FINDING THE BRIDE

A Devotional Meditation on CHAYEI SARAH (LIFE OF SARAH)

Genesis 23:1-25:18; 1 Kings 1:1-31; Isaiah 56:6-8; Jeremiah 31:31-34;
Matthew 9:37-11:1; Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 2:11-22; Hebrews 8:8-12

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When Messiah Yeshua sent his disciples out to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, he was following the precedent established by his ancestor Abraham. Both sent emissaries on missions with strict instructions about where they were to go and what they were to do. In a sense, they were the same mission, with Yeshua's disciples carrying the mission of Abraham's servant to the next level of God's redemptive plan.



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The instructions Abraham gave to his servant are in Genesis:

> Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac." The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.
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> Genesis 24:1-9 ESV

Notice the exclusive nature of the mission: the bride would only be found among the members of Abrahams extended family, so there was no point in looking among the Canaanites. That's similar to what Yeshua told his disciples:

> These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold or silver or copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics or sandals or a staff, for the laborer deserves his

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food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

"Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. . . When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes."

Matthew 10:5-16, 23 ESV

The link with Abraham is Yeshua's instructions about going to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. The bride Abraham sought for Isaac was Rebecca, the woman who would become the mother of Jacob. It was Jacob whom God renamed Israel, and who fathered the Covenant Nation through whom God is bringing redemption to the world.

We know that the Redeemer is Yeshua, that he is the Messiah of Israel, and that his atoning work on the cross was for salvation not only of the Jews, but all nations. What we don't understand very well is how that happens.

It's a legal matter involving adoption and inheritance, among other things. God promised Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, and that in his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed. Abraham did have many sons, and all of them became fathers of nations, but the true blessing came through Isaac, the heir to the Covenant promise. His descendants, the nation of Israel, proved unfaithful to the covenant, which is why God scattered them literally into the entire world.

The Jewish people remained identifiable as the core of God's Covenant people, but most of Israel's tribes lost their identity when they mixed with the nations. Those are the lost sheep of the House of Israel Yeshua sent his disciples to find. Since they were mixed with the nations, their adoption and restoration into the Covenant nation opened the way for all nations to be adopted into Israel as well. That's why the New Covenant God activated through Messiah's blood is made exclusively with the House of Judah and the House of Israel, and why all who pledge allegiance to Israel's Messiah become part of his Covenant people.

This is the bride of Messiah. It's much bigger than our understanding of the church as the Bride of Christ, or the Jews as God's Bride of Israel. This is all the redeemed joined at last into one people and united with the Bridegroom.

This is the blessed hope we all await. It's not a passive waiting, though. Until the Bridegroom comes, we still have the mission of finding his Bride.

This meditation was inspired in part by *The Echoes Bible,* vol. I, *Genesis & Matthew*. *The Echoes Bible* is available at https://www.echoesbible.com/.