

Isaac

Who was this biblical character Isaac? Oh, we all know him to be the son of Abraham and the father of Jacob, but beyond that do we know, or care to know much more? Wasn't he merely the genealogical fill-in between Abraham, that great pillar of faith, that first Jew and recipient of God's covenant, and Jacob the father of the twelve tribes that became the nation of Israel? In examining carefully what is written about him in Scripture, and also by probing between the lines, it becomes evident that he was much more than this, and that God used him for a far greater purpose than is commonly understood. Isaac means "laughter" or "laughing one." Indeed, he was the man whose birth caused at least two laughs. His is one of the few cases where God announced the persons name. In the New Testament they were John the Baptist and Jesus.

Regarding his name, we find two instances of laughter that brought it about. First it was the laughter of incredulity by Sarah when she, at 89 years of age, heard God tell Abraham that he would have a son. Then it was 99-year-old Abraham's laughter of joy at this revelation by God. Isaac was the child of the covenant. This unilateral covenant regarding the land and his posterity was given to Abraham (Genesis 12:7) and reiterated by God to both Isaac (Genesis 26:4) and to Jacob (Genesis 28:18). Sarah's laughter soon passed into penitence and faith, (Genesis 21:6) as she saw the power and faithfulness of God's word.

How she must have loved this boy, her son that only God could have supernaturally provided at her age, a son she had yearned to have for so long, a son who would end the mockery and disdain that barren women suffered in those early years. God further blessed her by allowing her to see him attain full manhood. He was thirty-seven when she died. Her death caused both Isaac and Abraham great grief. We find in Genesis 24:7 that even though Sarah had died four years earlier, her own tent in Abrahams compound had been left intact, perhaps preserved as a temporary memorial, or because their continued grief prevented them from doing otherwise. This verse tells us "*...that 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." Isaac was 40 years of age when he married Rebekah who was the sister of Laban. Laban was the father of Jacobs's future wives, Rachel and Leah, and was one of the children of Bethuel who was the son of Nahor, who was Abraham's brother. To his great credit, Isaac was the only one of the patriarchs whom it seems, had but one wife. At least Scripture doesn't mention any other with whom he had children. However, I suspect that the same would have been true of Jacob, had Laban not tricked him into marrying Leah first, instead of Rachel, his one and only true love. It seems most fitting that as a type of Christ, he would have had but one bride, just as Jesus has.

While there is considerable evidence of faith and virtue revealed about Isaac's life, he too is shown to have possessed his share of fallen man's deceitful and wicked nature. Evidence of this seems to be when he and his wife Rebekah left their home in Lahairos due to a severe drought. They came to a place called Gerar in the land of the Philistines, the same place Abraham and Sarah had gone many years earlier for some other reason. Like father, like son, Isaac spoke the same lie his father had. He told the residents that Rebekah was his sister, just as Abraham had told them this about Sarah! The parallel continues as we find that Abimelech, King of the Philistines, intended to take Rebekah, just as the earlier King of the Philistines had taken Sarah around sixty-five year earlier. It appears that Abimelech was a title, similar to Pharaoh, rather than an actual name. This was very likely the earlier king's son. If we merely substitute the name Isaac for Abraham, this portion of the episode appears to be very much the same. Isaac had grown very rich and was feared by the Philistines while there, just as Abraham had been a generation earlier. Their fear in both cases stemmed mostly from the evident power of Abraham and Isaac's God as their great protector. Abraham had dug wells, which the natives stopped up after he died. Isaac also dug wells in the same general locations.

However, there are some differences about this story when compared with that which has been told regarding Abraham. First, we know that Abraham left Mamre to "*sojourn in Gerer*" after the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 20:12). There is no evidence given as to

why he chose to leave Mamre or to settle in Gerar. This place was in Philistia just over the border from Canaan, but nevertheless within the boundaries of the “promised land”. There was no famine that we read of that caused him to go there. In Isaac’s case there was a famine. When Abraham had gone to Egypt to escape the famine, he violated God’s original command to simply go into Canaan. It was implicit in that command that he stay there and not go anywhere else. In leaving because of the famine, he showed his lack of faith in God as a provider. God surely would have seen to his safety and to his physical needs even under famine conditions. In Isaac’s case God told him specifically not to go into Egypt, but to dwell in the land He would show him. It doesn’t appear that he ventured into Egypt, but he did go unto Philistia, a land outside of where God showed him. It seems that Gerar and its eastern surroundings was that place.

As the story goes, after his deceit regarding Rebekah, God warned Abimelech not to touch her because she was Isaac’s wife. This, and the fact that Isaac was prospering greatly in the land, caused Abimelech to fear Isaac. With the power of the almighty God so evidently favoring Isaac and with his increasing prosperity, Abimelech realized that he was a big and growing threat to him. Perhaps for this reason the Philistines proceeded to stop up the well that Abraham had dug, thus making Isaac’s staying there quite difficult. At the same time Abimelech said to him *“go from us for thou are much mightier than we”* (Genesis 26:16) Rather than argue the point as he well could have, Isaac simply moved eastward up the valley and dug a new well. The Philistines stopped it up also, so he moved again and they again stopped his well. So he moved a third time, actually over the border back into Canaan and dug again. This time Abimelech came to him asking for, and received, a mutual non-aggression treaty wherein neither party would ever hurt the other. Abraham and the earlier Abimelech had transacted a similar agreement.

I believe that all of this is worth mentioning because there is much to be learned here regarding Isaac’s character, wisdom and obedience. It may even be that he didn’t realize that Philistia was not part of Canaan. First, though more powerful than his adversary, we might say he repeatedly “turned the other cheek”, thereby expressing his humble forgiving character. He chose not to simply keep by force what he had, but instead he

chose to respect Abimelech's ownership of the land, and so moved from it. Probably for the same reason he moved again, even though the provocation became more bold and unreasonable. I call this humbleness rather than cowardness, given that it was clear that if he had chose to fight, he would have won. Second, his patience and self-restraint under such provocations must have been very difficult, and so speaks well of his character. Third, He was aware of the bigger picture. God had given him the wisdom to realize that to engage in such a war, would in the end, be a tragic mistake. Subduing Abimelech and his little kingdom would have brought the whole of Philistia down on him, and would have destroyed all he had, as well as jeopardize the continuance of the sacred covenant. God had told him, through His instruction to Abraham, to sojourn in the land, not to try to claim it by force. Thus we see another example of Isaac's godly ways. How sad it will be to read a little later, of how even such a man can severely backslide on occasions.

I feel compelled to revisit the "lie" issue and offer the results of some later musings regarding the matter. As with so many things, there is a tendency that we all share as humans to some degree, to look down from some "holier" perch and judge someone based on far too little understanding of the facts and circumstances. How often we draw strong conclusions without having first pondered the matter, prayed about it, and sought to examine it with sufficient care. In reading about Abraham, having lied about Sarah twice in order to save his skin, and then reading that Isaac did the same thing, I quickly and without much examining of facts judged them as sniveling cowards. Praise be to God, he called me to reconsiders and to seek a better understanding of those situations before I chose to play God and hold to such a judgment.

In Genesis 20, Abraham explained the covenant that he had made with Sarah and the reason for it. God had caused him to leave the safety of his own people and to travel into a completely foreign land filled with unknown dangers from both beast, and from men of potentially extremely hostile and covetous passions, especially regarding beautiful women. One thing that he seems to have known about the culture was that they would not take another man's wife that is, while she was someone's wife. Killing the husband however, was an acceptable practice for solving this minor problem. Entering

into such a culture was therefore extremely dangerous for a man with a pretty wife. But he had to do it because he was so commanded and didn't yet have the faith that God would surely protect him and Sarah. And since he didn't go on this journey with a protecting army, he knew that he would always be at the mercy of the community he happened to enter. As we examine this situation we see that whoever wanted Sarah would simply take her, "one way or an other" However, one way he might live, was if she was his sister, the other way, if he was her husband, he would surely die. If we look at this pragmatically and not focus on the sinful lie as the primary point of this episode, we can see that this deception was not all what we so quickly condemn it to be.

Remember this was way before the law was given, so there were as yet, no 10 commandments. Intuitively, lying was no doubt considered wrong even then, but under the circumstances, I am sure that this type of lie did not lay heavy on anyone's conscience any more than it does in our current culture. In their times I don't believe that such deception was subject to God's condemnation. Before the Law defined sin, only the very most sinful souls had any qualms about killing, stealing, or anything that was appropriate in their own eyes. After the Law, and further after the Old Testament Scriptures, the Law spelled out the whole nature of sin. Today, as Jesus amplified and further defined sin, we today have absolutely no right to plead ignorance of what wrong is. Yet most of the world refuses to so honor Jesus, and continues to so what it chooses in accordance with what they see is most expedient for them with little or no regard as to how sinful it may be.

As I have come to view this event, I cannot accuse either of these righteous men of cowardness, or in any way condemn their willingness to give up their wives for their own preservation. Dead, they could do nothing to save them. Alive, there might have been a chance to rescue them. Besides this, there was the covenant issue. As dead possessors of the covenant, it would be impossible to pass it down, because neither of them had yet to have had sons. The only problem was their lack of a complete faith in God, and his ability and willingness to protect them.

Sequentially, before those things occurred, Scripture tells us about the most outstanding event of Isaac's life, one that happened about seven years prior to his marriage to Rebekah. That is when we read of him as he accompanied Abraham up Mt. Moriah. We will get to that incredible scene in a moment.

The last we hear of Isaac is when he was 137 years old and nearly blind, and set in his ways. We get the impression that he may have drifted away from the great faith and obedience he had expressed in his earlier years. We see him as favoring his son Esau over his son Jacob, so much so that he became obsessed with giving him the covenant blessing that he knew very well God had made clear was to go to Jacob. It was only through the trickery conceived by Rebecca, and acquiesced to by Jacob, that thwarted his intent, and set this matter right. Of course, all of this was by God's permitted will. That is the last we read about Isaac, except that he lived as a blind man for another 45 years and died in 1716 BC. Putting aside this example of his human weakness for a moment, Scripture gives us many evidences of the highly commendable aspects of his character. Isaac's submission and faithfulness to God's will, may be found in Genesis 22:6,9; his spiritually directed meditation in Genesis 24:63; his instinctive trust of God in Genesis 22:7,8; his deep devotion in Genesis 24:67 and 25:21; his peacefulness in Genesis 26:20-22; his prayerfulness in Genesis 26:25; and his faith in Hebrews 11:16,17. We also find in Genesis 31:42, 53, "The fear of Isaac" which means that God was "tremblingly" adored by him.

Next, we should move on to discuss how Isaac was a type of Christ, as exemplified by his one moment of glory on Mount Moriah, and what then followed. However, let us first look more deeply into these last recorded activities of Isaac as found in Genesis 27 and Genesis 28:1-9, because these provide us with some interesting insights regarding how this very noble character and exceedingly faithful servant of God nevertheless did most seriously backslide, , if only for a short time. The scene of this last recorded drama in Isaac's life began in Genesis 27:5, when Rebekah overheard Isaac promising to give God's blessing to Esau when he would return with some venison that Isaac so loved to eat.

What a shock this was to Rebekah, because God had made it very clear at the birth of Jacob and Esau that even though Esau was the eldest, it was Jacob that was to receive the birth right and the great blessing, that is, the right to the Abrahamic covenant. (Genesis 25:23, “...*the older shall serve the younger.*”) There was no doubt that this was known to Isaac as well as both of his sons. If there is any doubt of the clarity and meaning of this statement as they would have understood it, we need only to look at Malachi 1:3 where God revealed that He hated Esau and loved Jacob. I doubt if that unvarnished expression of God’s attitude was withheld from them, and only to be revealed to us much later by the prophet. The reason for this condemnation of Esau was found in God’s foreknowledge of what Esau and his descendents would become, and how they would never stop hating and hurting Jacob’s descendents. That hating and hurting has been continuous to this day, currently being expressed by Israel’s neighbors, many of whom are Esau’s descendents.

Rebekah truly loved Isaac and she knew that if he went through with this he would be defying God’s ordained will. This was something she could not allow for the sake of God’s purpose for Jacob, and for her fear of what God would do to Isaac as his just punishment. All we read about Esau and his descendents is about as ungodly as it gets. He distained his birthright by selling it for a bowl of soup. Back 25 years earlier he had married two Hittite women giving both of his parents great grief evidencing his disdain for God’s will and his parents desires. Now, however, he wanted the covenant blessing, perhaps because he knew that it really should go to Jacob. He had distained his birthright that by tradition was rightly his because he was the eldest son. It is unlikely that the covenant blessing had much value to him either, except to keep it from Jacob.

It is evident that Isaac related better to Esau and favored him more than he did Jacob. Esau was a man’s man, a “cunning” man, a hunter, and a woodsman, strong, bold and resolute. Jacob on the other hand was a “plain man living in tents” a shepherd (Genesis 25:27). As far as Isaac was concerned, he lacked those more “manly” qualities that Isaac admired in Esau. Because of this it must have troubled him to accept what God had

ordained regarding which son should be first. After all the common rule was that the eldest was the one to whom the family leadership was to be given by birthright. It was a long time ago (75 years) when God had announced His preference. As far as we know, God had been silent regarding this matter since then. Because of this, perhaps Jacob had rationalized that it was no longer that important. He knew that Esau had already lost his birthright to Jacob, so in order to even this up, giving the covenant blessing to Esau seemed quite fair. However in whatever manner he may have sifted this out in his own mind, it is clear that he was determined to favor Esau in this matter.

As we read of the relevant events, we see that the scheme Rebekah “cooked up” worked, and so Jacob did get the blessing. It may seem strange to us that even after Isaac realized he had been tricked into doing it, that he felt compelled to honor the validity of what he had given Jacob. In that culture, an oath or a decree once given, regardless of the circumstances or subsequent regrets could not be rescinded. We find similar instances in the books of Esther and Daniel. Could it be that as he checked out who it was who was serving him the meat, that he realized what was going on, and that this was Rebekah’s and Jacob’s desperate attempt to get him to do what he knew God had decreed? It is difficult to believe that he was really convinced that it was Esau and not Jacob serving him. He recognized Jacob’s voice and from years of experience would have recognized Rebekah’s cooking as well as the difference between goat and deer meat. It doesn’t seem possible to me that Jacob was fooled for long.

I suspect that he knew, and realized that this was his much loved and loving wife’s attempt to prevent him from doing that which they both knew was contrary to God’s will. Could Isaac’s trembling “very exceedingly” been because he realized how close he had come to violating God’s command? We read in Genesis 28 that the blessing on Jacob was sustained. However he also chose, as a result of Esau’s passionate request to provide him with a very substantial though earthly rather than spiritual blessing. That we see no wrath in Isaac is evident by the fact that he again blessed Jacob, this time with even stronger words of love and detailed expressions of the Abrahamic covenant. This clearly was now Jacobs, as he sent him off in obedience to a seek a wife from within the family

bloodline. Then we see again Esau's disdain for his father as he, in defiance, married two more women, this time Ishmaelite. This was an even further merging of his descendants into what became the Arabic people. Except for a notation about his death, that is about all we ever again heard about Isaac in his later life.

Now, let's get to something awesome, not just about Isaac, but about how God used a portion of his life story to portray him as a type of Christ. You have probably heard some of this before, but there is more! If you love Jesus and relish His blessed Word, and how it all fits together so beautifully, fasten your seat belt, you'll need it!

We all know about how Isaac carried the wood up Mt. Moriah helping his father Abraham carry out God's instructions regarding the making of a sacrifice. We know too that it was Isaac that was to be sacrificed as evidence of Abraham's total submission and absolute faith in God. We of course, see this as an advanced enactment of what God would do to His own Son 1896 years later at the very same location. However, let us consider some of the more subtle facts that attest to God having very carefully designed this portion of Isaac's life story to be this type of Christ.

1. As noted above, Isaac carried the wood up the hill on which he was to be sacrificed. So also did Jesus carry up the same hill the wood on which He would be sacrificed. Just as Isaac was placed as a sacrifice on the wood carried up the hill, so would Jesus be placed as a sacrifice on the wood He carried up that same hill.
2. Isaac was 33 years old when this event occurred, the same age as was Jesus when He was sacrificed! The common belief that Isaac was merely a boy is not true. Careful examination of the chronology strictly from Scriptural evidence, attests to his being 33 years old at the time of the event. He was 37 when his mother died, and 40 years old when he married Rebekah. We learn this as a result of the biblical scholarship of Dr. Floyd Nolan Jones as found in his masterful work titled, *The Chronology of the Old Testament*, 16th Edition, 2005.

3. At that age, there is no way that 123 year old Abraham could have tied him and held him down on the altar in order to commence the sacrifice. It was complete submission and faith in God at least equal to, and perhaps greater than that of Abraham that caused Isaac to so yield, to offer no resistance, and to allow happen what God directed should happen. Abraham was about to stab him to death and then burn him as a sacrifice. Even though this was evident to Isaac, he just laid there in complete submission, willing to allow it to happen. I believe that many miss this important point because of the mistaken belief that he was a mere boy and had no power to resist. The Son of man Jesus, also offered no resistance to what His Father had ordained, as he suffered the attachment to the tree, the wood, which He also carried up that hill. We read no evidences of protest by Isaac. He was silent and totally submissive, as was Jesus during His entire ordeal, even though both had the power to effectively resist or to prevent, had they sought to.

4. As God instructed Abraham before the journey, notice that in Genesis 22:2, God says, *“take thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest.”* In John 3:16 God also gave his only begotten Son that He “so loved” as a sacrifice. Notice also that here is the first mention in Scripture of the word “love.” Scholars have observed what they call the “principal of first mention.” This suggests that there is a major significance, a highly instructional purpose to be found regarding the meaning of such key words the first time they appear in Scripture. Generally the context in which the word was first used set the pattern for its primary usage and development through out the rest of Scripture.

I suspect that this deliberate insertion of love at the beginning of this prophetic saga may be just that. Notice God already indentified whom he should take. He had only one legitimate son, Isaac the son of the promise. Ishmael was long gone some 20-25 years earlier, so He didn't need any qualifier to make His words unmistakably clear. *“Thy son, thine only son:”* Isaac, as the son of the promise, was the only son God recognized as a legitimate son. Ishmael was a son of the flesh, therefore not qualified in this case to be part of God's sacred purpose.

Remember Abraham had much affection toward Ishmael, and grieved greatly over his forced departure. Affectually, Abraham had only one son at this time. Abraham's love had to have been very strong for Isaac, as it is here firmly established. It had to be so, in order for him to have had the veracity of a prophetic type of Jesus. Nothing but an only son, and one greatly loved would suffice for this sacrifice, just as God loved and sacrificed His only Son!

Let's look a little further into this first use of the word love. One might have expected it to be in regard to a man's love for his wife, or a mother's for her children, or man's love for God. But here it's the love of the father for his son! And also, it's a love for the son whom he is about to kill! Do you get the connection? As Abraham effectually, in his heart, gave up his only son to deadly sacrifice, so also did God give up His only Son in deadly sacrifice. Thus it's the love of the Father for His Son Jesus that sets the primary application of the word love. All who are born-again also become His sons and daughters, and are therefore inheritors of that same love!

Here's one more "goose bumps maker" regarding this Fatherly love. Notice where and in what context the word love first appears in the synoptic Gospels. The first occurrence is in Matthew 3:17 where God speaks from heaven about his beloved Son! It's in Mark 1:11 where we are told that again. Then in Luke 3:22 it is also repeated. Need we even mention the first use of the word "love" as it occurs in the Gospel of John? It's in John 3:16. There God expresses His love for us! For us, whom He loves enough to have sacrificed His only beloved Son!! How many more of these amazing "coincidences" do we need in order to be fully convinced that this Book, in its entirety, every "jot and tittle", every letter, word, and thought, is all by divine authorship?!!

5. Now it gets more subtle. Notice that in the continuing narration, Isaac is conspicuously absent. Abraham came down from the mountain, and he, along with his servants, went home. (Genesis 22:19). Where is Isaac? Didn't he go

home also? Of course he did, but the Holy Spirit has chosen to expunge him from the narration, for a while. Why? You'll love it when you find out.

6. Next, after Sarah's death, we find Abraham arranging with his oldest servant, "that ruled all that he had," his chief assistant (Genesis 24:2) to go and arrange for a wife for Isaac. In the progression of this commission, as the servant who never spoke of himself, he found Rebecca by supernatural appointment. We clearly see God's prophetic "touch" as we read how the events unfolded. The servant's name is not mentioned here. We know his name only if we remember, and look back in Genesis 15:2 before Abram became Abraham, and where he is pleading to God to give him a son, otherwise his entire estate would go to this chief servant Eliezer. Eliezer means "God of my help," or often spoken of as "the comforter." In this story we can easily see him as a type of the Holy Spirit both in his demeanor and in his dealing with the bride of Christ. (John 14:46) Isn't the Holy Spirit out in the world today, seeking and preparing (sanctifying) those who will be the Bride of Christ? The Holy Spirit never speaks of Himself, only of Jesus. The Holy Spirit's type, Eliezer never speaks of himself either. What character, integrity, loyalty, and selflessness this man had! Remember, he and his family were heirs of all of Abraham's wealth if anything bad happened to Isaac.

7. Now, after this long exclusion of Isaac from the story, we find Isaac mentioned again as he meditates in a field at "eventide" This meditation by definition was pondering or perhaps praying, as this was the normal time of prayer. That is when he saw and went to meet his mutual-love-at-first-sight bride, Rebekah as she was coming with Eliezer. How does this fit in as a Jesus type? On the altar of sacrifice, we might consider Isaac as dead, as was Jesus on the cross. Therefore Isaac is not mentioned again until he goes out of his home to meet his bride. Jesus, after his ascension, is seen no more until He goes to meet His bride, the Church. At the Rapture, the Comforter, that is the Holy Spirit, has finished His work regarding the Bride. Eliezer's work is finished once he delivers his bride to Isaac. Christ's intense love of His bride, and she for Him are also a part of this

parallelism. Jesus will leave His Father's house and go out to meet His bride from the cloud as she has been led by the Holy Spirit to meet Him.

8. Notice where Isaac took his bride? He took her home to Sarah's tent, effectually to one of his Father's homes, just as Jesus will take His bride to His Father's house, and "its many mansions".

The great pastor teacher, writer and lecturer C.I. Schofield saw some of these parallelisms and put them in the following very concise, beautifully referenced summary form for our further edification:

- Abraham – type of a certain king who would make a marriage for his son (Matthew 22:2, John 6:44).
 - The unnamed servant – type of the Holy Spirit who does not speak of or from himself, but talks of the things of the bridegroom with which to win the bride (John 16:13, 14).
 - The servant – type of the Spirit as bringing the bride to the meeting with the bridegroom (Acts 13:4; 16:6, 7; Romans 8:11; 1Thessalonians 4:14-17).
 - Rebekah – type of the church, the "ecclesia", the called out virgin bride of Christ (Genesis 24:16; 2Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32).
 - Isaac – type of the bridegroom "whom having not seen" the bride loves through the testimony of the unnamed servant (1Peter 1:8).
 - Isaac – type of the bridegroom who goes out to meet and receive His bride (Genesis 24:63; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17).
9. I think I'll just add "one more for the road," as boozers used to say. In Genesis 22:4 we learn that it was on the third day after God had told Abraham to sacrifice his son that they reached Mt. Moraih and proceeded with the sacrifice. Knowing the absolute faith of Abraham, we can conclude that from a mental-physical perspective, he considered Isaac as good as dead from the moment God commanded him to perform this sacrifice. There is no doubt, that short of some countermanding message from

God, Abraham was fully committed to the act. It was on the third day, when God cut short the plunge of the knife aimed at Isaac's heart. At the moment, in Abraham's mind, God resurrected, that is, brought Isaac back to life. He brought him back to the living. This may be considered as a parallel to Jesus' three days of physical death prior to His resurrection. Is it a stretch to add this to the list of similtudes by making note of this parallel of 3 days? There doesn't seem to be any other relevance to the three days, yet everything in Scripture is relevant, or it wouldn't be there. Because of this, I believe that it is there in order to provide yet another subtle allusion to Isaac as being a type of Christ, all the way from His death to His resurrection.

10. I'm sorry, but I must confess that I am a severely committed drunkard, as well as a glutton. So I just have to have another one, "just one more for the road". I'm a drunkard in the sense that I am always insatiably thirsty for the Living Water, and I drink so much that I'm usually literally floating in it. Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that if she but drank of this Water that He could give her, she need never to thirst again. Yet as I drink this precious Water, my thirst for it only increases. It's the thirst of wanting to know ever more about my Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. I believe that my gluttony is best expressed as the "Jeremiah problem". Jeremiah, in his book Chapter 15, verse 16 tells God "*Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts*".

11. Until then, Jeremiah had never seen a Bible, that is the Torah. King Manasseh, who reigned for 55 years had, early on, destroyed every copy known to have existed. By the time his grandson Josiah became king, essentially no one even knew that there was such a book. However, in Josiah's eighteenth year as King, a copy was found hidden in the temple. Jeremiah was there at that time, and I believe that the verse quoted above is his report to God as to how this first reading of it affected him. It so happens, that about the same amount of time that Torah was absent from Judah, so too was the Holy Bible absent from me. I passed through seven decades of life before

I “found” it, and then “I did eat it”, experiencing the same results of which Jeremiah spoke. I have continued to eat it with the same insatiable, gluttonous hunger.

After this long side trip away from the subject, what is this last “one for the road”? It has to do with the servant and Rebekah being a type of the Holy Spirit and of the church, respectively. For the sake of brevity, (if there is any such thing in me) the relevant scriptural verses are not quoted. Therefore, if the reader is to understand this, a careful follow-along reading of Genesis Chapter 25 is recommended, along with a study of how ancient Hebrew marriages were arranged.

Notice first that Abraham sent the unnamed servant to find, prepare, and set up the requirements for his son Isaac to finally obtain a suitable bride. There was no Bride for Christ Jesus until the Father sent the Holy Spirit, the unnamed servant out to find, and to prepare His Bride. Jesus’ Bride was\is to be found among those willing to believe, and to thereby become redeemed, and become the Church. We can say that the Holy Spirit “finds” those who are to be the Bride and then begins “her” preparation, otherwise known as sanctification.

The journey to find Jesus’” Bride began when the Holy Spirit traveled from the Father’s house in heaven, and journeyed to the earth, arriving on Pentecost to begin this work. However before there could be a Bride, it was customary and necessary that an appropriate payment, that is a purchase price needed to be paid to the father. As soon as the servant had determined that Rebekah was qualified, the Scripture tells us that the servant gave the purchase price, a part of Isaac’s future inheritance, to Rebekah’s mother, (Affectually, this was a payment to her father.) It was necessary for our Lord Jesus, the Son of God to pay the purchase price of the bride before she could be his. This price was paid by Jesus in blood to the Father, who then also became the spiritual Father of the bride. This was so that His justice could be satisfied and her purification (remission of sin) could be affected. Only then could the Holy Spirit begin his work. Of course, we know that Jesus paid in full on the cross, the demanded price for His bride.

As soon as Rebekah accepted the proposal, the servant began to prepare her. He gave her gold, silver, jewels, and fine raiment. So doesn't the Holy Spirit, in preparation for the wedding, clothe the Bride of Christ in the finest white raiment, and provide her with many richest, namely great blessings, as well as opportunities to provide golden crowns to later lay at the Bridegroom's feet? On the long trip, most certainly Rebekah asked many questions about her future bridegroom so that she could know all she could about him, and what he would expect of her. As she learned of his most righteous ways, his loyalty to his father, and his uncompromising strength of faith, she surely must have grown to love him more and more, long before she even saw him. Isn't the process as here described, strongly expressive of what goes on between the Holy Spirit and the Bride of Christ as she moves along during her life journey of sanctification?

Doesn't the Holy Spirit teach her all about Jesus, her Bridegroom? As saved souls that make up the many segments of the Bride of Christ move on through mortal life, don't they also have an insatiable hunger for knowledge about Jesus? And doesn't the Holy Spirit eagerly provide this by opening their eyes to the meaning of Scripture as part of their preparation for this eternal union? As these teachings by the Holy Spirit proceed, the Bride continues to grow in knowledge and love of her coming Bridegroom, Jesus. This continues to the very end of her earthly journey when she finally meets Him and He takes her home. Just as Abraham knew that he was acting out prophesy when he took his son up Mt. Mariah, so also, I believe, that the servant, Rebekah, and Isaac each knew that, in some way, this episode as recorded, was also an enactment of prophesy.

Can there be anything more beautiful and inspiring in all of Scripture than such illustrations that attests to the foreknowledge of God, and to His often subtle, but continuous Old Testament references to the future coming of our Lord and Savior? We see this most clearly through some prophecies, and also indirectly through others, as well as through episodes such as this. Scholars have found over one hundred ways in which Joseph is revealed as a type of Jesus, and other ways in which Moses, Joshua and others were similarly observed as to have been representative types of Jesus. These quite effectually support the premise that the New Testament is concealed in the Old

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Testament, and how beautifully the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament! I pray that you will find as much a blessing for yourself as I did in this precious likeness of a small segment of Jesus' life tucked away so cleverly in this story about Isaac.