

“...he shall send his angel...”

Today, pseudo-Christians see angels around every corner and demons under every bed. They claim to be able to manipulate and order them to do whatever they wish, and attribute this power to a gift given to them by God. And so they live a life full of dangerous delusion.

Though so many claim this, the matter is far from dead, for heavenly angels do exist and do act in our world, as do evil angels, demons. It is part of our rich spiritual heritage to understand and accept this, and it is to our good.

We are told in scripture that angels guard over us. Do you believe it? It does not mean that you will necessarily see them, but they are there with us anyway. God did not leave us bereft of heavenly company. Not only does He send us angels, but He also sends us the Holy Spirit, Who now is within each one of us who believe.

Why, then, do most of us live our lives as though there was a divide between heaven and earth for Believers? How can there be, when, as Christians, we are able to commune with God direct, through prayer? The path is already there, and we are already walking along it!

I am not encouraging you to constantly look for angels, but to always be aware that they exist and are with you, looking after you. The Holy Spirit, however, is actually within you. Do you acknowledge this? Do you give Him credit for what He does constantly in your life, sometimes even when you do not deserve it and when you sin? Do you properly attribute to Him wonderful and good things that occur to you? Do you sadden Him by committing sin or going off the path of holiness?

Nothing is hidden from God and no part of our lives can be removed from His sphere of activity and control. Do you truly think that parts of your life are outside of His influence and control? If I rely on observation, I can say that few of us really believe God is in control or has influence in our lives! We choose our jobs, buy our homes, have our children, and act out whatever we do, all devoid of an understanding of God. We do not take everything to Him in prayer, but pretend, offering instead quick comments that are not really meant to be taken seriously. Is this correct? I know it is, because I am just as guilty at times!

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Written by K B Napier
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To be a Christian is to accept fully that this world is of short duration and will not last. Frankly, as I grow older, I see this more vividly! Everything we own on this earth belongs to God and will return to Him. Whatever we have achieved is down to either His mercy or His gift, and belongs to Him, either to praise or to destroy. As Christians we should believe. Do we? Few do.

The Christian life should be resplendent with the acknowledgement of God's presence, of the presence of the Holy Spirit, and the presence of both good and evil angels. All are here on this earth, and we must respond carefully and openly, living both a spiritual and an earthly life.

Verses 1-9

1.

"And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2.

And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3.

And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4.

But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

5.

And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6.

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And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

7.

The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.

8.

And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.

9.

And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.”

We now come to an end of an era, when Abraham was very old. We are told that God had blessed him in everything. We must remember this when we decide that certain Christians are unworthy of blessings, for Abraham made mistakes, too. We cannot decide who is unworthy in God's eyes! We may judge their sins, but we have no access to God's mind when it comes to perceived worth. He may think otherwise!

How can God do this, when we think someone has sinned or made too many errors? It goes back to something I have been teaching for years – that God does not look upon our outward errors or even our occasional (or even frequent) sins, but He looks at our soul, the very core of our being. If the core is sound and willing and earnest before God, then His blessings will be given, whether or not fellow Christians think much of the person!

Abraham, knowing he was about to die, called for his 'eldest servant', or *zaqen*. This was his chief servant, or steward, having household authority over all matters (and he would also have been older in age). He asked the servant to place his hand under his thigh ('under', *tachath*

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). The word thigh,
yarek

, means the outer aspect or flank. It can also mean the (inner) loins, but as these are symbolic of procreative power, it cannot mean that. It was the equivalent of a 'gentleman's handshake' today, the sign of a promise. Therefore, the servant placed his hand on the outer part of Abraham's thigh.

This was symbolic, and, at that time, represented power, re the side where a sword was worn. (Also see Genesis 47:29, where the same requirement is placed on Joseph). Because of its allusion to power, it is why the angel struck Jacob's thigh, proving his superior strength and power compared to Jacob's. (Besides referring to a man's power, the thigh also represents the source of life, which is why touching the thigh was considered at that time to be the gravest of oaths. It also has reference to the 'side' of the tabernacle, and of the altar. The term, then, is loaded with significance).

Abraham told his servant that he would have to "swear by the LORD", which is interesting, for when the New promise came in Christ, swearing by God's name was banned. The command from Abraham was for his servant to *shaba* – take an oath. The servant had to promise that he would not allow Isaac to take a wife from amongst the Canaanites.

This is a good example of living amongst pagans but not being one of them. As we can see from previous texts, Abraham was considered to be at the top of the civil hierarchy, a rich and powerful ruler, with military prowess. He lived amongst pagans and idolaters. Yet, he kept himself apart by his allegiance to the one true God.

This has a special priority for us today, as Islam builds itself an empire on our doorsteps. We are to live in peace with Muslims, and yet must never capitulate to their demands, whether civil or otherwise. In terms of agape, they are our neighbours, with whom we must have daily communion on a civil level, but none at a spiritual level. This is not a false way to live – it is how we must live according to God. Abraham did it amongst pagans, with all due courtesy, and so must we.

Abraham recognised that the Canaanites had allowed him free passage in their land, but he also recognised that it was God Who had given him the land for his own. It was not yet given physically, so he had to wait, and abide by Canaanite protocol. But, even so, he did not wish his son to marry a Canaanite girl, a *Kěna* an. In this way he demanded he remain of a pure race,

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the coming nation of God.

We find a parallel for this in the New Testament, where we are warned not to yoke ourselves with unbelievers, whether in marriage or in any other sense. We have to live amongst pagans and commune with them, but this is to be fairly superficial, for it is only civil. As Christians we are not free to marry a pagan, or anyone who is an unbeliever. To do so would be to open ourselves up to their influence, and the influence behind them, Satan.

I have come across many disastrous marriages, of Christian and unbeliever, caused by the infidelity of the Christian to God. Over the decades I have noted many breakdowns of marriages between believers and unbelievers, where the unbeliever's love has been eroded slowly because he or she cannot share the godliness of the spouse... superficial beauty, apparent compatibility, agreement on many things – all fail at some point and the relationship usually ends in tears. Their marriage suffers and eventually disintegrates, or limps along unhappily.

Therefore, Beware, if you contemplate marrying an unbeliever, especially as God speaks against it! (Many today think they can marry an unbeliever in the hope that God will eventually save him or her... this is not guaranteed, especially as God warns us not to marry an unbeliever in the first place! Their salvation may, or may not, occur. If it does not, then the saved person is in for an increasingly unhappy relationship).

Isaac was not to travel himself, but was to have a wife by proxy. The servant, wiser and older, and not emotionally involved, could do the bargaining, and so Isaac would be kept spiritually safe. The servant was to travel back to the land of Abraham's kin, and pick out a woman for Isaac.

The servant, whose relationship with Abraham was sound and personal, asked what was to happen if the woman would not go with him to Abraham's present land. Would he have to then come back and get Isaac, to travel back with him? Abraham warned that Isaac must not travel there.

The reality of Abraham's faith is then shown to us – the God Who took him from the land of his fathers, and Who made him promises, would go before the servant. His angel would find a suitable bride; the servant merely had to obey the choice. So, once again, a *mal'ak*, or angel

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was sent as a deputy of Almighty God, to do what was necessary, preparing the family and bride chosen by God.

As you read that sentence do you take in the enormity of what was going on? Here was a man who was familiar with God coming to him in person as Christ, or through angelic beings. Once again, he was told by God that an angel would go to his former home and choose a wife. Do you truly believe this happened? It happened alright, but do you really take it in?

Do you recognise angelic activities when they occur? I have witnessed several of them in my own lifetime. On one occasion the result was spectacular: I was rushing to get to work in my small car, containing four (unbelieving) colleagues. As I drove too fast around a bend, I was met with a scene of mayhem – a dozen or so cars were littered all over the road, having met with an accident. It was too late for me to even brake! I could not swerve, because there were so many cars blocking my way, with no space, and I remember thinking, “This is it!”

That was the scene before me – and the next sight was an open road ahead! I looked in my rear mirror and saw the cars still there. My colleagues blurted out: “How did you do that?” I do not know! I just know that I was taken safely through the carnage to the other side. I do not remember actually driving through it at all, only coming out on the other side. Was that an angelic intervention? Yes, it was. There was no other possible explanation.

And there have been other instances of this kind of thing. So, believe it, friends; Abraham was not fooling and was not deluded! God intervenes in this world daily, often through the ministrations of angels. Not the pseudo-interventions claimed by charismatics, but the genuine ones only God can produce, by His good pleasure and mercy. This not ‘supernatural’ but more powerful – divine.

Those of us who are a little older were taught by our mothers that angels guarded us and looked after us. Today, many disregard this and relegate it to a time past when folk did not know any better. But, it is true and it is Biblical. Demons roam this world – do you think God would leave us stranded without counter-angelic help? Angels are certainly with us. Amen!

Though Abraham was sure an angel would choose a woman for Isaac, he nevertheless was human, and knew that the final result was in God’s merciful hands. So, if the angel did not

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choose a woman, the servant was freed from his oath. But, even if freed from his oath, the servant was never to allow Isaac to travel through the land to the place of his kinfolk. It might sound very sad, but I have had very little contact with most of my kinfolk over the years. This is because most of them do not care about me and have shown it, and some were foul towards my mother, and my grandmother. The blood-link is very fragile in their case, so I have had no real contact. Why should I keep up a pretence when their spiritual states are against my own?

From the vantage point of history we know that if God sent an angel to find a woman, then the conclusion would be certain, for what God determines, and what He predestines, will come to pass.

After the discussion, the servant placed his hand on Abraham's thigh and swore to comply with his demands.

Verses 10-14

1.

“And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

2.

And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.

3.

And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

4.

Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

5.

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And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.”

The servant immediately prepared for his task, choosing ten camels from Abraham’s herd. On the camels were packed precious goods to be offered as a dowry to the girl’s parents. It is reasonable to suppose that he also had a number of armed men with him for the journey, to protect against brigands, and to help handle the beasts.

He then set off to the land of Mesopotamia (‘Aram of the two rivers’), which today would be roughly northern Iraq or Iran. His destination was the ‘city of Nahor’ (‘snorting’), Abraham’s brother.

Some time later, in the evening, the servant and his retinue arrived at the city and the camels were made to kneel by a well, ready to be watered. It was a time when women went to the well to draw supplies. The servant noted the women and called to God to help him find the one chosen for Isaac.

The servant was prompted by God to lay out a plan of action... he would approach a young woman and ask her to draw water with her pitcher (a *kad*, a large portable jug) for him to drink from. If she responded suitably and offered not only him but his camels, water, then that would be the sign that God had chosen and was being merciful to Abraham. If such a thought came to your mind, would you dismiss it as fantasy or as psychological (the usual modern reaction)? Or, would you take it faithfully, as God’s response?

Verses 15-21

1.

“And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

2.

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And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

3.

And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

4.

And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

5.

And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

6.

And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

7.

And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.”

The servant had been praying audibly, as the text implies – *dabar*, to speak, to converse. Before he had stopped his prayer to God, a young woman came to the well, Rebekah (‘ensnarer’). Her father was Bethuel and her brother was Laban. Bethuel (‘God destroys’ or ‘man of God’) was Abraham’s nephew, the son of his brother Nahor and wife Milcah. She walked out of the city gate with a large water pitcher on her shoulder.

Rebekah was beautiful and a single virgin. She went to the well, filled the pitcher, and started to return to the city. The servant ran to her and asked for a drink of water. She responded in a

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kindly fashion – ‘drink, my lord!’ In this text ‘lord’ means either a recognition of superiority, or, of his status as ‘superintendent of household affairs’. It was not used in the same sense as it was used for Abraham. It is also possible that it was a proper form of address by a young girl to an older male.

She did not just agree to give him water, but she did so quickly, which shows us her general disposition. When the servant finished drinking, Rebekah offered to draw more water so that the camels could drink, too. This was the answer the servant wanted to hear!

She emptied the remaining water into the trough outside the city wall, and then ran back to the well to fill the pitcher again, so that all the camels could drink. Though it as the exact answer he was looking for, the servant said nothing and watched, wondering if this was indeed God’s answer.

It is worthwhile saying that even when we ask for answers and they appear to be given, we should remain wary, for the master of disguise, Satan, can come along and mimic a right response for a sought-after desire. This is especially so as the servant had openly spoken to God with ordinary words, that could easily have been heard by nearby demons. The man of God will know the difference and should not worry.

Verses 22-27

1.

“And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold;

2.

And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?

3.

And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

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4.

She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

5.

And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

6.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren."

When the camels finished drinking, the servant got out from a bag some gifts – a gold earring worth half a shekel, and two gold bracelets worth ten shekels (whether this was the weight of each, or of both combined, I cannot tell).

He asked the girl who her father was, and if he would have room at his house to accommodate him. She said I am the daughter of Bethuel, whose father is Nahor and mother is Milcah. She then said that they had plenty of straw, provender (fodder), and room in which the man could lodge.

At this the man bowed his head and thanked God. Then he blessed God for answering Abraham's request, through himself, a servant. The girl must have wondered at his words, for he prayed openly.

Verses 28-33

1.

"And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.

2.

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And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

3.

And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.

4.

And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.

5.

And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.

6.

And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on."

The girl then ran to her home to tell her family what had been said, and to show them the gold earring and bracelets. Her brother, Laban ('white') then ran out of the city to greet the servant, who had remained near the well. Laban referred to him as the "blessed of the LORD" and this show us that his family were believers, as was Abraham. Why stand outside like this, asked Laban? Come with me, for I have prepared a room for you and a place for the camels. (The wording of these texts suggest that Nahor was by this time dead.)

So, the servant took the camels into the city, where he ungirded them (removed the straps and ropes and packs), and gave them food and straw. Then, Laban gave him and the men (not hitherto mentioned but assumed to have been with him earlier) water to wash their feet with, a common oriental practice. After that the servant and his fellow men were invited into the house where a meat meal was set out on the table ready. The servant was mindful of his task, and so

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he said, 'I cannot eat until I tell you why I have come.' To which Laban replied, 'Please speak.'

Verses 34&35

1.

"And he said, I am Abraham's servant.

2.

And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses."

The word for 'servant', *ebed*, can be a form of address between equals. It can also mean a worshipper of God, a prophet, a loyal citizen of Israel, the subject of a king, a slave, or a man-servant. It is always important to 'fit' proper meanings to words in scripture, for a wrongly interpreted word can alter the meaning of the whole passage, with the possible end result of creating a new doctrine.

This is how Roman Catholics teach that Peter was the 'Rock' on which the Church was built. It is also how reformed Christians think John 3:18 refers to the whole world... words do not always mean what you think they mean. In this text, 'servant' means a man-servant. This is confirmed by the qualifying words, "my master".

The servant went on to describe Abraham's great wealth, consisting of gold, silver, animals and people. This would have been a common thing to do, to show parents that a suitor was able to look after their daughter well. You will note that the servant attributed all of his master's wealth to God, who blessed Abraham 'greatly'. Thus, the servant placed the discussion on the right footing from the start.

Many Christians think it is alright to use a kind of 'holy subterfuge' when dealing with the unsaved. They prepare a 'strategy' for 'witnessing' to friends, family and colleagues, and engineer events and situations so that they can then 'pounce' on them with the Gospel. Thus, every day becomes not an ordinary day where God brings up an opportunity, but a grand battle

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plan in which the Christian manipulates situations to his advantage, thinking it is what God wants. This is not so. We are NOT to chatter endlessly to people, anyone and everyone we meet, and corner them with the Bible. This is not witnessing, nor is it evangelism!

(Once, when on holiday in Malta, my wife and I were sitting at breakfast. An old man sat near us, reading a small book and drinking coffee, minding his own business. Suddenly, a Maltese man stood before the old man, leaning on the table and pushing himself forward. He immediately related a 'story' of something he and his friends had done the day before, inventing a spiritual parallel, trying to force the hapless old man to agree and to ask questions! The 'preacher' was so pushy I felt like intervening! I was so annoyed, on behalf of the old man. The Maltese fellow wanted to see the man 'saved', no doubt... but it is not how God works! We do not corner people on the street, or in cafes, or anywhere else! The Holy Spirit guides us to a person, and He even gives us the words. No need to invent stories or make weak links to them, nor may we pounce on everyone we meet. Those who do outdoor ministries must take stock and stop what is an infuriating and worthless campaign of 'attack by words', because nothing puts the unsaved off more than someone literally 'in their face' uninvited).

On an even grander scale, many missionaries work like this, pretending all the while to be agricultural workers, doctors, or teachers, whilst hatching plans to witness to what is to become their captive audience.

This, my friends, is not true witnessing, but Arminian-style manoeuvring. It is to use human processes instead of waiting for God to move upon a person and then upon the one witnessing. It is to present a false reason for being somewhere and a false reason for being a 'friend'... the person becomes a pawn in the Christian's plan of action, instead of a person in his own right.

Think about it, next time you plan to witness to use an Arminian strategy. God can develop situations of His own – He does not need us to interfere and bring about a false situation just so that we can be 'faithful' and gain another trophy!

Verses 36-41

1.

“And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

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2.

And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:

3.

But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

4.

And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

5.

And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:

6.

Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath."

The servant proceeded to give an account of Abraham's family situation and events given by God. Isaac was identified as the son in question, who was heir to his master's fortune. The command to find a wife amongst his own brethren was repeated – and, also, that if a wife was not found, the servant was free of his oath. He would also be free if a wife was found.

The servant went on to say that an angel of God would go before him to the city, to ensure his safety and a good result. It is a truth that 'guardian' angels are a reality. Good angels are with us on this earth, carrying messages from God and doing His bidding in all kinds of situations for the benefit of saved men and women. There are also evil angels, demons, who try to thwart their activities and God's plans. We are not, then, alone in this world!

Verses 42-49

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1.

“And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go;

2.

Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

3.

And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

4.

And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

5.

And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

6.

And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

7.

And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

8.

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And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.”

The servant then reiterated what happened when he arrived at the city, and we have already dealt with the matter above. It is important that we reiterate our own actions in the light of God's plans and will. If we have prayed for this or that and it has been granted, then we ought to tell people what happened and about the God Who brought it about. We should not just keep quiet and let it pass. We must always put our daily life into its proper context – in the middle of God's plans for our earthly existence. (Most just make their own plans regardless of what God requires. Indeed, many make plans for all kinds of things, some life-changing, without once considering whether or not it is what God wants of them, or if He approves).

In this way life transcends the 'mortal toil' we live in, and God is presented as a reality and not just a myth... in many instances it is obvious to me that Christians think of God as a mythical character, so they do not bother to speak of what He does for them daily. How can they speak with zeal or reality if they think God is not real?

When he had finished his account, the servant asked the family to tell him if his journey was to have a fruitful end. He needed to know, so that he could wind-up his dealings and return home with one answer or the other. You will note that all along this man was obvious in his activities. He did not use 'holy subterfuge' to win people over or to 'soften them up' for a final act of witness. He just spoke as he needed to, with his intentions open and frank. There was no 'emotional blackmail', a tactic often used by Christians adhering to their own agenda and humanly-devised plans. He just gave his message and left the rest to God.

Verses 50&51

1.

“Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

2.

Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.”

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This approach by the servant was a good one, for the angel sent by God had already done his work on the family. Laban, Rebekah's brother, and their father, Bethuel, quickly answered the servant. They accurately assessed the situation and, without hesitation, attributed it to God: 'This comes from God, so we cannot alter it one way or the other. Therefore, take Rebekah to be Isaac's wife, just as God has commanded.'

(Today, if we are close to God, we will think His thoughts and do His bidding, even if we have not asked for specific help or guidance. In this way we can make plans that are HIS plans, and say things that are HIS words. True Christian living is dynamic and real, but very few experience it).

This reflects the faith the family had in the same God. It was a faith similar to that of Abraham, but very alien to most Christians today, whose concept of God is small and emotional rather than actual. Today, we also have the extreme, where charismatics claim belief in a 'big' God, but have no true idea of what they are saying, making Him to be a reactive manufacturer of their own devices and demands. Thus, their beliefs are not real, but formed of vanity and a wrong perception of God.

Only recently, I had dealings with a Pentecostalist, who insisted that he retained his false 'tongues' because he did not wish to offend God. He told me that it was 'just in case' the tongues were genuine! This is a very clear admission that he had no true belief or faith, but had a wrong concept of God, of His gifts, and so his 'belief' was a falsity based on a fear of being wrong – a superstition. In this way he continues in sin, knowing that his 'tongues may, or may not' be genuine. I have often taught that if a man receives a true gift from God, it will be obvious and the man will not be shaken from his belief. There will be no 'just in case' beliefs!

Do you recognise when God is acting in your life? Or, do you operate on the human level only, living on your emotions and reactions, rather than on true faith? Do you boldly attribute to God what He has done? Or, do you put it down to circumstances, or human interventions? On the other hand, do you wrongly attribute things to God, when all along what happens is of your own making, and is not particularly holy or good? (Charismatics do the latter all the time, to their detriment and false security. Sadly, many genuine Christians follow this trend, too).

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You will note that the truth was spoken by the two men – whatever God has put into place cannot be altered. God's will cannot be manipulated by our prayers or actions, and when He commands something we have no option but to obey, whatever we think and whatever then happens.

Verses 52-61

1.

“And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.

2.

And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.

3.

And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.

4.

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.

5.

And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

6.

And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.

7.

And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

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8.

And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

9.

And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.

10.

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.”

The words of Rebekah's brother and father caused the servant to be overjoyed, and he immediately worshipped God for providing an answer. He then brought out more gifts – jewels, gold, silver, and fine clothing – and gave them to Rebekah, as a gift from her future husband's father. He also gave *migdannah* – precious and fine things – to her father and family, as a dowry.

The servant and his fellow travellers then had a meal and stayed the night. In the morning the servant got up early and requested that the family should send him back to Abraham. This would have been yet another custom of that time, for the servant was not just one who belonged to Abraham – he retained his status even when farther afield, so he was compelled to seek permission to actually leave.

Rebekah's mother and brother agreed, but asked that Rebekah should remain at home for another ten days, as a farewell, because the request was so sudden. The servant then shows us another principle of living in faith: the urgency of meeting God's demands immediately. Though a servant, the man said “Hinder me not” because the whole situation was in God's hands, not his own. He could not allow such a request to be granted, for fear of losing God's favour.

We do well to remember this today. Many Christians deny immediate response to God, or try to

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ignore what He says, with sometimes dire consequences for their own lives. And, how do we measure the cost of lost benefits in our lives? How many things do not come our way because we resist or deny immediate response to God's commands? How many benefits do we thereby lose?

Again, it seems that the family recognised that God ruled their situation, and so called their daughter for an answer. They asked her if she was willing to go to Isaac immediately, and she replied "I will go." Once more, there seems to have been no hesitation. It would be easy to say that any young girl, given jewels and gold, would be flattered to go... but by thinking this way we deny the part played by God's angel in preparing her heart and mind.

The family then prepared her departure right away, and she left with the chief servant and his fellow servants. In the text, Rebekah is referred to as "their sister", *achowth*: this means both that she was Laban's sister, and also a relative of the others in the family. It may also have been a reference to her new status as a bride. She was accompanied by the woman who had brought her up from childhood, described here as her 'nurse'. Properly, this means a wet-nurse, but Rebekah was now a young woman, so we may safely assume that she was a young teenager who still required a female helper. The woman was, then, her own personal servant.

The family knew that they were on the verge of something immensely great and godly, and sent her away with their blessings, and wish for her descendants, "thousands of millions". In saying this, they show us a realisation of God's plan for the coming new order of things, in which Rebekah would play a significant part as a 'mother of nations' and mother of those who would destroy their enemies.

Rebekah then said her farewells and went with the servant. Apart from her nurse she also had other personal servants, which tells us that her family were quite wealthy. They rode off on camels, beginning on a journey not just of many miles and weeks, but also of many spiritual and physical benefits that would affect the entire world.

Critics have often demanded: "Who do you think you are!" when I teach or refer to scriptural demands. My answer is that no man knows the true extent of his actions, for they are in God's hands. None of us knows if he is to be another Paul, or Peter, or some person used greatly by God, possibly affecting thousands if not millions. Thus, each of us must live as though we were that man or woman used greatly by God.

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It does not mean that we think we, as people, are great... only that each of us must be aware of the possibility that God might use us to His glory. It is not a matter of who *we* think we are, but of what *He* can make us become! We are nothing, but in His hands we can be mighty. And this is how each of us must live.

Verses 62-67

1.

“And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the south country.

2.

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming.

3.

And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

4.

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: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.

5.

And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

6.

And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.”

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As the travellers proceeded on their journey, Isaac walked from the well at Lahairoi ('well of the Living One seeing me'), west of Kadesh in what became south Israel, to one of his fields. It was coming to the end of the day and he wished to think deeply on what was going on. He looked up and, when he saw the camels in the distance, he began to walk toward them.

At the same time Rebekah saw Isaac and asked the servant who he was. On being told it was Isaac, she fixed her veil over her face and got off the camel to meet him. As soon as the servant got to Isaac, he gave an account of his journey and the result.

Isaac then took Rebekah into his mother's tent in marriage. Sarah was of course dead, and so the tent was still empty. Thus, Rebekah continued what Sarah had begun, and became one of the mother's of Israel, as well as a comfort to Isaac after his mother's death.

God always provides a successor in spiritual things. Once He has instituted something, it will continue. Rome thinks that it is a successor to Peter, which is a lie. But, it is truth to say that each of us is a successor to the Apostles and the early Church, for God never leaves this world devoid of His presence or people. There has never been a time when at least a remnant of His true Church has not been on this earth. Even when the dark ages of Romanist rule were in full force, a remnant of genuine believers were on the earth, continuing the line of belief, unbroken.

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