

Lesson 9

God's Heart: The Role of the Holy Spirit

Introduction: We know from God's word that in this current "age" God is calling out from among the nations a people for His name (**Acts 15:6-17**). References to this body of believers from scripture include the Church, the Body of Christ, God's holy temple, a royal nation, and a holy priesthood to name a few. The one reference we want to focus on today is God's reference to the Church as the Bride of Christ (**2 Corinthians 11:1-2**). Throughout the Old Testament there are many physical pictures of future spiritual truth that was eventually contained in the New Testament. Some of these examples we have already seen in the lessons we've covered so far and others we haven't come to yet:

- God clothing Adam and Eve
- Noah's Ark
- The ram that God provided to die in Isaac's place
- Israel's position at the Red Sea
- Leading Israel out of Egypt and into the Promised Land
- The rock in the wilderness
- The brazen serpent on the pole
- Genesis 24, Abraham sends out his servant to find a wife for Isaac providing a very clear physical picture of God's calling out a bride for Christ.

Part 1 –The Father and His Purpose

- **Read Genesis 24:1-4.**

First, notice that the plan to find a wife for Isaac began in Abraham's heart. A wife may have been on Isaac's mind, but all God chooses to reveal to us here is that it was Abraham who initiated the finding of Isaac's bride. Just as the plan to find a wife for Isaac began in Abraham's heart, so the plan to establish the church and call out a bride for Christ began in the heart of God before the foundations of the earth. See **Romans 16:25-27; 1 Corinthians 2:6-9; Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 1:26-29; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:18-21.**

Second, it was also Abraham who determined when the time was right to send out his servant to find a wife for Isaac. So also it was God the Father who determined when the time was right to begin the process of carrying out His eternal plan of redemption (which He began with creation). From creation in Genesis to the creation of the new heaven and the new earth in Revelation, it is God Who has determined the perfect time for all things.

We have clearly seen this in the life of Christ through the gospels. Abraham wouldn't have sent the servant out to find Isaac's wife had Isaac not yet become an adult. He didn't find him a wife while he was still a child; i.e., there was an appropriate time. Just like that, once Jesus had completed all the work that God had sent Him to do, God then sent the Holy Spirit

down into the world to call out a people for His name to become the bride of Christ. See **John 14:26**.

Next, notice that Isaac's wife couldn't just be any woman from anywhere. She had to be a woman who, by Abraham's standards, was suitable for his son. Just like that, those who make up the bride are those who have been made suitable for Christ through faith in His finished work. His finished work that He did FOR us makes us suitable in terms of our position or origin. But it's His divine work that He does IN us that makes us suitable in terms of our relationship with Him.

- **Read Genesis 24:5-9.**

Two times Abraham warns the servant to never take Isaac back to Mesopotamia where he came from. Abraham was making it very clear that this is important. At what point did God send the Holy Spirit down to begin calling out the bride? After Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. After Jesus was already in heaven. Jesus will not be brought back to join us here on earth, but one day we will be raptured and taken out of this world to go and be with Him.

“The Holy Spirit is not here to prosper the Christian in business or to make us wealthy men in the world or to make the world a comfortable place for us. He is not here to remove the curse or hush creation's groan. He is not here to make the desert rejoice and

blossom as the rose. He is not here to remove pain and death and sorrow and tears. All this Christ will do in a day yet to come. Nor is He here to convert the world as some think. He is here to bring to light a people who are suited to Christ for the joy and satisfaction of His heart.” Hamilton Smith

“Again the people of God may entertain great hopes from the mission field. With thousands of missionaries working in all parts of the world, they had hoped that the strongholds of heathendom, Buddhism and Mohammedism would be broken down before the light of Christianity, and yet they find these false systems are hardly touched, and they are disappointed.

Others again have entertained the thought that after nineteen centuries of the light of Christianity, the world would be morally better, and instead they have to admit that never was society more corrupt, lawlessness so prevalent, and unrest so general; hence, they are disappointed. If however, we abandon our own thoughts and rise up to God's thoughts we shall not be disappointed. Our expectations are often times too limited, our outlook too circumscribed. We think of the present moment and look only at things seen. Let us, however, 'look beyond the long dark night and hail the coming day.' Let us see to what great end God is working, so that, out of the wreck and ruin of this world, He shall secure a Bride that will be suited for the love of Christ. What a thought, that the Spirit of God is here to form bridal affections in the hearts of believers in

view of the day—the great day—the day of the marriage of the Lamb!” Hamilton Smith

Part 2 – The Holy Spirit and His Work

- **Read Genesis 24:10-26.**

In speaking about the servant, notice what it says of him in verse 10: “*All the goods of his master were in his hands.*” What a picture of the Holy Spirit and His role and ministry among us today

- **Read John 16:12-15.**

“He will take of mine and reveal it to you.”

“He will lead you into all truth.”

“The Spirit will tell you whatever He receives from Me.”

Another verse that clearly speaks to this role of the Holy Spirit is **1 Corinthians 2:12**: “*To reveal to us the things that God has freely given to us.*”

Another important thing to notice about the servant is the fact that he went out in total dependence upon God. His role was not to choose just any girl and then work to make her suitable for Isaac. His role was to find “the one” that God had appointed for Isaac. If you read Jesus’ prayer in John 17, you will notice that eight times Jesus refers to His disciples and future followers as “those that You have given Me.” Folks, God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, views each one

of us (that have accepted Him as our Savior) as being given to Him by God the Father!

Next, notice that the moment God brings Rebekah to the servant and reveals to him that she is the appointed one, immediately the servant adorns her with a nose ring and bracelets, thereby distinguishing her from all others. Compare with **Ephesians 1:13**. The moment any of us accepts Jesus as our Savior, that very moment we become “sealed” by or with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells us, thereby marking us as now belonging to God.

After marking Rebekah as the appointed one, the servant asks if there is room for him to lodge at her father’s house. Notice that he didn’t force his company on her. The servant had a lot that he wanted to tell Rebekah about Isaac in order to awaken the affections in her heart for Isaac, but he wasn’t forcing it on her.

At this point, Rebekah knew nothing about Abraham and Isaac. Just like that, for many of us, at the time of our salvation, there is really very little that we know about God the Father and God the Son. Just as the servant wanted to tell Rebekah more about Abraham and Isaac, so the Spirit is desiring to reveal more and more about God the Father and God the Son to us; but like the servant, He won’t force it on us.

- **Read Genesis 24:28-49.**

Upon entering the house, the first thing the servant wants to do is to speak about Isaac and his father Abraham. In a sense, the servant was “glorifying” Abraham and Isaac by showing and declaring their wealth. In **John 16**, Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, “*He will glorify Me.*”

First, the servant speaks of all of the wealth of Abraham. Then he speaks of Abraham’s son and says in verse 36, “*Everything that my master owns will all become his.*” This is exactly how it is with God the Father and God the Son.

- **John 16:15** – “*All that belongs to the Father is Mine.*”
- **John 17:7** – “*Everything that I have is a gift from the Father.*”
- **Romans 8:16-17** – Made “*joint heirs*” with Christ.

This is exactly what the servant was saying. All that is Abraham’s will become Isaac’s. If you marry Isaac and become one with him, you will become a “joint heir” with him.

- **Read Genesis 24:50-60.**

Upon receiving Rebekah and her family’s approval, the servant then pulls out jewels of silver and gold and expensive raiment to give to Rebekah. The

servant awakened affection in Rebekah's heart by first telling her about Isaac and his family. Then when she agreed to go and become his wife, the servant then adorned her with riches and beautiful things that came from Isaac.

The moment we accepted Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit did the exact same thing with every one of us. He opens His bag and pulls out:

- Justification and adorns us with it
- Sonship
- Access to God
- Reconciliation with God
- Forgiveness
- Oneness or union with Christ
- Acceptance with God
- Heavenly citizenship
- Eternal security
- Made a new creation
- Made one with the saints
- A relationship with God
- All condemnation is removed
- Adoption
- Taken out of the kingdom of darkness and placed in the kingdom of light
- Made joint heirs with Christ
- Made a vessel of honor used to proclaim the excellencies of Christ
- Indwelt with the Holy Spirit
- Been given every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies
- Seated with Him at God's right hand
- Complete in Him

We were adorned with all of these things and more the very moment we accepted Jesus as our Savior.

Now, after giving all of these beautiful gifts to Rebekah, the servant wanted to leave right away, but Rebekah's family wanted her to stay another ten days. Isn't it interesting that when asked, Rebekah said she was ready to go to Isaac and that she didn't want to stay. She had never met Isaac or his family. She had never seen his home and the area in which he lived. All she knew of Isaac at this point was what the servant had told her about him and what the servant had given her FROM him.

The servant had proclaimed the glories of Abraham and Isaac so much that Rebekah was willing to immediately leave her own home and family to go to be with him. Rather than proclaiming unto Rebekah the "glories" of Abraham and Isaac, what if the servant had spent all of his time telling all the things that she would have to do in order to please Isaac and make him happy? How would this have affected her? Think she would have had the same eager desire to go and become his wife? But this is exactly what many churches do to their people. Instead of grounding them upon the foundation of the finished work of Christ and what He's done, given them, and made them to be, we spend more time telling them all that we believe God now expects them to do for Him.

No wonder why people lose their joy. No wonder why people get burned out, lose heart, and fall away.

Their “betrothal” to Christ, which God has given as a life and place of great blessing and privilege and honor, has become to them a life of bondage and slavery!

So, there was no longer a desire for Rebekah to remain in her old home. This is exactly what the Holy Spirit does in our lives. We have never met Jesus; we have never seen Him in person. We have never seen heaven or the place that He is preparing for us. Through the Word of God, He reveals to us the mind of the Father concerning Christ. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He awakens our love for Christ, our desire to know Him, commune with Him, and one day enter His presence. The Spirit thereby adorns us with the beautiful things of Christ. The moment we get saved, He adorns us with the “riches of Christ.” And then He continues to work to deepen our affection for Christ by revealing to us the glories and excellencies of Christ! See **1 Corinthians 2:12; Ephesians 1:3-11, 16-20; and Ephesians 3:14-21.**

As He continues to reveal Christ to us, the desire to be with Him continues to grow within our hearts. The more we walk in the Spirit and not in the flesh, the more the Spirit will cause Christ to become the occupation of our hearts—and the more disengaged our hearts will become from the things where Christ is not, or is not a part of.

So, the servant has found the appointed bride. He has distinguished her from all others with the earrings

and bracelets. He has awakened affection for Isaac within her. He has adorned her with the beautiful things from Isaac, and now he will lead her TO Isaac. What a beautiful picture that depicts exactly what the Holy Spirit has done in our lives. For such is the mighty attractive power of the excellencies of Christ when the Holy Spirit opens the eyes of the heart to behold Him. See **Philippians 3:7-8**.

- **Read Genesis 24:61-66.**

Notice that Rebekah arose and followed the servant. The servant took Rebekah and went “HIS” way. In order to get to Isaac, Rebekah had to place herself totally under the guidance of the servant and she had to go HIS way, not her own way. See **Joshua 3:1-4**; **Galatians 5:16**—The flesh is “our way”—in the Spirit is “His way”; **Ephesians 5:18**.

The immediate result of following the servant was that Rebekah found herself in the wilderness! She was no longer in the comfort of her own home, nor was she with Isaac at his home yet. For 400 miles or about one month, all she had was the desert, heat, stinky camels, maybe low on food or water at times, and much discomfort.

However, along the way, I believe the servant continued to tell Rebekah about the one that she was going to marry, the one that was waiting for her to arrive. I believe the servant continued to tell Rebekah about Isaac as he continued to lead her to Isaac! The joy of meeting her groom gave her

encouragement to endure the hardships she faced in getting to him. See **Hebrews 12:1-3**.

This is a picture of exactly what the Holy Spirit is doing in our lives today, too! We are currently in the wilderness, as this world is no longer our home. We no longer feel comfortable here in our old lifestyles, but we haven't yet arrived to our eternal home heaven either. See **John 15:18-19; 17:14, 16; 18:36**. See also **Galatians 6:14** "*world crucified to me and me to the world*"; **Ephesians 2:19** "*members of the household of God*"; **Philippians 3:20; Colossians 3:1-3**.

Now we must consider as we are traveling through the wilderness, are we focusing on the One to whom the Spirit is leading us? Is our focus on the prize of being with Christ? Is our hope in heaven? Or are we doing what the Israelites did when they were in the wilderness? They, too, were delivered from being slaves and were being led by God through the wilderness to their promised land; but often they lost sight of the prize and instead longed to return to their old life of slavery. See **Exodus 13:17-18; 14:10-12; 16:1-3; 17:1-3; 31:18-32:4** and **Numbers 14:1-4, 11; 20:1-5; 21:4-5**.

We must remember that the Spirit has much to reveal to us about the excellencies of Christ, but He will not force it on us. He will allow us to hang on to the old life and all the misery that comes along with it. The Holy Spirit continues to lead through this "wilderness," seeking to reveal Christ to us more and more as He continues to lead us to Him. See **1 Corinthians 2:12**.

Part 3 – Christ and His Affection

Genesis 24:65 says that Rebekah looked up and asked who was walking out to meet them. This picture portrays Isaac as one who was waiting for and wanting to receive his bride. We often talk about the rapture in terms of our anticipation of going to be with Him, but have you ever stopped to think about His desires for us? How much He wants us to be with Him? How He longs to receive His bride? Not just us as a group, but US as individuals.

Think about it—this all began in the heart of God before the foundations of the earth. And when that day finally comes in **Revelation 19**, God will have spent thousands of years working, orchestrating, intervening, and carrying out His plan. Jesus came and fulfilled that plan through much pain and suffering and “ALL FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM”! The joy of one day receiving His glorious bride without spot or wrinkle.

Revelation 19:7 says, “*The marriage of the Lamb HAS COME.*” See **Hebrews 12:2** and **1 Thessalonians 4:16-18** – “*And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.*”

In this lesson, I believe we have been given a clear glimpse of the heart of God for His people, the affection that He has for His children, and Jesus’ love and anticipation to receive His bride!

To go deeper into this topic, read through Lesson 18 in the full Knowing God curriculum.