

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *JESUS IN ME*

ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ
& RACHEL-RUTH LOTZ WRIGHT

PREPARING TO MEET JESUS

SNEAK
PEEK



SAMPLE
ONLY

A 21-DAY CHALLENGE UNCORRECTED
PROOF

TO MOVE YOUR FAITH FROM
SALVATION TO TRANSFORMATION

BOOKS BY ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ

Jesus Followers (co-authored
with Rachel-Ruth Lotz
Wright)

The Light of His Presence

*Jesus in Me: Experiencing
the Holy Spirit as a
Constant Companion*

*The Vision of His Glory:
Finding Hope Through the
Revelation of Jesus Christ
God's Story*

*Just Give Me Jesus
Pursuing MORE of Jesus*

Heaven: My Father's House

*Why? Trusting God When
You Don't Understand*

*The Magnificent Obsession:
Embracing the God-Filled
Life*

*Expecting to See Jesus:
A Wake-Up Call for
God's People*

*Wounded by God's People:
Discovering How God's Love
Heals Our Hearts*

*The Daniel Prayer:
Prayer That Moves Heaven
and Changes Nations*

*The Daniel Key:
Twenty Choices That Make
All the Difference*

*The Joy of My Heart:
Meditating Daily on
God's Word*

*Fixing My Eyes on Jesus:
Daily Moments in His Word*

Into the Word

Daily Light

*Storming the Gates of
Heaven: Prayer That Claims
the Promises of God*

CHILDREN'S BOOK

*Heaven:
God's Promise for Me*

Preparing *to* Meet Jesus



*A 21-Day Challenge
to Move from Salvation
to Transformation*

Anne Graham Lotz
and
Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright



MULTNOMAH

PREPARING TO MEET JESUS

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978 by Biblica Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. (www.zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica Inc.™ Scripture quotations marked (NKJV) are taken from the New King James Version®.

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission.

All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2023 by Anne Graham Lotz and

Rachel-Ruth Lotz Wright

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Multnomah, an imprint of Random House, a division of Penguin Random House LLC.

MULTNOMAH® and its mountain colophon are registered trademarks of Penguin Random House LLC.

Published in association with the literary agency of Alive Literary Agency, 5001 Centennial Blvd., No. 50742, Colorado Springs, CO 80908, www.aliveliterary.com.

Hardback ISBN 978-0-525-65195-6

Ebook ISBN 978-0-525-65228-1

The Cataloging-in-Publication Data is on file with the Library of Congress.

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper

waterbrookmultnomah.com

2 4 6 8 9 7 5 3 1

ScoutAutomatedPrintCode

First Edition

Book design by Susan Turner

SPECIAL SALES Most Multnomah books are available at special quantity discounts when purchased in bulk by corporations, organizations, and special-interest groups. Custom imprinting or excerpting can also be done to fit special needs. For information, please email specialmarketscms@penguinrandomhouse.com.

Hallelujah!
For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.

Revelation 19:6–7

CONTENTS



INTRODUCTION: The One the Father Seeks	00
DAY 1 A Family Member	00
DAY 2 Faithful in the Day-to-Day	00
DAY 3 Beautiful . . . on the Inside	00
DAY 4 Purified	00
DAY 5 Spiritually Filled	00
DAY 6 Kind	00
DAY 7 A Humble Servant	00
DAY 8 Responsive to Needs	00
DAY 9 Honest	00
DAY 10 Motivated	00
DAY 11 Unashamed	00
DAY 12 Hospitable	00
DAY 13 Eager to Share	00
DAY 14 Authentic	00
DAY 15 A Good Listener	00
DAY 16 Submissive	00
DAY 17 A Blessing to Others	00

DAY 18	Committed	00
DAY 19	Perseverant	00
DAY 20	Focused	00
DAY 21	Beloved	00
EPILOGUE: Preparing to Meet Jesus		00
NOTES		00

INTRODUCTION



The One the Father Seeks

JESUS IS COMING! ALL INDICATORS POINT TO THE FACT that His return is imminent. While expectancy among people of faith worldwide is at a fever pitch, I wonder if you and I are actually prepared for that world-changing, history-altering, heart-stopping moment in time?

Again and again, the Bible tells us that Jesus will come suddenly . . . quickly . . . like a thief in the night . . . and that His followers need to be prepared to meet Him at any moment.

I became a follower of Jesus when I was a young girl. In response to a movie depicting His life, I knelt by my bed in prayer. I knew with deep conviction that the horror of the Cross I had just watched portrayed on television was my fault. Jesus had died in order to take away my sin

and forgive me for all the wrong things I had done. I was acutely aware that if I had been the only sinner in need of saving, He would still have died just for me. So in fear and trembling, I told Him I was sorry for my sin, asked for His forgiveness, and invited Him to come into my heart.

While I was too young to understand the full ramifications of that decision, I had an immediate sense of relief, peace, and joy, as though a burden had been lifted, one I hadn't realized I was carrying. With a heart full of love and gratitude for the One who died for me, I began a lifelong journey to know Him, to serve Him, to obey Him, to please Him, to follow Him, to glorify Him more fully every day.

Now, not only because of my age but also as world events line up with the signs Jesus gave us to indicate we are living at the end of human history, I know with certainty that I will soon meet Him face-to-face. I live on the tiptoe of expectancy that at any moment I might see the One "who loved me and gave himself for me."¹ And I believe that He, too, is filled with eager anticipation as He looks forward to meeting the bride His Father has sought for Him.

The Subject of the Search

What comes to mind as you consider your relationship with Jesus? Did you know that He's not looking to see

how well you follow a list of dos and don'ts? Did you know that a genuine connection with Him transcends denominations and organizations and traditions and rituals? Did you know that it's about an intimate love relationship, like the one between a bridegroom and his bride? In fact, the Bible refers to followers of Jesus as His bride.

Like any bride, I'm a little nervous about meeting the Bridegroom.

I remember the day I married Danny Lotz. My father, who never came upstairs to my bedroom, suddenly appeared in the doorway. He sat on the bed beside me as I told him how nervous and fearful I was. Would Danny find me pleasing? He was almost twelve years older than I was. He had waited a long time to get married. Would I be all he had been longing for in a bride? My father assured me that I would; then he put his arms around me and prayed for me. God answered that prayer. When we met later that evening at the altar, the smile on Danny's face stretched almost from ear to ear!

While I'm eager to see Jesus in person, once again I find myself a little nervous. He has waited a very long time for the wedding. What will that first face-to-face moment be like? Will I be all that He has been looking for . . . longing for . . . in a bride? Will I be pleasing to Him?

That question is of such critical significance that I don't want to leave anything to chance. I want to be ready. I want to prepare now to meet Jesus.

What about you? As you consider meeting Him, what hopes and fears surface from the recesses of your heart? Do you wonder whether He'll be pleased or disappointed as His eyes fall on you? What will be the expression on His face when He sees you? Do you even know what He is looking for in a bride?

If you are a male reader, while you recognize Jesus as your Savior, your dearest Friend, your divine Companion, and your Lord and Master, it may seem a little off-putting to think of Him as your Bridegroom. Let me put you at ease. This is the way He described Himself.² Jesus used this term to underscore the fact that our relationship with Him is a love relationship, and the Bible uses the analogy of marriage to describe our relationship with Jesus. Following a well-known passage about marriage, Ephesians 5:32 reveals, "This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church." The church—not the organized church that assembles in buildings, but the collective followers of Jesus—is His bride.

Each of us enters into this relationship when we put our trust in Jesus at the "marriage altar" of the Cross. So whether male or female, Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, weak or strong, young or old, we are each in-

vited to come to the altar, say yes to Jesus, make our vow of commitment to honor, obey, and love Him as long as we live, then enjoy life as the bride of the Son of God, looking forward with eager expectancy to the wedding supper of the Lamb.³

THE INITIATIVE

To be clear, God the Father will not settle for just any bride for His Son. He's looking for one that is holy, cleansed of sin, and at peace with Him.⁴ This search for the bride of His choice is illustrated by a beautiful story recorded in Genesis 24 that describes the effort one father made to find the perfect bride for his beloved son. And although the story is a true one, it is also an incredible analogy of our heavenly Father, who has made the supreme effort to find the perfect bride for His Son.

The Genesis account tells of Abraham, whose son Isaac would one day inherit the unique promises, blessings, and covenant relationship with God that had been given to Abraham. As a godly father, Abraham knew it was of preeminent importance that his son have a godly wife. So he took the initiative to search for one.

I have to smile as I remember the initiative my own father took to find a godly husband for me. The first week of the summer following my graduation from high

school, I was free to go out, which I did. Every night. With the same guy. Daddy, who happened to be home at the time rather than traveling as he often did, became alarmed. He knew that the Fellowship of Christian Athletes was having its annual conference across the valley from our home, so he placed a call to the national director and asked if there was a Christian athlete who would take me to one of their meetings. The result? On the last night of the conference, I went to the closing meeting with Danny Lotz. He was the son of a New York City preacher, had won the NCAA basketball championship on an undefeated team at the University of North Carolina, had finished dental school, and was a captain in the air force whose commander allowed him to volunteer for all the FCA summer conferences.

Because my father had arranged for this date, I didn't take it seriously, which meant I was very relaxed. I didn't try to impress Danny in the least. What I found interesting was that we were very comfortable with each other. As we talked, we discovered that we enjoyed the same type of music and the same kinds of foods. But most important, we shared the same faith, which became very apparent at the FCA event. We were led in lively worship, and I was thrilled by the sound of about eight hundred male athletes all singing at the top of their lungs, accentuating their music by stomping their feet and clapping their hands. Then we

listened to testimonies given by well-known professional and college athletes. All in all, it was a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Since Danny returned the next morning to Holloman Air Force Base in New Mexico, I thought that was that.

About one month after our initial date, Danny came to visit on leave. Once again, my father was home, and he and Danny seemed to really hit it off. By contrast, I was still somewhat uninterested, primarily because of Danny's age and the fact I was headed to college that fall.

My third meeting with Danny was in Denver, Colorado. I had been at a leadership training institute in California and stopped in Denver to see Daddy and attend the crusade he was holding there. Danny, who had just completed his military commitment and been discharged from the air force, drove up from New Mexico to meet me.

We spent the day together touring the spectacular Rockies nearby; then Danny drove me back to my hotel. As we enjoyed an ice cream soda in the hotel coffee shop, I was taken aback when Danny told me he was in love with me and wanted to marry me. This was our third date! I told him I couldn't care less. He asked if he could pursue the relationship, and I told him it was a free country so he could do what he wanted, but I wasn't going to encourage him.

Afterward I went straight to my father's room and told him what Danny had said. I thought for sure he would pick up the phone and tell Danny it was time for him to leave. Instead, Daddy looked at me and said, "Anne, I think Danny Lotz is the man you are going to marry." Talk about a shock! But deep down, while I can't explain why, I knew what Daddy said was right. A little more than a year later, Danny and I were married, entering into a relationship that lasted until his death forty-nine years later. I will always be grateful that Daddy took the initiative to find a godly man for me.

While I don't necessarily recommend fathers doing what mine did, I can appreciate why Abraham took the initiative to find a godly wife for his son Isaac. Singleness wasn't an option for Isaac, since God had promised Abraham a multitude of descendants through Isaac, who was uniquely the son of promise. This implied that Isaac would have children and therefore would need a wife. But Abraham and Isaac lived in the land of the Canaanites, wicked people given over to obscene, pornographic behavior. Where could a godly woman be found for Isaac to marry? The people who came to Abraham's mind were his own extended family, who lived in Haran, more than 450 miles away.⁵

Since Abraham was too old for such a long journey, he made a bold decision and called for "the chief servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he

had.”⁶ While we can’t be certain, it seems likely that this is Eliezer, the servant who would have inherited Abraham’s estate had there been no natural descendant.⁷

THE INSTRUCTIONS

When the servant answered Abraham’s summons, he received not the customary gracious greeting but a very solemn charge: “I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”⁸

The servant responded by respectfully asking a logical question: “What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?”⁹ It would seem highly improbable that a young woman suited to be Isaac’s wife would accept a proposal presented by the servant of an unknown relative and forsake her friends, her father’s house, her country, and all that was familiar, and travel hundreds of miles to marry someone she knew nothing about.

But Abraham didn’t waver. He assured the servant that God would “send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there.”¹⁰ Abraham was

completely confident that God would help the servant on this critical mission, because he was confident that God also wanted a godly wife for his son. As the heir to God's promises and God's covenant, Isaac needed a suitable helper in raising a godly son who would also inherit the covenant blessings. If the servant found the woman and for any reason she was unwilling to accept Abraham's offer of his son, then the servant was released from his obligation and his oath to bring her back.¹¹

When Abraham had finished giving the instructions, his servant "took ten of his master's camels and left, taking with him all kinds of good things from his master"—gold, jewelry, linens, silks, spices, and other costly items.¹² Once the servant found the right person, he'd need to make the absent bridegroom attractive to her, so he planned to shower her with gifts to give her some idea of the greatness and wealth of the son and his father.

The Significance of the Search

After a long journey through desert wasteland, bandit territory, and rock-strewn wilderness, the servant finally arrived in the city of Nahor, a suburb of Haran. Fully committed to his task, the servant wasted no time. He went to the city well and had his camels

kneel down.¹³ He knew there was no better place to find the woman he was seeking than where women gathered each evening to draw water for their households.

THE PLACE

While the well was a literal, physical place to draw water, it also has symbolic significance. The Bible describes many divine meetings that took place at a well.¹⁴ The Lord met Hagar at a well when she was running away from Abraham's wife, Sarah. There He established a personal relationship with her. Later, when Hagar was on the desert road after leaving Abraham's household with her son, Ishmael, the Lord provided water from a well and promised to bless her and her son.¹⁵ Abraham's grandson Jacob met the love of his life, Rachel, at a well, where he promptly kissed her.¹⁶ While fleeing from Pharaoh, Moses sat down at a well, where he met his future wife.¹⁷ Beside a well, Gideon heard from God, who commanded him to reduce his army of thirty-two thousand men to three hundred before they were given victory over the invading enemy.¹⁸

But perhaps the most meaningful of these events took place at Jacob's well in Samaria. In the heat of the noonday sun, a travel-weary Jesus encountered a woman who had come to draw water. He asked her for a drink. In the resulting conversation, Jesus revealed

that physical water doesn't satisfy the thirst of the heart and soul. He then clearly stated that anyone who drank the water He offered would never thirst again, because "the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."¹⁹ Later, Scripture makes clear that the water He was referring to was the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit.²⁰ The woman was amazed! She ran to tell those who lived in her city that she had met the Messiah, and the entire population came out to the well to meet Him.²¹

Life-changing well encounters still occur today. The prophet Isaiah exclaimed, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."²² When we place our faith in Jesus as Savior and Lord and receive Him into our hearts in the person of the Holy Spirit, we also are receiving through Him the well of living water Jesus described to the Samaritan woman. A spring wells up in us, bringing joy, peace, love, hope, and what I would describe as a vibrancy to life itself.

The well can also symbolize a place to meet with other followers of Jesus, where God does significant things in our lives. It's striking to me that my parents met each other at the "well" of a prayer meeting. My husband's parents met at the "well" of a church service. I met my husband at the "well" of a Fellowship of Christian Athletes meeting. My two daughters also each met their husbands at the "well" of FCA.

Just as Abraham's servant knew that the best way to find Isaac's bride was to be where the women gathered, if we want to experience life-giving relationships with those who will help us love Jesus more fully and trust Him more completely, we need to put ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren in a place where we can meet other followers of Jesus, such as at a Bible study, church, Christian youth group, or fellowship meetings. This is true not only in our quest for trustworthy, lifelong friends but also in the search for a godly spouse.

THE PRAYER

As he waited at the well after his long journey, the servant prayed with great humility and expectancy: "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."²³

The servant's request was somewhat unreasonable. Many young women who came to draw water would probably have given a drink to a hot, dusty,

thirsty traveler if he asked. But it would have been almost beyond imagination for anyone to offer to water his camels also, unless God intervened and moved her heart to do so.

The spring of water on the outskirts of Nahor most likely was located within a well that was accessed by a circular stairway. Whoever watered the camels would have to walk down the steps, fill the bucket with water, walk back up the steps, pour it into the watering trough, turn around, go back down the steps, fill the bucket, go back up the steps, pour it out—again and again and again. Camels can drink up to thirty gallons of water each. The servant was praying for a girl who would be willing not only to get the water she needed for herself but also to spend at least an hour of hard work getting water for his ten camels!

Before the servant had even finished praying, God answered. A beautiful young woman caught his eye. He “hurried to meet her and said, ‘Please give me a little water from your jar.’”²⁴ Then she offered, “I’ll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking.”²⁵ What an amazing response! Surely God Himself had moved her to make such an offer.

When finally the last camel had satisfied its thirst, the servant took out a gold ring and heavy gold bracelets to give the young woman in appreciation for what she had done. He knew the time had come to take the next

step, so he inquired, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”²⁶ He knew it wasn’t enough to find a phenomenally beautiful, hardworking girl for Isaac. She also needed to be from a God-fearing family.

Rebekah’s straightforward yet astounding response confirmed the answer to his prayer: “I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milcah bore to Nahor.”²⁷ Nahor was Abraham’s brother! This girl who had offered him a drink, then watered all his camels, was from the very family to which his master Abraham had directed him! There was no doubt. This was the girl he had come to find.

THE PRAISE

The servant must have fallen to the ground in amazement and awe and unrestrained worship. “Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham,” he declared, “who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master’s relatives.”²⁸

When the servant finished praising God and rose from the ground, he discovered that Rebekah had disappeared! But he didn’t frantically search for her. He simply waited, knowing that if God had brought her to him once, God could bring her to him again. He didn’t have to wait long.

Rebekah had run back home to tell her family about a remarkable man who had given her some spectacular and valuable jewelry. When her brother, Laban, saw the expensive gifts, his eyes must have lit up. As we know from later encounters, he was a conniving, shrewd man. He “hurried out to the man at the spring” and found the servant “standing by the camels near the spring,” obviously waiting patiently for the next step in God’s plan to unfold.²⁹

As he greeted the servant, Laban gushed, “Come, you who are blessed by the LORD. . . . Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”³⁰ Abraham’s servant accepted the gracious offer of hospitality and followed Laban to the house. The camels were unloaded and fed, a bath was prepared for the servant and for the men who had traveled with him, and refreshments were presented. Through it all, the servant patiently waited to tell his story. But he didn’t wait too long.

THE PRIORITY

When the food was set before him, he resisted: “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.”³¹ As he recounted his story, the servant didn’t focus on himself. First he spoke of the greatness of Abraham, the father: “The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep

and cattle, silver and gold, menservants and maidservants, and camels and donkeys.”³² Then he spoke of Isaac as the only beloved son of the father, to whom Abraham had promised everything he owned.³³ The servant described Abraham and Isaac in such glowing terms that although they weren’t physically present, those listening must have been irresistibly drawn to them.

With Rebekah and her family hanging on every word, the servant explained how Abraham had entrusted him with the task of finding a bride for Isaac, declaring, “You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites . . . but go to my father’s family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.”³⁴ As the servant recalled Abraham’s words, the tone of his voice must have conveyed the seriousness with which he had accepted the responsibility for this overwhelming task.

I wonder if his face broke into a warm smile at the memory of Abraham’s encouraging words of faith that had given birth to genuine expectancy in his heart: “The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success.”³⁵ Rebekah’s family must have noticed the sparkle of excitement in his eyes as he began to unfold for them his side of the meeting at the well. He described how he had come to the spring, how he had prayed specifically

for God to give him success by leading him to the bride for Isaac, how even before he had finished praying, he had looked up and seen Rebekah! His admiring gaze must have turned to her as he related their interaction and how she had become the dramatic answer to his prayer.

THE PRESENTATION

With bold assurance, the servant stated that he knew God had led him “on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master’s brother for his son.”³⁶ Everyone who had gathered around to listen was convinced of the servant’s certainty that Rebekah was God’s choice of a bride for Isaac. The servant concluded by presenting the family with a choice: “If you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn.”³⁷

Laban, Rebekah’s brother, and Bethuel, her father, spoke in total unity. “This is from the LORD,” they said. “Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has directed.”³⁸

Overcome once again with gratitude to God, the servant immediately “bowed down to the ground before the LORD.”³⁹ His words had been received; his mission had been understood; the offer had been accepted. He had no words to express how he felt, only

the intensely meaningful and poignant gesture of humble worship.

The Success of the Search

The servant then stepped over to the big, heavy packs he had brought such a long way, opened them up, and distributed gifts of sparkling jewels and gleaming gold and silver necklaces, bracelets, and rings, along with shimmering silks, fine linen clothing, and other costly treasures for Rebekah and her family. So many extravagant gifts! And such a variety! The gifts indicated that Abraham was wealthier than their wildest dreams. Surely the abundance and the extravagance of these treasures confirmed the decision Laban and Bethuel had made for Rebekah to become Isaac's bride.

But the wise servant hadn't yet heard from Rebekah. She hadn't indicated her choice. I wonder if the display of gifts was partially his way of persuading her, without pressure. He was giving her just a glimpse of what would one day be hers if she chose to be Isaac's bride.

THE SUCCESS DEPENDS ON OUR CHOICE

The next morning Laban suggested the servant's return journey be delayed for ten days so that Rebekah could have more time at home. The wise servant insisted, "Do

not detain me, now that the LORD has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master.”⁴⁰ He knew the decision needed to be made at that moment, then promptly acted on. Any postponement would only make room for indecision on Rebekah’s part, as well as provide opportunity for her brother and father to reconsider their decision to let her go.

“They called Rebekah and asked her, ‘Will you go with this man?’”⁴¹ Rebekah had to choose for herself. In fact, it was the only way she could become Isaac’s bride. The servant would never have accepted a forced arrangement. He wanted her to come with him and choose life with Isaac of her own free will.

Rebekah replied, “I will go.”⁴²

THE SUCCESS DEPENDS ON OUR COMMITMENT

Once Rebekah made the decision, her family blessed her. “Then Rebekah and her maids got ready and mounted their camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.”⁴³ The servant had to transport Rebekah back over the difficult and dangerous route to Canaan. It was his responsibility to protect her and guard her and keep her and deliver her safely to Isaac. It was Rebekah’s responsibility to live out her commitment to be Isaac’s bride as she allowed the servant to lead her step by step. Mile by mile. Day after day. Week after week.

As monotonous as the desert view likely was, the mounting anticipation must have been almost palpable. Without a doubt, Rebekah was consumed with thoughts of Isaac.

The servant must have thoroughly enjoyed talking to the beautiful young woman about the greatness of the father and the glory of the son. He must have told Rebekah about Isaac's miraculous conception and birth.⁴⁴ He may have told her about Ishmael's jealousy of Isaac, his voice dropping as he described the painful scene of Ishmael's removal from the home.⁴⁵ And did he tell her about Mount Moriah, where Isaac was spared death at the last moment because God had said he would provide a lamb to die on the altar in his place?⁴⁶

As Rebekah learned more and more about Isaac, she must have fallen in love with him before she even saw him. She must have longed for him and begun to look for him, especially as she knew her journey was coming to an end and she was drawing near to the place where he was.

As I journey through life on my way to the Father's house, the Holy Spirit, who is the Holy Servant, is teaching me about the Father's Son.⁴⁷ He has told me . . .

. . . about His miraculous conception and birth.⁴⁸

. . . about His life on earth.⁴⁹

... about His sacrifice on the cross when the Father provided His own Son as the Lamb.⁵⁰

... about His resurrection.⁵¹

... about His ascension into Heaven.⁵²

I have learned that He is the Father's sole heir⁵³ and that, as His bride, I will share in His wealth and power and glory.⁵⁴ The Holy Spirit has shown me a vast variety of gifts from which He's carefully selected specific ones to give me in the name of the Son.⁵⁵ I have learned that the Son is seated at the Father's right hand, thinking of me and praying for me right now.⁵⁶ And I have been told that He is looking for me! That one day I will look up and see Him coming to receive me to Himself so that I can live with Him in His heavenly Home forever.⁵⁷ It's no wonder that even though I have yet to see Him visibly, I already love Him! I believe in Him. And I'm filled with inexpressible and glorious joy at the very thought of Him.⁵⁸

As my journey draws to an end—whether because I'm growing older or because the time for His return is near—my expectation of seeing Jesus is intensifying. I long to see the expression on His face when He sees me . . . and my children and grandchildren. I long to hear the sound of His voice speaking my name. And I long to feel His touch. My anticipation of being physically in His presence is at times almost a tangible ache.

In a similar way, Rebekah's anticipation must have

reached a crescendo. After weeks of travel, on an evening that probably looked like many previous ones, her attention was caught by movement. Instinctively, she knew. It was Isaac. He was coming for her! This encounter was the climax of her entire journey. She hastily slipped off the camel; then just to make sure, she asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?"⁵⁹ Her hope was confirmed when he answered, "He is my master."⁶⁰

THE SUCCESS DEPENDS ON OUR CONSTANCY

I wonder if it suddenly occurred to Rebekah that while she had been learning all about Isaac, he knew nothing about her. I wonder if she was in love with him but feared he wouldn't love her. Would she be pleasing in his eyes? Would she be what he was looking for and longing for? Would she be all he expected her to be? She knew Isaac was the father's sole heir. As his bride, she would share in all that was his. She was walking toward one who would transform her life with vast wealth and power and position. But would their marriage be only an official arrangement? Or would their relationship be one of genuine love? She seemed overcome with shyness, so she took her veil and covered herself.⁶¹

Before long, Isaac's response would lay all Rebekah's fears to rest. He had gone out into the field to

meditate, but I wonder if he had been watching for her too. After forty years of singleness, his mind must have been filled with thoughts of his bride, who she would be and what she would be like. As she drew near, he, too, must have felt his heart skip a beat! Since she was veiled, all he would have been able to see was a female form swathed in the fine linen clothing his father had provided for her. Would he be pleased? Or would he be disappointed?

There must have been introductions then, as Isaac and Rebekah gazed on each other for the first time and “the servant told Isaac all he had done.”⁶² How thrilled the servant must have been to present the bride to Abraham’s son and explain all that God had orchestrated to make this moment possible. She was exactly the bride the father had sought for his son. But would she be what Isaac wanted? The Bible leaves no room for doubt: “Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her.”⁶³

The Bible doesn’t tell us what Abraham thought about his new daughter-in-law. But I know. Without any doubt, he loved her because she loved his son.

If you ever wonder what the heavenly Father thinks about you, just remember this: Love His Son, and you can be absolutely reassured that the Father loves you.⁶⁴

Not only is Abraham’s parental leadership exem-

plary, but it also beautifully parallels the heavenly Father's desire to secure a bride for His Son. Just as Abraham sent his servant to look for a godly match, God the Father sends His Spirit into the world to find a fitting bride for His Son. But the choice of whether or not to "go with this man" is ours. Once we decide to be the one the Father seeks, we must follow through with a commitment that results not in a 450-mile trip but in a lifelong journey of faith. And every step of the way, the Father's Servant, the Holy Spirit, will guide, protect, instruct, and strengthen us until the glorious day when He presents us to the Son as the one the Father has chosen to be His bride.

So while you and I can rest assured of the heavenly Father's love for us, will we be a bride that is pleasing to His Son? We don't have to guess. We don't have to live in the fear that He might be disappointed in us. The Bible gives us enough information to know with certainty whether we will be pleasing to Him or not. While no one is perfect, it's possible for saved sinners to pursue lives of utter devotion, abandoned to the One who loves us and gave Himself for us—lives that reflect the beauty of His character in ways that are obvious to those around us.

In the following pages, Rachel-Ruth explores twenty-one qualities we find in Rebekah, each of which should be present in anyone who seeks to be

pleasing to the Son. Please join us in this twenty-one-day challenge as we examine ourselves in preparation for meeting Jesus face-to-face. It's time to move our faith from salvation to transformation in order to be a bride who "has made herself ready."⁶⁵

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Paul". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

DAY 1



A Family Member

Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor.

—Genesis 24:15

WHEN ABRAHAM INSTRUCTED HIS FAITHFUL SERVANT to find a bride for his beloved son Isaac, he had only one criterion: Make sure you find a young woman who is in the family. His exact words were “Go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac.”¹ He didn’t say to his servant, “Travel all the lands in every kingdom, and find Isaac a wife that is drop-

dead gorgeous, wealthy, smart, athletic, the life of the party, and a really good cook!” While surely he would have wanted his son’s bride to exhibit the qualities we’ve highlighted in this volume, the success of this mission was based first on her being a member of Abraham’s extended family. Why was that so important?

God had promised to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants forever. However, during the time of Abraham, the land was occupied by Canaanites, a broad term used to describe ten tribes that lived in the land. The Canaanites were wicked people that worshipped idols, sacrificed children, and glorified every kind of sexual perversion, to name just a few of their sinful patterns. Abraham had the wisdom to know that Isaac needed a godly wife and that such a woman wouldn’t be found among the pagan tribes surrounding them. So he sent his servant on a long trek back to Abraham’s hometown of Haran, where his brother’s family still lived.

Being a mother of three daughters, two of whom are at the age where they could meet their future spouses, I resonate with Abraham’s concern. As you can imagine, each of my daughters has a very different vision of the type of man she hopes to one day marry. There has been much discussion and prayer in our house over what the man of their dreams will be like and look like. But the one thing I always say with absolute conviction is “Make sure he is in God’s family!”

The primary qualification is that he has to love Jesus with all his heart and be surrendered to the Lord and His will in his life.

Beauty fades; financial prosperity can come and go; athletic records will be broken by the next star. But a marriage centered on a shared love for Jesus will endure whatever life may throw at you. So when one of my daughters calls to tell me she is going on a date, the first thing I ask is if he is a believer. In other words, Is he in God's family?

As I consider what it means to be in the family, I can't help but think of my dad, Danny Lotz. As a teenager, he was an aggressive, six-foot-seven basketball player who started all four years on the basketball team at Northport High School on Long Island, New York, and played pickup basketball in Harlem every chance he got. All that hard work paid off when he received a full basketball scholarship to the University of North Carolina. Tar Heels country! While playing under Coach Frank McGuire, my dad and his team had an undefeated season, winning the 1957 national championship in triple overtime against Kansas.

I obviously wasn't alive at that time, but growing up, I saw the many perks my dad enjoyed from being a part of the Tar Heels basketball family: season tickets to athletic events, membership in the lettermen's club, camaraderie with all the former and current players

and coaches, a fiftieth anniversary ring ceremony honoring their dream championship season, photos of their team on display in the Dean Dome, an entire museum dedicated to UNC basketball, and the list goes on. Wherever legendary UNC coach Dean Smith was, if he saw my dad, he would stop everything to go talk with him. Because when you are part of UNC basketball, you are part of an exclusive family! When long-time head coach Roy Williams announced his retirement in 2021, many former UNC players made it clear that the school needed to hire a new coach within “the family.” They did!

As exclusive as the UNC basketball family is, or Abraham’s family was, God’s family is even more exclusive. Even so, anyone is welcome to join! It doesn’t matter what you look like—your height, your weight, your skin color. It doesn’t matter how many academic degrees you have or don’t have, how many championships you’ve won or lost, how much money is in your bank account or if you’re overdrawn, or whether the latest fashions are hanging in your closet or you can’t remember when you had new clothes. It doesn’t matter how many times you’ve helped an old lady across the street, stopped along the road to fix someone’s tire, cooked a meal for a sick friend, or given time or money to a homeless shelter. None of these things matter, because it’s not about good works or good looks. It’s about your relationship with the Father.

When the trumpet sounds and the clouds part and Jesus Himself descends, the only people that will be taken up to meet Him in the air and forever live in His house are those who are members of His family! That is the picture God was painting when He had Abraham seek a bride for his son Isaac, mirroring His own search for a bride suitable for His Son.

Jesus isn't the kind of princely bridegroom you read about in novels or see in movies, the kind that slays the dragon or fights off a villain or two to win the heart of the lovely princess. Our Bridegroom—the Son of God—came to this earth in human form, humbled Himself to leave glorious Heaven and be born in a stable, grew up, compassionately healed the sick, set free the demon possessed, raised the dead, led the sinner out of the path of destruction, and taught the hardest of hearts about the love of His Father. He was then rejected by his own people.² They spit at Him, mocked Him, hurled insults at Him, whipped Him, beat Him, pulled out His beard, nailed Him to a cross, and speared His side. But Jesus, our Bridegroom, didn't storm off; He didn't yell back; He didn't command them all to drop dead; He didn't pour out His wrath on humanity right then and there. Instead, our Prince, our Bridegroom, received all the wrath and condemnation we deserved. He took our sins on Himself and bore the humiliation of the Cross so that we could be set free and become His bride!

Oh, how can we be deserving of such a gift, such a Bridegroom? That's just it: We aren't worthy in ourselves. But this is the greatest news anyone can ever tell you: Jesus did all the work on the cross, all that was necessary for us to receive forgiveness of sins—past, present, and future. To be in God's exclusive family, all we have to do is believe and humbly accept His gift! Once we do receive this through faith in Jesus, “to those who [have] believed in his name, he [gives] the right to become children of God.”³

Before the dear servant set out on his journey, he asked Abraham what he should do if the woman he chose as the bride wasn't willing to come back to Canaan and marry Isaac. Abraham responded by saying that the servant would then be released from the promise he'd made to find a bride for Isaac.⁴ In other words, he shouldn't force her to come with him. The servant could choose a wife for Isaac, but then the potential bride would also have to willingly choose to come to Isaac's home and be part of his family.

Abraham's servant is like the Holy Spirit, coming to you with the most amazing offer imaginable. He offers you salvation in the name of Jesus! Will you accept? He won't force you. You have free will to choose. Don't delay; accept His free gift of salvation today! Make sure you are part of God's family.



DAY 1 CHALLENGE



If you don't remember a time when you prayed a prayer like the one below, how do you know you are in God's family? So on this first day, if you aren't sure, pray this prayer now. Don't wait another second! The Bridegroom is at the door. He's coming in the blink of an eye. Make sure He's coming for you!

Jesus, I believe! I want to be a member of Your family!

I believe that You died on the cross to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me. I believe that You rose from the dead and now offer me eternal life with You and that one day You will return as my Bridegroom and receive me into Your kingdom in Heaven. I confess to You that I have done wrong things, and I'm sorry. I'm willing to turn away from them. I'm asking that You come into my life today. I receive the eternal life You offer. Be my Savior, the Forgiver of all my sins, the Lord of my life, and my soon-coming Bridegroom!

Thank You, Jesus!
Amen.

If you have the blessed assurance that God is your Father because you have trusted Jesus as your Savior and Lord, then take a moment now to thank Him for your place in His family.

Father God,

Thank You for the confidence I have that I have met the most important criterion for being chosen as a bride for Your Son, Jesus. Not because of anything I am or have done but simply because I have placed all my trust in Him, I know I'm a member of Your family. Now I pray You will use the following twenty days of challenges to make me more pleasing to You in every way.

*For the sake of the Bridegroom,
And in His name—Jesus,
Amen.*

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *JESUS IN ME*

ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ
& RACHEL-RUTH LOTZ WRIGHT

PREPARING TO MEET JESUS

A 21-DAY CHALLENGE
TO MOVE YOUR FAITH FROM
SALVATION TO TRANSFORMATION

Continue reading ...order today!

BUY NOW



MULTNOMAH