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Chapter One

A Bride for the Son the Father of Heaven and earth is busy preparing Himself a bride for His Son. He has sent forth the Holy Spirit into the earth to search for those whose hearts are willing to be fashioned and formed into an offering which will bring pleasure to the Heir of all things, Jesus. Eve was fashioned out of a rib, part of the body of the first Adam and Christ's bride will be fashioned and brought forth out of His Body.

In just the same way as God the Father, Abraham sent his faithful servant, Eliezer, to search out a bride for Isaac from among his own people. There are certain things the servant was looking for in this oriental bride; a servant-heart, beauty, generosity, humility and the willingness to go the extra mile. Rebekah had all these qualities and Eliezer was impatient to know if she would fulfill the final requirement - a willingness to be led by him to a place she did not know, to wed a man she had never set eyes upon! Are we willing to be led by the Spirit on a journey of which we know nothing except the final destination?

This servant comes bearing gifts for her and for her family. The first things Eliezer gives Rebekah are a nose-ring and bracelets. Gen 24:22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man brought out gifts, a gold nose ring weighing a little over a quarter of an ounce and two arm bracelets weighing about four ounces, and gave them to her. The Hebrew word for 'bracelet' means 'to link, to fasten, to join self'. Here we see the beginning of the betrothal process. She has been singled out and chosen as the potential bride, should she be willing and also if her father is willing to accept the bridal price paid.

However, first the servant has a question: Gen 24:23MSG He asked her, "Tell me about your family? Whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father's house for us to stay the night?" In just the same way as Mary and Joseph knocked at the innkeeper's door and asked if there was room for Christ to be born in his inn, so too the Holy Spirit is knocking at the door of our fellowships, asking if there is room for Him to bring forth the Bride in our midst. Gen 24:24MSG. She said, "I'm the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah and Nahor. And there's plenty of room in our house for you to stay--and lots of straw and feed besides."

Rebekah opens wide her home for this servant and puts everything at his disposal. This is the response the Holy Spirit is looking for. We often sing, "You are welcome in this place, Holy Spirit" but do not allow Him freedom in every department of our lives. Sometimes we are willing to entertain Him alone but we want His camels to be fed and watered elsewhere. Camels are beasts of burden. They depict intercessory burdens that the Spirit wants us to attend to. He is looking for a house that is willing to feel what the heart of God feels; to have our hearts broken by what breaks God's heart. The Bride will gladly welcome both the Spirit of God and all He brings with Him, no matter the discomfort or inconvenience or how it looks to those outside. Rebekah's grandmother's name was Milcah, which comes from a root word meaning 'to ascend the throne, to reign, to induct as queen'. This bride-to-be had royal blood! What Rebekah was saying prophetically when she explained her bloodline, is that this was her heritage; this is where she had come from and where she was going to. She had been born for this purpose, to become queen – and this is the purpose of the Bride of Christ, to ascend to the place prepared for her, to rule and reign with the King of Kings. In John 13:3 it tells us that Jesus, knowing who He was, where He had come from and where He was going to, did a strange thing. He girded Himself with a servant's towel and began to wash the disciple's feet. So too, the Bride, secure in the knowledge of her royal heritage and destiny, will take on the form of a servant and begin to wash the dusty feet of those around her. She will minister gently to those who have traveled hard stony paths, washing away their weariness and the debris of the journey with the water of the Word. Rebekah had a brother named Laban, which means 'to be white, to make bricks'. When he saw the bracelets on her arms, He quickly welcomed Eliezer in the name of the Lord. This all seems very hospitable on the surface. However, Laban's eyes

were on the jewelry. He was welcoming the servant because of the potential wealth he saw coming the family's way. In the same way, there are those in the Body of Christ who make a show of welcoming the Holy Spirit, but there are dollar signs in their eyes so to speak. They want to build for themselves and profit from the gospel. They are whitewashed but inside, they are full of the bones of those who have been sacrificed on the altar of their spiritual ambitions. They may be related to the Bride but their hearts are vastly different. Not everyone in the house gets to go on this journey with the Holy Spirit! In verse 33 we read that the family wanted Eliezer to enjoy a meal with them but he would not do so until He had fulfilled His master's wishes and found a Bride. In the same way, we invite the Holy Spirit to feast with us at our meetings. We want to fellowship with Him, relax, and enjoy His presence. We do not comprehend that this is not the reason why He has come to us. There is an urgency in the heart of the Holy Spirit to complete His assignment. He has come to call out a Bride from among God's people, not to eat, drink and be merry with the people of God! We speak so often of banqueting and feasting on all God has prepared for us and sometimes we go ahead and start eating, unaware that the Holy Spirit is not joining us. He has come for an explicit purpose and will not eat with us until we hear what He has to say -until we receive a revelation of the Father's desire for a Bride for His Son and release her to journey with the Holy Spirit to her destiny. The tragic thing is that many will be unwilling to do this. I encourage those who have mentored and fathered people in the house of God, to be quick to release any that the Holy Spirit has marked and is calling. When you hear how God has divinely dovetailed arrangements, seen His divine networking, acknowledge the hand of God and work with Him, not against Him. For those who resist the Holy Spirit's invitation, He is no longer required to tarry with them. Abraham told Eliezer: Gen 24:41MSG If you go to my family and they won't give her to you, you will also be free from the oath.' If we do not respond to the wooing of the Holy Spirit at this time, He will leave and move on to search for those with willing hearts. He is not bound to remain where people resist His requests. Rebekah's family recognized that the servant was sharing truth and released her to his care. In just the same way, John the Baptist encouraged people to stop following him and follow Jesus. We must recognize when our time of mentoring and preparing people has collided with the next chapter in God's purpose for their lives.

Gen 24:5,51MSG Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is totally from GOD. We have no say in the matter, either yes or no. Rebekah is yours: Take her and go; let her be the wife of your master's son, as GOD has made plain." When they surrendered to the will of the servant, he responded by giving gifts: Gen 24:53MSG Then he brought out gifts of silver and gold and clothing and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave expensive gifts to her brother and mother. These are the betrothal gifts for the Bride, and her family is also showered with presents. God is no man's debtor. When we surrender to His purposes and release that which is precious to be used for His glory, He generously pours out gifts upon the family of God. The Bride in turn receives garments, which represent mantles and anointing to equip her for the road ahead. Once again we see the heart of Laban the next morning. He has seen the garments and jewelry bestowed on the Bride and now wants to hold her back from her destiny for selfish purposes. His desire is to cause her to miss the wedding because he wants her to stay with them so they can benefit from what the Father has bestowed upon her. Laban represents those moving in a religious spirit – this spirit always seeks to harness the giftings of people for its own ends. Listen to me, Bride of Christ: there is a strategy unleashed against you to cause you to miss your appointment with the Bridegroom. The voice of comfort and familiarity are wooing you, urging you to remain a little longer in the place you stand. Your garments and giftings have been noted and there are those near and dear to you who do not really want to let you go. They are saying, it is just a small delay for old time's sake, not a cancellation of your travel plans. After all, who knows when we will see each other again? I implore you at this point to hear the urgent tone in the Holy Spirit's voice: Gen 24:56 MSG He said, "Oh, don't make me wait! GOD has worked everything out so well--send me off to my master." Time is short, the Bridegroom is waiting and the end of the age is at hand. The great cloud of witnesses surrounds us, those who in ages past yielded to this same invitation, and they are also hasty for they do not come to perfection apart from us. You face a journey you have not been on before. You do not know what is around the next bend but you have this certainty; Jesus, your

Bridegroom is waiting to see the fruit of the travail of His soul. He longs to catch sight of the face of the one He paid such a high bridal price for. As the Holy Spirit comes to each of us individually and asks if we are willing to go with Him on a journey of preparation and purification, may our answer be that of Rebekah: Gen 24:58 And they called Rebekah, and said to her, Will you go with this man? And she said, "I will go." Don't allow the comfort of familiarity to rob you and the seductive voices of those who wish to keep you back for their own ends, to lull you into a slumber. If we lose our lives for His sake, we shall find them. Rebekah means 'strongly bound or fettered'. Are we willing to be strongly bound and at the mercy of Him who leads us or do we still want to be able to run wild and free and have our own way? If so, the Holy Spirit will not force us to go anywhere. Rebekah's father's name was Bethuel, which means 'destroyed by God'. Our old associations will be dead to us if we are willing to leave and cleave. Psalm 45 says this: 'Hear O daughter, consider, submit to my instruction; forget also your own people and your father's house; so will the king desire your beauty; for he is your lord; reverence and honor him.' God is asking each of us to make this choice because the Holy Spirit is hasty and time is running out. Those close to us will always want to hold on to us a little longer. Will we answer like Rebekah or will we have excuses and reasons to prolong our stay in our comfort zones? Rebekah did not look back; she was asked the question and all she said was, "I will go". She asked no questions or expressed any doubts. This is the kind of bride the Holy Spirit is looking for in these days; one who will say, "Here am I, Lord. Send me"; someone single-minded, one who doesn't look to the left or the right but fixes her eye on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of her faith; the Bridegroom she has never seen with her natural eye but whom she loves. 1 Peter 1:8 says: 'Having not seen Him, we love Him'