

# Genesis

## Chapter 24



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**Theme:** A bride for Isaac

The Scriptures are preparing us to move on from Abraham as the focus, to Isaac, then to Jacob, and then the Israelites.

Last chapter was one of the shortest chapters in Genesis and this Chapter is one of the longest chapters in Genesis.

**Be Obedient:**

It seems strange that the longest chapter in Genesis tells the story of how a man got his wife. While that is an important topic, and this is certainly a beautiful story, does it deserve that much space? Only thirty-one verses are devoted to the Creation account in Genesis 1; sixty-seven verses are allowed to relate how Rebekah became Isaac's wife. Why?

For one thing, the chapter emphasizes *separation*. Abraham made it clear that his son was not to marry a Canaanite woman (24:3). The Law of Moses did not permit the Jewish men to marry heathen women (Deut. 7:1–11). Nor are believers today to marry unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14–18; 1 Cor. 7:39–40). Genesis 24 is a great encouragement for those who want God's will in the selection of a mate. Today, while we do not use the same manner as Abraham's servant, the principles still apply: We must want God's will, we must pray and seek His guidance, we must be willing to obey, and we must be alert to what God is doing.

Of course, when the husband in the story is Isaac, the beloved son of Abraham, then the narrative takes on greater significance. After all, Isaac was the next "living link" in the chain of blessing that culminated in the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ; so whatever happens to Isaac is of utmost importance in God's great plan of salvation.

But the chapter goes beyond history into theology. It gives us a picture of the Heavenly Father getting a bride for His Son (Matt. 22:1–14). The church is compared to a bride (2 Cor. 11:2–3; Eph. 5:22–33); and during this present age, the Holy Spirit is calling people to trust Christ and be "married to...Him" (Rom. 7:4). The elements involved in the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah are also involved in the marriage of Christ and His church.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 24:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

## **Genesis 24:1**

**And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.**

**[Abraham was old]** He was now about one hundred and forty years of age, and consequently Isaac was forty, being born when his father was one hundred years old.

*(Gen. 21:5) And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.*

*(Gen. 25:20) And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.*

**[blessed Abraham in all things]** First fulfillment of Genesis 12:1-3.

## **Genesis 24:2**

**And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:**

**[eldest servant]** Ruled over all that Abraham had; would have inherited everything in the absence of issue. He is unnamed here (Gen 15:2, "Eleazer" = "Comforter." Notice that the servant appears to be nameless...Jn 16:13: Will not testify of Himself.

*(Gen. 15:2) And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?*

His is also given a name in the ancient apocryphal book of Jasher. There he is also called Eliezer.

*(John 16:13) Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come.*

*(Gen. 47:29) And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt:*

**[eldest]** He was the head servant but not necessarily the oldest. "Eldest" is used here in the official sense. The position was sometimes filled by younger men, as in Joseph's case (Genesis 39:4,22; Genesis 41:46).

**[thy hand under my thigh]** Eleazer's putting his hand under the patriarch's thigh (cf. 47:29) was a solemn sign that if the oath were not carried out, the children who would be born to Abraham would avenge the servant's unfaithfulness. Sometimes, as in this case, a gesture is added to the oath. The gesture usually is symbolic of the task to be performed by the oath taker. For instance, by placing his hand inside Abraham's thigh (in the vicinity of or on the genitals), the servant ties his oath of obedience to the acquisition of a wife for Isaac and thus the perpetuation of Abraham's line.

To accomplish the same purpose, we shake hands, swear oaths, or sign documents in the presence of a notary public, or place our hand on the Bible in the court room.

**[Put ... thy hand under my thigh]** According to ancient Jewish expositors, putting the hand on the thigh (representing the organs of generation) was most sacred. According to Indian custom, the act was a sign of subjection (cp. Genesis 47:29-31). God touched Jacob's thigh when He changed his name as a sign of blessing (Genesis 32:24-32; cp. Genesis 14:22; Genesis 47:29-31).<sup>2</sup>

**McGee:** This is the way men took an oath in that day. They did not raise their right hands and put their left hands on a Bible. They didn't have a Bible to begin with, and frankly, I do not think it is necessary for anyone to put his hand on a Bible to swear that he is telling the truth. If he intends to lie, he will lie even if his hand is resting on a Bible. The method in that day was for a man to put his hand under the thigh of the man to whom he was going to make an oath. I think this servant was Eliezer. He was the head servant in the home of Abraham, and he had a son—remember that Abraham had called God's attention to that earlier (see Gen. 15:2–3).<sup>3</sup>

**Chrysostom: Abraham Instructs His Servant:** You see, since he had reached extreme old age, the text says, he wished to preserve Isaac from association with the Canaanites, lest he take a wife from among them. So he summoned the more prudent of his servants, the text says, and gave him the following instructions: "Place your hand under my thigh." In Greek the verse is written this way: "under my thigh"; whereas in Hebrew it says "under my loins." Why did he speak in this fashion? It was an idiom of the people in the past. But on other grounds it was also because the birth of Isaac takes its origin from there.

For you to learn that the action was done according to a certain custom, notice that when he was ordering him to put his hand there, he immediately added, "and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the god of earth." See how he reaches the servant to recognize the Creator of all things. By saying, "the God of heaven and the God of earth," he encompassed all creation.<sup>4</sup>

**Ephrem the Syrian: By the Covenant of Circumcision:** Abraham made him swear by the covenant of circumcision. Because God saw that the two heads of the world had

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<sup>2</sup> Dake's Study Notes, Dake's Study Bible

<sup>3</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:97). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>4</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

dishonored this member, he set the sign of the covenant on it so that this member, which was the most despised of all the limbs, would now be the most honored of all the limbs. The sign of the covenant that was set on it bestowed such great honor that those who take oaths now swear by it and all those who administer oaths make them swear by it.<sup>5</sup>

**Augustine; The blessing of Marriage:** For, putting the hand under the thigh of a man and swearing by the God of heaven, what else did that signify except that in that flesh, which took its origin from that thigh, the God of heaven would come?

Marriage therefore is a good in which the married are better in proportion as they fear God more chastely and more faithfully, especially if they also nourish spiritually the children whom they desire carnally.<sup>6</sup>

**Augustine; The Incarnate Lord:** This surely was prophetic of the fact that the Lord God of heaven and the Lord of the earth would one day come in flesh fashioned from that thigh.<sup>7</sup>

### **Genesis 24:3**

**And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:**

Abraham, confident in the Lord's promise, had his chief servant swear an oath to find a wife for Isaac from Abraham's native land, 450 miles away.

**[of the Canaanites]** Because these had already been devoted to slavery, etc., and it would have been utterly inconsistent as well with prudence as with the design of God to have united the child and heir of the promise with one who was under a curse, though that curse might be considered to be only of a political nature. See the curse of Canaan, Genesis 9:25.

*(Gen. 9:25) And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.*

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all had a horror of intermarriage with Canaanites (Genesis 24:3; Genesis 27:46; Genesis 28:1-9; Genesis 34:1-31). The reason was the giant races the devil was using to do away with pure Adamite stock so that the Seed of the woman could not come into the world.

**[swear by the LORD]** An oath is always sworn in the name of a god. This places a heavy responsibility on the one who swears such an oath to carry out its stipulations, since he would be liable to divine as well as human retribution if he did not.

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<sup>5</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

<sup>6</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

<sup>7</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

**McGee:** My Christian friend, if you have a boy or girl in your home who is marriageable, you ought to pray that he will not marry one of the “Canaanites”. They are still in the land, and there is always a danger of our young people marrying one of them. If they do, as someone has put it, they are going to have the devil for their father-in-law, and they are always going to have trouble with him.<sup>8</sup>

The Hebrew people were going to have to displace the Canaanites and it would not be good to have a marital alliance between the nations.

### **Genesis 24:4**

**But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.**

**[my country]** Mesopotamia, called here Abraham’s country, because it was the place where the family of Haran, his brother, had settled; and where himself had remained a considerable time with his father Terah. In this family, as well as in that of Nahor, the true religion had been in some sort preserved, though afterwards considerably corrupted; see Genesis 31:19.

*(Gen. 31:19) And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father’s.*

**[and take a wife unto my son]** A young man in Bengal is precisely in the same circumstances as Isaac; he has nothing to do in the choice of a wife; parents employ others to seek wives for their sons. Those who leave their homes in search of employment always marry their children in their own country, and among their acquaintance at home; never among the people with whom they reside. In Asiatic countries this custom has prevailed from the infancy of the human race.

**Marrying from same tribe - Endogamy:** The practice of marrying within one’s own tribe or family is called endogamy. Endogamy could be the result of religious, social or ethnic concerns. In this text it appears to be ethnic in that there are no suggestions that the family of Laban, Rebekah and Rachel shares the religious beliefs of Abraham and his family. Likewise social standing is usually an issue only when nobility and commoners are involved or certain classes of urban society are seen as necessarily distinct. Ethnic concerns usually center around clan traditions or family land holdings. At times they represent long-established hostilities between two groups. In this text the endogamy seems motivated by the covenant that seeks to prevent Abraham and his family from simply being assimilated into the ethnic melting pot in Canaan.

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<sup>8</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:98). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### **Genesis 24:5**

**And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?**

Question 45. Next question is in Genesis 24:23.

### **Genesis 24:6**

**And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.**

The 31st prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 24:6-8). Next prophecy is in Genesis 24:40. The second prophecy of Abraham. Cp. Genesis 22:8. He predicted God's angel would go before Eliezer to get a wife for Isaac. It was fulfilled as in Genesis 24:12-67.

**Chumash: Classic Questions:** Why was Isaac not allowed to leave Canaan?

**Minchah Belulah:** Isaac had the status of a “perfect burnt-offering” and was not permitted to leave the Land of Israel.

**Kli Yakar:** Abraham did not want Isaac to marry a girl from Canaan for the local people had a genetic disposition to self-indulgent desires. The family of Lavan and Besu’el did not possess this genetic predisposition but, on the other hand, they were idol worshippers. A tendency to idol worship, however, is not a genetically inherited quality, but rather, a cultural phenomenon. Therefore, Abraham requested that a.) Isaac’s wife should be not from Canaan but from “my birthplace”, so that she should be of good genetic disposition. b.) He insisted “not to take my son back there,” the girl must be removed from the idol worshipping culture and brought to Isaac, and not the other way round.<sup>9</sup>

**Chrysostom; Isaac Shall Not Go Back There:** The patriarch, on the other hand, delivered an adequate direction to his servant and put him under oath. But let us now see the servant’s sense of duty in imitating his master’s godliness; when he saw the good man directing him with great earnestness, he said to him, “If the woman does not want to accompany me, do you want me to take your son back to the country you came from?” In case some problem arises, he is saying, and I seem to overstep your commands, I would consequently like to know what rules I should observe and whether it is your will that Isaac should go there, take his wife and then return here if she does not agree to accompany me, as you commanded: So what did the good man reply? He rejected this alternative, saying, “Be sure not to take my son back there.” There is no need for you to do it, he says. The One who made the promise to me and guaranteed that his descendants would be increased to such an extent will also bring this to a happy end.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

<sup>10</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 24:7**

**The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence.**

Genesis 13:14-18; Genesis 15:13-21; Genesis 17:8.

### **Genesis 24:8**

**And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.**

### **Genesis 24:9**

**And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.**

**[put his hand under the thigh of Abraham]** Adam Clark writes in his commentary: This form of swearing has greatly puzzled the commentators; but it is useless to detail opinions which I neither believe myself, nor would wish my readers to credit. I believe the true sense is given in the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, and that called the Jerusalem Targum. In the former it is said, Put now thy hand. When we put the circumstances mentioned in this and the third verse together, we shall find that they fully express the ancient method of binding by oath in such transactions as had a religious tendency. 1. The rite or ceremony used on the occasion: the person binding himself put his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he was to be bound; i.e., he put his hand on the part that bore the mark of circumcision, the sign of God's covenant, which is tantamount to our kissing the book, or laying the hand upon the New Testament or covenant of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2. The form of the oath itself: the person swore by Jehovah, the God of heaven and the God of the earth. Three essential attributes of God are here mentioned:

1. His self-existence and eternity in the name Jehovah.
2. His dominion of glory and blessedness in the kingdom of heaven.
3. His providence and bounty in the earth.<sup>11</sup>

**Chumash: The Last Word:** Some parents think that when a child reaches the age of 20, the obligations of parenthood end. The son or daughter is now a mature adult who can, and must, learn to fend for his or herself.

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<sup>11</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old Testament.

However, we can learn from the conduct of Abraham that education never ceases. At this point, Isaac was 37 years old, and Abraham could have quite reasonably taken a “back seat,” allowing Isaac to make his own choices about where to live and whom to marry.

In fact, Abraham did precisely the opposite. Instead of relaxing and enjoying his own life, he relinquished his life’s savings and all his possessions, giving them to Isaac in an attempt to help him find an appropriate wife.

From this we can learn that parenthood never ends. Even when one’s children become mature adults, we should be willing to sacrifice everything that we have for their benefit.<sup>12</sup>

### **Be Obedient: 1. The will of the father (Gen. 24:1–9)**

Abraham was now 140 years old (Gen. 21:5; 25:20) and would live another 35 years (25:7). His great concern was that, before he died, he would find a wife for his only son Isaac. Only then could God fulfill His covenant promises to bless Abraham with many descendants and give them Canaan for their inheritance (12:1–3; 13:14–17; 15:18; 21:12). In those days, the parents made the marriage arrangements. A man and woman got married and then learned to love each other (24:67). In much of the world today, the pattern is different.

We do not know who this “eldest servant” was. If it was Eliezer (15:2), then he must have been very old; the events recorded in Genesis 15 occurred more than fifty years earlier. Abraham made him swear to three things: (1) he would not select a wife for Isaac from among the Canaanite women; (2) he would choose her from Abraham’s relatives; and (3) he would not take Isaac back to Abraham’s former home.

Knowing that he had assigned his servant a difficult task, Abraham also gave him some words of encouragement (24:7, 39–41). God had guided and blessed Abraham for sixty-five years and would not forsake him now. Furthermore, God had given Abraham a specific promise that his seed would inherit the land; so this meant that his son had to have a wife who would bear him a child. Finally, God’s angel would go before the servant and guide him to the right woman.

Abraham was a man of faith who believed God’s word and knew how to apply it to specific situations and decisions. He sought to obey God’s word because true faith always results in obedience. The more you meditate on God’s Word, the more truth you will see in it and the more direction you will get from it. This applies to decisions about marriage, vocation, ministry, or any other area in life. Unless we trust God’s Word and obey it, He will not direct us (Prov. 3:5–6).

Just as Abraham wanted a bride for his son, so God the Father elected to provide a bride for His beloved Son. Why? Not because Jesus needed anything, for the eternal Son of God is self-existent and self-sufficient and needs nothing. *The bride is the Father’s love gift to His Son.* We usually emphasize that the Son is the Father’s love gift to the world (John 3:16) and forget that the church is the Father’s love gift to His Son (17:2, 6, 9, 11–12, 24).

In the divine counsels of eternity, the Father elected to save lost sinners by His grace, the Son agreed to die for the sins of the world, and the Holy Spirit agreed to apply that

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<sup>12</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

work to the lives of all who would believe. This is revealed in Ephesians 1:1–14, where you see the work of God the Father (1:3–6), God the Son (1:7–12), and God the Holy Spirit (1:13–14). Note especially that the reason for this great plan of salvation is *the glory of God* (1:6, 12, 14). Those who trusted Christ would be a special people, His inheritance (1:18) and His bride (5:22–33). His bride would bring glory to Christ on earth and throughout all eternity. One day Jesus Christ would have the joy of presenting His bride in glory to the Father (Heb. 12:2; Jude 24).

The next time you have the privilege of witnessing for Jesus Christ, remember that you are inviting people to come to the wedding! <sup>13</sup>

### **Genesis 24:10**

**And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master *were* in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.**

[**Nahor**] At the town of Nahor in Aram Naharaim (NW Mesopotamia) he received a precise answer to his prayer. This was Haran, called "city of Nahor" because Nahor settled there (Genesis 11:31-32; Genesis 12:4).

**Torah Class:** Just as Abraham needed children for the covenants of promise to be carried on, so did Isaac. And, the first step towards that end was a suitable wife. Abraham knew that the choice of a wife for Isaac was all-important. So, he used his highest, best, most trustworthy servant to go find Isaac a wife, but.....in a manner carefully prescribed by Abraham. The first matter is, the choice **MUST** not be a Canaanite woman. After all, if Abraham and his descendants were to possess the land, it would not be well for Isaac to enter into an alliance, marriage, with one whose family might soon be dispossessed of their land. Besides, Abraham did not want a woman raised in the Canaanite religions to raise the children of the promise. Second, in the unlikely event the servant was unsuccessful in persuading the chosen wife to come down to Canaan, the servant was **NOT** to bring Isaac up to Mesopotamia for the marriage.

So, the servant is sent north, back to Abraham's homeland, Mesopotamia. Further, he is to find a family member for Isaac to marry. Now we can understand why back in Chapter 22 we were given Abraham's brother's genealogy.....for Abraham was hopeful it would be from among these that Isaac's future bride would come.

Abraham was not worried, for he knew God was preparing the way for this. The worried party was the servant, not Abraham. That said, the fact that Abraham made the servant recite an oath, plus the fact that Abraham was very old now, and fully realizing that his last breath could come at any moment, says that Abraham suspected he might not live to see the day his son, Isaac, obtained a wife. Therefore, since he might not be around to examine and give his blessing to the proposed wife, he gave all the requirements and disqualifications for a wife for Isaac to his servant to carry out in his stead.

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<sup>13</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 24:1). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

This oath is recited with Abraham requiring the servant to put his hand under Abraham's thigh. That some kind of gesture accompanies an oath was normal for that and all eras, including our modern age. Even in Abraham's time, we have records of a hand being raised as part of swearing to a promise. But, what does this "hand under the thigh mean"?

Well, this is a Hebrew idiom; and it is referring to Abraham's genitals. Now, as weird and just plain icky as that might sound, there is a meaning to this that the ancient Rabbis have spoken of that makes sense (whether they're right about it or not, I cannot say). It is in the male genitals that the sign of the covenant with Yahweh is carried; circumcision. NAS **Genesis 17:11** "*And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.*

Later in Genesis, we will find Jacob, Abraham's grandson, requiring the same exact "hand under the thigh" gesture of swearing an oath from Joseph. So, this odd action is seen as invoking the power and presence of God as the One who created the covenant, and also the One who guarantees the oath. We find this exact gesture nowhere else in any other culture at any time. And, the only two mentions of it in the Bible are the ones I just gave to you.....and they involve the Patriarchs and the carrying out of the provisions of the covenant.

The words of instruction Abraham gives to his servant are the last recorded words of Abraham in the Bible. And, the transition we see between some his first recorded statements versus what we read now is striking. Here, his faith is firm, there is no worry because all is in God's hands and he completely trusts that Yahweh will bring about all that He promised to Abraham. Before he asked "how will I know that I will possess the land"? And, he lied about Sarah being his wife. And, he wanted to know how he would have descendants if Sarah was barren, and so on. This is what years and years of walking with God brings.....maturity in faith. It just doesn't happen fast, does it?

This trusted servant, probably still Eliezer of Damascus spoken of in earlier chapters, has been much affected by Abraham: for he journeys back to Mesopotamia, Abraham's birthplace, and as he arrives in the city of Nahor, he prays to God that God's will would be done. Notice, that although in some bible versions Eliezer is shown calling God "Adonai" or "Lord", in the original Hebrew, he calls God "Yahweh". He uses God's personal name.<sup>14</sup>

### **Genesis 24:11**

**And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, *even* the time that women go out to draw water.**

The cool of the early morning and evening would have been the best times for women to go to the village well for water. Since the well was often outside the town to accommodate watering of animals, women would normally travel in groups for protection. Strangers could be expected to use the well, but it may be assumed that they would ask permission of the villagers. Hospitality custom would have necessitated offering them a drink.

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<sup>14</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

**McGee:** It may seem strange to you that the women came out to draw water, but they were the ones who did the watering of the camels in that day. Very frankly, women did lots more work in those days than they do today—I mean by that, *hard* physical labor. The women were the ones who watered and took care of the stock. The men were supposed to be out trading and doing other work—they were not always loafing, by any means. But it is interesting to note that it was the custom of that day for women to go out to draw water. This servant was waiting because it was not the proper thing for him, as a stranger, to water his camels before the others who lived in that community.

This servant is depending upon God. Abraham had put all of this in the hands of the Lord, and now the servant does also:<sup>15</sup>

### **Genesis 24:12**

**And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.**

Eliezer had been trained in the faith of Abraham's God and therefore exercised the same faith and looked for guidance as his master did.

#### **Eliezer, the Model Servant:**

1. Faithful to trust (Genesis 24:2; cp. Genesis 15:2)
2. Intelligent and obedient (Genesis 24:2-11)
3. Acquainted with God (Genesis 24:12-14)
4. Knew how to pray (Genesis 24:15-16)
5. Wise and courteous (Genesis 24:17-25)
6. Worshiper of God and thankful for answers to prayer (Genesis 24:26-27)
7. Patient and believing (Genesis 24:28-30)
8. Unselfish and diligent in business (Genesis 24:31-49)
9. Impressive and winning (Genesis 24:50-58)
10. Successful and true (Genesis 24:59-67)

### **Genesis 24:13**

**Behold, I stand *here* by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:**

(Genesis 24:15; Genesis 29:10; Exodus 2:16; 1 Samuel 9:11).

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<sup>15</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:99). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

### **Genesis 24:14**

**And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: *let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.***

Eleazer trusted the Lord to grant him specific leading. He prayed that Isaac's future bride would give him and his camels water to drink. To water 10 thirsty camels involved much work, for camels guzzle great amounts of water

**Mechanistic oracle:** Abraham's servant is using an oracular approach to identifying Isaac's bride-to-be. In an oracle a yes/no question is posed to deity, and a mechanism of some binary nature is used so that deity can provide the answer. In post-Sinai Israel the priest carried the Urim and Thummim to use in oracular situations. Abraham's servant must be more creative and uses a natural mechanism for the oracle. His yes/no question is whether the girl that he is about to approach is the right wife for Isaac. His oracular mechanism is based on a question that he will pose to the girl. When asking for a drink, one would normally expect that a drink would be offered. That would be normal behavior in the context of etiquette and hospitality. In this case such a response would indicate a "no" answer to his oracular question. For the alternative the servant chooses something far out of the range of expectation: that prompted by such a common, unimposing request, the girl would volunteer to water all his camels. This unbelievable offer would indicate a "yes" answer to his oracular question. The thought behind this process is that if deity is providing the answer, he can alter normal behavior and override natural instinct in order to communicate his answer. For similar mechanistic oracles, see Judges 6:36-40 and 1 Samuel 6:7-12. The prophets occasionally approach this type of oracular situation from the other side when they provide signs to verify that they represent God, as in Numbers 16:28-30 or 1 Samuel 12:16-17.

### **Genesis 24:15**

**And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.**

**[behold, Rebekah came out]** How admirably had the providence of God adapted every circumstance to the necessity of the case, and so as in the most punctual manner, "before he had done speaking", to answer the prayer which his servant had offered up!

**[Rebekah]** Rebekah means "captivating", or "ensnaring beauty". See this illustrated in Genesis 26:7-11. She was of the family circle of Abraham (22:20-23).

**[Bethuel]** Bethuel means "separated unto God," implying that Nahor knew Abraham's God.

**Chumash; Midrash:** The Midrash cites Eliezer’s prayer as one of the greatest in history, since he was answered immediately. In fact his prayer appears to be even greater than that of Moses and Solomon, since Eliezer was answered even before he had finished his prayer. This preemptive help from above became evident during Eliezer’s prayer. The fact that he was answered before he had finished praying indicated that God had orchestrated the events in Eliezer’s favor even before he had begun to pray. This gave Eliezer much encouragement, as he witnessed Abraham’s promise of an angel going “ahead” actually unfold. The divine providence in Rebekah’s appearance, before Eliezer concluded his prayer, was a first indication to him that his girl was none other than Isaac’s future wife.<sup>16</sup>

**Origen; Rebekah’s Actions Represent Great Mysteries:** Rebekah came to the wells daily; she drew water daily. And because she spent time at the wells daily; therefore, she could be found by Abraham’s servant and be united in marriage with Isaac.

Do you think these are tales and that the Holy Spirit tells stories in the Scripture? This is instruction for souls and spiritual teaching which instructs and teaches you to come daily to the wells of the Scripture, to the waters of the Holy Spirit, and always to draw water and carry home a full Bessel just as also holy Rebekah used to do. Otherwise he could not have been joined to so great a patriarch as Isaac, who “was born by promise.” It is only by drawing water and by drawing so much that she could give a drink not only to those who are at home but also to Abraham’s servant, and not only to the servant. She also had such an abundance of water that she drew from the wells that she could also water the camels “until,” the text says, “they stopped drinking.”

Unless therefore you come daily to the wells, unless you daily draw water, not only will you not be able to give a drink to others, but also you yourself also will suffer “a thirst for the Word of God. Hear also the Lord saying in the Gospels, “Let him who thirst come and drink.” But, as I see it, “you neither hunger nor thirst after justice,” and how will you be able to say, “As the deer pants after the fountains of water, so my soul pants after you, O God. My soul has thirsted after the living God; when shall I come and appear before his presence?”<sup>17</sup>

### **Genesis 24:16**

**And the damsel *was* very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.**

**Rebekah**’s name may mean “Ensnaring Beauty.” She was of the family circle of Abraham (22:20–23). Such commentary on a woman’s **beautiful** appearance is rare in the Bible (see the description of Sarai in 12:11; Rachel in 29:17; Joseph in 39:6; compare also 1 Sam. 16:12). Her chastity is noted: **a virgin; no man had known her.** The word translated *virgin* is not a precise term; hence the clarification, “no man had known her.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

<sup>17</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

<sup>18</sup> The Nelson Study Bible, Bible Notes

[to the well] *ha'an'ah* (EDLS) starting with the letter *ayin* counting 386 letters from left to right spells *Yeshua*. 386 is also the gematria for *Yeshua*. Also adjacent letters to **Yeshua** spell *Yonah* or Jonah.

### **Genesis 24:17**

**And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.**

**Ramban;** And the Servant Ran to Meet Her: Rashi comments: “Because he saw that the waters rose in the well when she approached it.” In Bereshith Ragvah the Rabbis said, “And she filled her pitcher, and came up. All the women went down and filled their pitchers from the well. But this one, as the waters saw her they immediately rose. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her, “You are a sign of blessing to your children.”

It would appear that the Rabbis derived this interpretation upon observing the language, And she filled her pitcher, and came up, for it does not say, “and she drew water and filled [the pitcher].” Now this miracle happened to her only the first time for afterwards it is written, and she drew. The servant, when recounting the day’s events to them said: And she went down unto the well, and drew water. That was because he thought that perhaps they would not believe in the miracle.<sup>19</sup>

### **Genesis 24:18**

**And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.**

### **Genesis 24:19**

**And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw *water* for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.**

### **Genesis 24:20**

**And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels.**

**How much camels drink:** Camels drink only as much water as they have lost and do not store it in the hump. The concentration of fat and the coat of hair allows dissipation of heat, less sweating and a wider range of body temperature during the day and night. The camel also is able to maintain a constant amount of water in its blood plasma and thus sustain higher water loss than most animals. A camel that has gone a few days without water could drink as much as twenty-five gallons. In contrast, the jars that were used for water would usually hold no more than three gallons.

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<sup>19</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

### **Genesis 24:21**

**And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.**

[the man, wondering at her] And he was so lost in wonder and astonishment at her simplicity, innocence, and benevolence, that he permitted this delicate female to draw water for ten camels, without ever attempting to afford her any kind of assistance! I know not which to admire most, the benevolence and condescension of Rebekah, or the cold and apparently stupid indifference of the servant of Abraham. Surely they are both of an uncommon cast.

The answer to his prayer was foremost on his mind, showing his diligent application to his master's business (Genesis 24:33,54,56).

### **Genesis 24:22**

**And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten *shekels* weight of gold;**

[earring] or, jewel for the forehead. *nezem*, (H5141) *neh'-zem*; from an unused root of uncertain meaning; a nose-*ring* :- earring, jewel.

This was expensive jewelry—a gold earring weighing a beka (half a shekel, i.e., 1/5 ounce) and two gold bracelets weighing 10 shekels (4 ounces).

**Caesarius of Arles; The Earrings Signify Divine Words:** The servant brought gold earrings and gold bracelets and gave them to Rebekah. Those gold earrings signify the divine words; the gold bracelets signify good works, because works are designated by the hands.<sup>20</sup>

### **Genesis 24:23**

**And said, Whose daughter *art* thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room *in* thy father's house for us to lodge in?**

Questions 46-47. Next question is in Genesis 24:31.

### **Genesis 24:24**

**And she said unto him, *I am* the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.**

See Genesis 11:29; Genesis 22:20.  
Nahor is a brother of Abraham.

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<sup>20</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intervarsity Press

### **Genesis 24:25**

**She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.**

### **Genesis 24:26**

**And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.**

### **Genesis 24:27**

**And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: *I being* in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.**

**McGee:** This is a great statement here: "I being in the way, the LORD led me . . ." The Lord leads those who are in the way—that is, those who are in *His* way, who are wanting to be led, who will be led of Him, and who will do what He wants done. God can lead a willing heart anytime.<sup>21</sup>

**Torah Class:** And, here we see something we'll encounter often in the Bible: a woman, or women, coming to the well to fetch water. This is not a romantic notion or some literary device; women of the Middle East in that era stayed separate from men for the most part. There were certain times of the day when it was understood that women would go to the water well, or to a spring or a river, to draw water. . . . a standard task for women. . . . and usually men would not be around. This was all about traditional modesty. And, in particular this applied to unmarried girls and young women. Therefore, often when we get a narrative about a male Bible character encountering a woman at the well or spring, there is this sense of surprise. . . . the girl is startled. . . . at the site or voice of a man. This practice is still prevalent in many parts of the world today.

An interesting part of this chapter occurs in verse 10, because it speaks of Abraham's servant taking 10 camels with him for his trek to the north to go wife hunting. Most archaeologists will say that this cannot be, because camels were unknown to the region at this time. . . . this time being around 1850- 1900 BC. Some fairly recent findings, though, shed some light on this matter.

Records found in southern Mesopotamia from the Old Babylonian Kingdom era (around 2000 BC), make mention of drinking camel's milk. Further some Sumerian and Akkadian writings from that same era make mention of a creature used for transportation that literally is called "a donkey-of-the-sea-land". And, with those writings were pictographs of Dromedaries. . . . what we erroneously call "one-hump camels". In fact a Dromedary is not a Camel. A Dromedary is a one humped creature and a Camel is a two-humped creature. It seems as though the original habitat of the Camel was Mesopotamia and the Far East, while the original habitat of the Dromedary was the Arabian Peninsula, far to the south. **That** Abraham might have Dromedaries makes all kinds of sense, as he

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<sup>21</sup>McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:100). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

roamed the southern regions and constantly dealt with Semite tribes of the south. So, this idea that Genesis 24 is a much later addition or redaction just doesn't hold water.

Now, understand: Eliezer WENT to the well, at the time of day he did, because he knew that's when he'd find some eligible females.....this wasn't some type of fortuitous coincidence. In the Middle East, if you wanted to find a young girl, this was the place. He sees some girls coming, and proceeds to lay out kind of a fleece before God: that is, he sets up a kind of test so that he can be sure that the woman he picks for Isaac is the woman God intends. And, wouldn't you know it, before he can even finish speaking to God, the answer to his prayers arrives in the form of Rivka, Rebecca, daughter of B'tu'el. B'tu'el was Abraham's nephew; he was the son of Abraham's brother, Nahor. So, B'tu'el, Rivka's father, would have been Isaac's 1<sup>st</sup> cousin. Rivkah, as a daughter of Isaac's 1<sup>st</sup> cousin, was kind of a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin. So, the relationship between Isaac and Rivka was by blood, but not too close. Because Rivka spoke the exact words Eliezer had set out as a fleece, he knew he was on the right track. But, he kept silent for he wanted to see how this all played out...he wanted to be sure. That she kept drawing water until all 10 camels Eliezer had brought with him were fully satisfied was probably pretty impressive to Eliezer, and so he takes the next step.

Eliezer gives the girl, Rebecca, gifts of significant value including.....yes.....a nose ring. Not at all an unusual piece of jewelry for that day. Of course, Rebecca races home and tells her mother and the other female clan members what had just happened. When Rebecca's brother, Laban, who will play an important role in the biblical story some time in the future, sees the expensive jewelry worn by his sister, he runs to meet this man who gave her these things. While meeting a stranger, a guest, is always a big deal back in that day, the fact that this is a WEALTHY stranger is what excites Laban. Laying on the schmooze, Laban even invokes the name of Yahweh in greeting Eliezer. We shouldn't be too impressed or draw too much from this: latter we will find out that Laban possessed MANY gods, so he was just being cordial in using the name of the god that Eliezer's master worshipped.<sup>22</sup>

### **Genesis 24:28**

**And the damsel ran, and told *them* of her mother's house these things.**

[her mother's house] Some have conjectured from this that her father Bethuel was dead; and the person called Bethuel, Genesis 24:50, was a younger brother. This is possible, but the mother's house might be mentioned were even the father alive; for in Asiatic countries the women have apartments entirely separate from those of the men, in which their little children and grown-up daughters reside with them. This was probably the case here, though it may be that Bethuel was dead, as the whole business appears to be conducted by Rebekah's brothers.

### **Genesis 24:29**

**And Rebekah had a brother, and his name *was* Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.**

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<sup>22</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

### **Genesis 24:30**

**And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well.**

From what we know of his character, there is reason to believe that the sight of the dazzling presents increased both his haste and his invitation.

### **Genesis 24:31**

**And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.**

Question 48. Next question is in Genesis 24:47.

### **Genesis 24:32**

**And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that *were* with him.**

[**provender**] *micpow* (H4554), fodder for cattle (Genesis 24:25,32; Genesis 42:27; Genesis 43:24; Judges 19:19). It was made of hay and straw.

[**wash his feet**] It was always customary to wash the feet of guests (Genesis 24:32; Genesis 18:4; Genesis 19:2; 1 Samuel 25:41; 2 Samuel 11:8; Luke 7:44-45).

[**the men's feet that were with him**] The first mention of his companions.

### **Genesis 24:33**

**And there was set *meat* before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.**

### **Genesis 24:34**

**And he said, I *am* Abraham's servant.**

**McGee:** Notice that his name is not given. Likewise, the Lord Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will not speak of Himself, but He will take the things of Mine and show them unto you (see John 16:13-15). By the way, what is the name of the Holy Spirit? He has no name. He does not come to speak of Himself; He has come to speak of

Another, of Christ. Similarly, this servant is not named but is simply called a servant of Abraham.<sup>23</sup>

**Genesis 24:35**

**And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.**

**Genesis 24:36**

**And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.**

**Genesis 24:37**

**And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell:**

**Genesis 24:38**

**But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.**

**Genesis 24:39**

**And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.**

**Ephrem the Syrian; Perhaps She Will Not Follow:** Then they called the young woman to learn from her [whether she would return with him or not]. Because she heard about the oath that Abraham had made him swear, and about the prayer that the servant had prayed at the well and about the sign for which he had asked and which had been granted to him, she feared to say "I will not go," because she knew that it was the will of the Lord that she go. So she went and became Isaac's [wife].<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997, c1981). *Thru the Bible commentary*. Based on the Thru the Bible radio program. (electronic ed.) (1:101). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>24</sup> Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Genesis, Thomas C. Oden, Intersity Press

### **Genesis 24:40**

**And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house:**

The 32nd prophecy in Genesis (Genesis 24:40, fulfilled). Next prophecy is in Genesis 25:23. The prophecy of Genesis 24:7 is repeated, with an added detail—he would take a wife for Isaac, as fulfilled in Genesis 24:50-67.

### **Genesis 24:41**

**Then shalt thou be clear from *this* my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee *one*, thou shalt be clear from my oath.**

### **Genesis 24:42**

**And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:**

**Chumash: Classic Questions:** Why did Eliezer say, “I came today?”

**Rashi:** He was saying, “Today I left, and today I arrived.” From here we learn that his journey was miraculously shortened.

**Torah Temimah:** Why was it necessary for Eliezer to inform Besu'el that his journey had been miraculously shortened? Before Eliezer's departure, Abraham gave him a deed stating that he had given everything he owned to Isaac as a gift, in order that they would jump at the chance to send him their daughter. Consequently, if Eliezer would not have revealed the nature of his miraculous journey, the deed would appear to have been post-dated. Besuel would thus have doubted the validity of the deed, since it is unlikely that Abraham would have made a post-dated document, an act which is discouraged by the Torah.

**The Last Word:** Abraham sent Eliezer to fetch Rebekah at the earliest opportunity, as soon as she had reached marriageable age. Eliezer's miracle – where his journey was miraculously shortened, allowing him to complete a 17 day journey in one day – thus spared Rebekah from spending an additional 17 days in an atmosphere of idol worship.

From this we can be assured of the speed with which God will send Mashiach, saving the Jewish people from even an additional moment in exile.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

**Genesis 24:43**

Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw *water*, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

**Genesis 24:44**

And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: *let the same be* the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.

**Genesis 24:45**

And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew *water*: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

**Genesis 24:46**

And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her *shoulder*, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.

When Eliezer told his story to Laban, he spoke openly of God and his goodness. Often we do the opposite, afraid that we will be misunderstood or rejected or seen as too religious. Instead, we should share openly what God is doing for us.

**Genesis 24:47**

And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter *art* thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

Question 49. Next question is in Genesis 24:58.

**Genesis 24:48**

And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.

## **Genesis 24:49**

**And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.**

### **Be Obedient: 2. The witness of the servant (Gen. 24:10–49)**

*The servant.* Neither Abraham nor Isaac went to find the bride; the task was given to an anonymous servant, who was completely devoted to Abraham. His favorite name for Abraham was “my master,” which he used nineteen times in this narrative. He lived and served only to please his master, and that is a good example for us to follow today.

The servant got his orders from his master and did not change them. When he made his vow of obedience, he meant it and kept it. Whether his mission succeeded or failed, the servant knew he would have to give an account to his master; and he wanted to be able to do so without embarrassment. (See Rom. 14:10–12 and 1 John 2:28.)

But how would he go about finding the right woman for his master’s son? *The servant acted by faith in the God of Abraham and Isaac (Gen. 24:12).* He believed the promise of God and trusted the providence of God to direct him (24:27). He took time to pray and to ask God for help, and he kept his eyes open to see what God might do. In fact, while he was praying, God was sending the answer (Isa. 65:24). The servant was not impulsive but waited on the Lord to see what He might do (Gen. 24:21). “Whoever believes will not act hastily” (Isa. 28:16, NKJV).

*The bride.* In His providence, God brought Rebekah to the well just as the servant was praying; and she did exactly what the servant had been praying about. The servant did what Gideon would do years later, “put out a fleece” (Jud. 6:36–40). This is not the best way for God’s people to determine the will of God, because the conditions we lay down for God to meet might not be in His will. We are walking by sight and not by faith, and we may end up tempting God. However, God accommodated Himself to the needs of the servant (and Gideon) and guided them as they requested.

Little did Rebekah know that doing a humble task for a stranger would make her the bride of a wealthy man who was in a covenant relationship with God. She would become the mother of Jacob, and he would become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel! Years ago, I read a quotation from a writer identified only as “Marsden,” and it has stuck with me: “Make every occasion a great occasion, for you can never tell when someone may be taking your measure for a larger place.”

The servant was evaluating Rebekah to see if she would make a good wife for Isaac. He could see that she was kind, pleasant, humble, healthy, and a hard worker. Watering ten camels is no easy job! After a long trek, a thirsty camel might drink as much as forty gallons of water; and Rebekah had to draw all that water by hand.

“Whose daughter art thou?” (Gen. 24:23) is a key question for any suitor to ask. Of course, the servant was interested in her family, but the question has a wider application for Christian believers today, both men and women. “Are you a child of God? Have you been born again into the family of God?” What a tragedy when believers marry unbelievers and try to establish a home without the full blessing of God.

*The family.* Rebekah took her gifts and ran home to tell her father, mother, and brother Laban (who seemed to be the leader in the home) that a generous stranger needed a place to stay for the night. Hospitality is the first law of the East, so the family went out to meet the visitor. Laban’s character is revealed in 24:30: He was more excited about the

expensive gifts than the privilege of showing hospitality to a stranger. Isaac and Rebekah's son Jacob would discover years later what a clever rogue Laban really was (Gen. 29–31).

The servant would not eat until he had fulfilled his mission (24:33; John 4:32). He did not speak about himself but about Isaac and his great wealth. (The train of ten camels helped to tell the story.) He reviewed his experience at the well, and for the first time Rebekah discovered that she had been “measured” for a new and exciting assignment. But, would they let her go, and would she be willing to go?

Before we learn the answer to those questions, we must pause to see how the servant illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit in the world today as He uses us to witness about Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). He did not speak about himself but about his master and his riches (John 15:26; 16:13–14). He gave tokens of his master's wealth just as the Spirit gives us the “firstfruits” and “down payment” of our spiritual riches in Christ (Eph. 1:13–14). The best is yet to come!

The servant's job was not to argue or bribe but simply to bear witness to the greatness of his master. He did not force Rebekah to marry Isaac; he merely gave her the facts and the opportunity to make a decision. While there is nothing wrong with urging people to be saved (Acts 2:40), we must be careful not to try to take the place of the Spirit who alone can do the work of conviction in the human heart (John 16:7–11).<sup>26</sup>

### **Genesis 24:50**

**Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.**

**[Laban and Bethuel]** These seem both to be brothers, of whom Laban was the eldest and chief; for the opinion of Josephus appears to be very correct, viz., that Bethuel, the father, had been some time dead.

**[Laban]** Laban was evidently the chief in the household after Nahor's death. See his biography in Genesis 22:23; Genesis 24:15-33; Genesis 28:5; Genesis 29:12-30; Genesis 30:27-43; Genesis 31:1-55.

**[we cannot speak unto thee bad or good]** We fully submit to the providence of God (cp. Acts 11:17).

### **Genesis 24:51**

**Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.**

In that society a woman's brother gave his sister in marriage, which explains why Laban, Rebekah's brother, was the negotiator in this marriage contract.

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<sup>26</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 24:10). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

### **Genesis 24:52**

**And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth.**

### **Genesis 24:53**

**And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave *them* to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.**

[**her brother and to her mother**] Her brother was Laban (Genesis 24:29) and her mother, Milcah (Genesis 11:29; Genesis 24:24,47).

### **Genesis 24:54**

**And they did eat and drink, he and the men that *were* with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.**

### **Genesis 24:55**

**And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us *a few* days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.**

**Chumash: Classic Questions:** Why are only Rebekah's "brother and mother" mentioned in verse 55, and not her father Bethuel?

**Rashi:** Where was Bethuel? He wanted to stop Rebekah's marriage, so an angel came and killed him.

**Ibn Ezra:** Since Laban surpassed his father in wisdom and stature, he answered on behalf of his father. Similarly, we find in verse 50 that Laban answered before his father Besu'el.

**Tur Ha'aruch:** Bethuel consented immediately to the marriage, saying, "Rebekah is now yours. Take her and leave". In v. 55 Rebekah's brother Laban and mother spoke up, requesting that she stay home a while longer. Bethuel is not mentioned in v. 55 as he was willing to let Rebekah leave immediately.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Chumash, The Gutnick Edition, Genesis, Rabbi Chaim Miller, Published by Kol Menachem

**Genesis 24:56**

**And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.**

**Genesis 24:57**

**And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.**

**Genesis 24:58**

**And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.**

[**Wilt thou go with this man?**] So it appears it was left ultimately to the choice of Rebekah whether she would accept the proposals now made to her, unless we suppose that the question meant, Wilt thou go immediately, or stay with us a month longer? She said, I will go—It fully appears to be the will of God that it should be so, and I consent. This at once determined the whole business.

The journey to Beersheba was about 450 arduous and dangerous miles; by camel it would take twenty-five to thirty days. It was natural for a young woman to hesitate (and perhaps refuse) to go with total strangers to meet a husband she had never seen, of whose character she knew nothing. But Eliezer's worship made an impression on the entire family. They saw God's hand in the matter, and Rebekah was willing to obey what was believed to be the will of God.

Question 50. Next question is in Genesis 24:65. It seems the final choice was left up to Rebekah, unless the question was whether to depart immediately or a little later.

**Genesis 24:59**

**And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.**

[**and her nurse**] Whose name, we learn from Genesis 35:8, was Deborah, and who, as a second mother, was deemed proper to accompany Rebekah. This was a measure dictated by good sense and prudence. Rebekah had other female attendants.

## **Genesis 24:60**

**And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou *art* our sister, be thou *the* mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.**

### **Be Obedient: 3. The willingness of the bride (Gen. 24:50–60)**

Rebekah's brother and mother were willing for her to become Isaac's wife, but they wanted her to wait at least ten days before leaving home. This was a natural request, since the parents would want to spend as much time as possible with her and perhaps even invite the neighbors to celebrate with them (31:25–27). Of course, they were delighted with the wealth the servant gave them, which was probably the marriage dowry; and no doubt they wanted to hear more about Isaac and the home Rebekah would share with him.

Just as the servant would not delay in presenting his petition (24:33), so he would not delay in completing his mission. When the Lord is at work, that is the time to keep going! He asked that they let Rebekah make the choice, and her reply was, "I will go." This is the decision every sinner must make if he or she is to be "married to Christ" and share His home in heaven.

What motivated Rebekah to make the right decision? She heard the word about Isaac and believed it. She saw the proof of his greatness, generosity, and wealth and wanted to belong to him for the rest of her life. She had never seen Isaac (1 Peter 1:8), but what she had heard about him convinced her to go to Canaan with the servant.

Her parents and friends could have given Rebekah many arguments for waiting or even for saying no. "You have never seen the man!" "Maybe the servant is a fraud!" "It's nearly 500 miles to where Isaac lives. That's a long trip!" "You may never see your family again!" But she was determined to make the long, difficult journey and become the wife of a man she knew only by hearsay.

The application is obvious for unsaved people today: *They must not delay in making their decisions for Christ*. It is a decision of faith, based on the evidence provided by the Holy Spirit through the Word and the witness of the church. The sinner who delays is in danger of losing the opportunity to belong to God's family and live in heaven (John 14:1–6). "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Heb. 3:7, 15, NKJV). "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

At the closing service of a great evangelistic crusade he conducted in Fort Worth, Texas, Dr. George W. Truett, then pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, said to a vast congregation: "Satan does not care if men and women come to the house of God, and to public services such as these, and are attentive and serious and deeply moved, if only they will let the religious opportunity pass, and be unimproved. Oh, dreadful possibility, that religious opportunity may come and pass by, and the highest things of the soul be lost and forfeited forever" (*A Quest for Souls*, p. 362). Dreadful possibility indeed!

A century and a half before, Charles Spurgeon said to his London congregation: "Ten days did not seem too long; but they might have been ten days too late. One day does not seem much; but one day more may be one day too late, and one day too late is to be too late forever; yea, one minute too late is an eternity too late!" (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 13, p. 533)

The entire story makes it clear that God had chosen Rebekah for Isaac, for His providential leading is seen each step of the way. *Yet Rebekah had to make her choice of Isaac.* There is no conflict between divine sovereignty (God's plan) and human responsibility (man's choice). In fact, Jesus taught *both* in one statement: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me [divine sovereignty], and him that cometh to Me [human responsibility] I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

"Am I one of God's elect?" is not the question the lost sinner should ask. The admonition to "make your calling and election sure" was written to believers (2 Peter 1:10), not to lost sinners. The question the lost sinner should ask is, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30; cf. 2:37) And the answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (16:31). When God is speaking to you, that is the time to respond and put your faith in Christ (Isa. 55:6-7).

"We make our decisions," wrote Frank Boreham, "and then our decisions turn around and make us." From the minute she left her home (Gen. 35:8), Rebekah was under the special providential care of God and was now a part of a thrilling plan that would bring salvation to the whole world (12:1-3). Had she stayed in Mesopotamia and married one of the local men, we would never have heard of her again.<sup>28</sup>

### **Genesis 24:61**

**And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.**

**[and her damsels]** How many isn't stated. One was her nurse (Genesis 24:59), named Deborah (Genesis 35:8).

**Torah Class:** Eliezer is invited to stay with the family, but to first have a meal. First things first. Eliezer is a loyal servant.....and he's on a mission.....so he wants to know if he's just wasting his time. He states straightaway for the record who his master is, and what his goal is.

Then, so there can be no doubt that the girl's modesty was not violated, nor that she had committed anything untoward in speaking with a male, and that all intentions were honorable, he restates all that was told to him, and how he carried-out his duty, and how it led him to Rivka.

In customary Eastern hospitality, Rebecca's father and brother say that it is far from them to go against God's will for their daughter. Little doubt, it was not that they were so anxious to get rid of Rebecca; it was that they already knew from the expensive bracelets and nose ring that the customary gifts they would receive in exchange for the giving of her hand would, in this case, becoming from a wealthy man and therefore be a King's ransom. And, so it was. After a little more bartering, Rebecca, along with the women who cared for her as a child, accompanied Eliezer back to Canaan.

Notice, interestingly, how little role the father, B'tu'el plays in all this: Laban, Rivka's brother, is the dominant player from Rivka's side of the family. This is unusual. The only explanation would be that B'tu'el was feeble from age or sickness, and, as would have

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<sup>28</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 24:50). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

been customary, Laban (probably B'tu'el's firstborn) took over the duties as guardian of the clan's unmarried females.

Thus, in verses 54-55, when we see Eliezer asking for leave to take Rivka and go, it is her mother and brother....not her father....who requests that she not go just yet. A little more dickering and, upon Rivka stating that she was ready to go, permission to leave was granted. And, the Scriptures tell us that Rivka's "nurse" accompanies her on the journey. Apparently this nurse is a much-loved family member that could well have actually been the infant and toddler Rivka's wet nurse, who eventually became a sort of companion and guardian of Rivka. In fact, the Hebrew word translated "nurse", here, is **meneket**, which MEANS wet nurse. Of course, Rivka was well beyond that stage of life, so it likely indicates that this personal nurse began her stay with the family as Rivka's wet nurse and continued on from there.

As Rivka, her nurse, and several handmaidens mount the camels and get ready to leave for Canaan, a benediction is pronounced over Rivka. To my surprise, this was NOT a standard pronouncement given in that era over a young girl traveling to enter into marriage. Rather, this is a divine prophecy, that I'm sure her family had no idea they were speaking; and it concerns her producing a large number of descendants AND that these descendants would have victory over their enemies. This, of course, plays in perfectly with the covenant Yahweh had made with Abraham; the covenant which now would be inherited by Rivka's future husband, Isaac.<sup>29</sup>

### **Genesis 24:62**

**And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.**

### **Genesis 24:63**

**And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels *were* coming.**

[meditate] *suah*: has been rendered "walk about," "pray," "wail," "lament," or "moan." Verse 67 may throw some light on its meaning. Isaac needed comforting. It is possible that Sarah had passed away during the absence of Eleazer (Chapter 23).

### **Genesis 24:64**

**And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.**

[lighted off] Rebekah fell prostrate before; If Isaac were walking, it would have been most unmannerly for her to have continued seated; an inferior, if riding, always alights in presence of a person of rank, no exception being made for women.

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<sup>29</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

### **Genesis 24:65**

**For she *had* said unto the servant, What man *is* this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant *had* said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself.**

**[It is my master]** He recognized Isaac also as his master (cp. Genesis 15:2; Genesis 24:10,12,27,34-37).

**[she took a veil]** This is the first time this word occurs, and it is of doubtful signification; but most agree to render it a veil or a cloak. The former is the most likely, as it was generally used by women in the east as a sign of chastity, modesty, and subjection.

**Use of veil:** Since she had gone unveiled during the journey, Rebekah's veiling herself once Isaac is identified to her suggests that this is her way of demonstrating to him that she is his bride. Brides were veiled during the wedding but went unveiled as married women. Veil customs differed in various locations and times. Asiatic women on the Beni Hasan tomb painting (early second millennium) are not veiled, but in the Middle Assyrian laws (late second millennium) all respectable ladies went about veiled in public.

Question 51. Next question is in Genesis 25:22.

### **Genesis 24:66**

**And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.**

### **Genesis 24:67**

**And 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.**

**[Sarah's tent]** Sarah being dead, her tent became now appropriated to the use of Rebekah. Wives' tents were separated from those of husbands; children also lived in their own tents.

**[she became his wife]** There was no marriage ceremony in ancient times. Some celebrated with a feast, but the removal of the bride from her home to that of the bridegroom completed the marriage.

**[comforted after his mother's death]** This may explain Isaac's meditation of Genesis 24:63.

Isaac brought Rebekah to his mother's **tent**, a public act. **his wife, and he loved her:** Only rarely in the Bible do we read of romantic love (see the Book of Ruth). But the Song of Songs rhapsodizes on it. Isaac's sense of grief at the death of his mother was now

replaced by joy in the newness of married love. The story is lovely as it stands—a dramatic portrayal of God’s kind providence toward His people.<sup>30</sup>

**Ramban: And Isaac Brought Her Into His Mother Sarah’s Tent:** The construct is missing here [for the noun *ohel* (tent) appears with the definite article, and in this form it cannot be used in construct with “his mother Sarah.” The verse then should be understood as if it were written, “and Isaac brought her into the tent which was the tent of his mother Sarah.”] There are many cases like this.

The purport of the verse is to tell of the honor that Isaac bestowed upon his mother for from the time that Sarah died they did not take down her tent because they said, “Let not another woman come into the tent of the honorable mistress.” But when he saw Rebekah he brought her into the tent in her honor and there he took her as his wife. This is the meaning of the words, and he loved her, and he was comforted, indicating that he was deeply grieved for this mother, finding no comforter until he was comforted by his wife through his love for her. Otherwise, what reason is there for Scripture to mention a man’s love for his wife?<sup>31</sup>

#### **Be Obedient: 4. The welcome of the bridegroom (Gen. 24:61–67)**

Camels traveled about 25 miles a day and could cover 60 miles if they had to, while the average pedestrian walked about 20 miles a day. A train of 10 camels with its attendants and guards could easily make the trip from Hebron to Mesopotamia and back (about 900 miles) in less than 2 months. The servant was the kind of man who permitted no delay and was anxious to complete his task successfully. Certainly Abraham and Isaac were both praying for him and his mission, and their prayers were answered.

Isaac pictures our Lord Jesus Christ in his miraculous birth (Gen. 21) and in his willingness to obey his father and give his life (Gen. 22). We have already noticed that Genesis 22:19 does not tell us that Isaac returned with his father from Mount Moriah, although certainly he did (22:5). This omission suggests the ascension of our Lord: He returned to glory to wait for the time to receive His bride (1 Thes. 4:13–18).

Isaac was not living with his father at that time but was south of Hebron, getting ready to establish his own home. Isaac is identified with *wells* (Gen. 24:62; 25:11; 26:17–33) just as Abraham is identified with *altars*. Water was a precious commodity and had to be guarded carefully.

The name of the well would be an encouragement to Isaac as he waited for the return of the servant: “the well of Him who lives and sees me” (16:14). If God took care of Hagar and met her needs, surely He would take care of Isaac and provide the wife that he needed in order to maintain the messianic line. Jehovah is the Living God who sees everything and plans all things for His glory and the good of His children.

Genesis 24:63 suggests that Isaac was a quiet, meditative man who pondered the things of the Lord in solitude (Ps. 1:2). His wife was more the activist type, so there would be a good balance in their home. The two saw each other at a distance, and Rebekah dismounted so she could meet him on foot. In that day, it was considered a breach of

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<sup>30</sup> The Nelson Study Bible, Bible Notes

<sup>31</sup> Ramban, Nachmanides, Commentary on the Torah, Genesis, Rabbi C. Chavel, Shilo Publishing House

etiquette if women rode beasts in the presence of strange men. She also put on the long veil that was a mark of her modesty and submission.

It is significant that Isaac met his bride “at the eventide” (Gen. 24:63); for when Jesus comes for His church, it will be a time of spiritual darkness (Rom. 13:11–14). Just as a new day dawned for Rebekah, so also will the coming of Jesus Christ usher in a new day for His people (1 Thes. 5:1–11).

But that meeting involved much more than the claiming of the bride by the bridegroom. The servant also gave an account of himself to his master’s son (Gen. 24:66). When Jesus Christ comes for His church, there will not only be a joyful wedding (Rev. 19:1–9) but also a solemn judgment seat (Rom. 14:10–13; 2 Cor. 5:9–10) where our works will be examined and rewards given out (1 Cor. 3:13–15; 4:1–5).

With Isaac, it was “love at first sight”; but what did Jesus Christ see in *us* that He should want *us* to be His bride? We were rebellious sinners with no beauty or merit to boast about, and yet Jesus loved us and died for us (Rom. 5:6–8).

Rebekah had received a few gifts from Isaac; but now that she was his very own, she possessed everything that he possessed. Their lives were one, and so it is with Christ and His church (Eph. 5:22–33).

This is much more than an ancient, idyllic love story. It can be *your* love story *today* if you trust Jesus Christ and say, “I will go!”

If you already belong to Jesus Christ, then be like the faithful servant and tell others the good news about the marriage and the glorious wedding feast yet to come. Invite them to say, “I will go!”<sup>32</sup>

**Torah Class:** The caravan arrives back from its journey, and Isaac and Rebecca lay eyes on each other for the first time. The covering of her face with the veil is kind of interesting. I’ve heard many teachings on this part of Genesis, and it was always taught that women in that era covered their faces with veils in the presence of males. Well, that simply is not the case.

Hebrew women didn’t wear veils. There is no mention of Sarah wearing a veil. And, it was also not Mesopotamian custom to wear veils as a show of modesty.

There was some use of veils in that part of the world, in that era, as kind of a decoration; even as a show of wealth. The only customary use of a veil among Israelites, Canaanites, Mesopotamians, Sumerians, and so on had to do with wedding and betrothal procedures.

It was customary for the bride to be married with her veil down, and the groom not allowed to see her without that veil for some amount of time before the wedding ceremony (a little history of where the modern practice of a bridal veil is usually in place during a wedding ceremony, and is lifted by the groom upon completion of the wedding vows). So, what this likely indicated was that Rivka was letting Isaac know that a) she was the one his father had chosen for him, and b) that she had consented to be his wife, and in fact, the betrothal period had already been entered into.

Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebecca. The father and mother for the next generation of the line of promise were now in place. What is kind of interesting is that we

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<sup>32</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1991). *Be obedient* (Ge 24:61). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

are told that Isaac and Rebecca went into the tent of Isaac's departed mother, and apparently it became theirs. Remember, in this era the men and the women generally stayed separated, even after marriage. Husbands and wives, particularly if they were wealthy or the heads of large clans, slept in separate quarters. Actually, what happened here is that this bride and groom entering Sarah's tent was symbolic of Rivka assuming the position of matriarch that Sarah held until her death. Sarah's tent had been maintained just for this ceremonial purpose, until a bride for Isaac had been chosen.

I very much like how the chapter ends when the Scripture states that Isaac found great comfort, finally, in the loss of his mother by marrying Sarah. Obviously, up until Rivka, Sarah had been his primary contact with the female world. He must have been quite close with his mother.<sup>33</sup>

### **Book of Jasher: Chapter 24:29-45**

29 And Abraham called for Eliezer his head servant, to give him orders concerning his house, and he came and stood before him.

30 And Abraham said to him, Behold I am old, I do not know the day of my death; for I am advanced in days; now therefore rise up, go forth and do not take a wife for my son from this place and from this land, from the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom we dwell.

31 But go to my land and to my birthplace, and take from thence a wife for my son, and the Lord God of Heaven and earth who took me from my father's house and brought me to this place, and said unto me, To thy seed will I give this land for an inheritance for ever, he will send his angel before thee and prosper thy way, that thou mayest obtain a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house.

32 And the servant answered his master Abraham and said, Behold I go to thy birthplace and to thy father's house, and take a wife for thy son from there; but if the woman be not willing to follow me to this land, shall I take thy son back to the land of thy birthplace?

33 And Abraham said unto him, Take heed that thou bring not my son hither again, for the Lord before whom I have walked he will send his angel before thee and prosper thy way.

34 And Eliezer did as Abraham ordered him, and Eliezer swore unto Abraham his master upon this matter; and Eliezer rose up and took ten camels of the camels of his master, and ten men from his master's servants with him, and they rose up and went to Haran, the city of Abraham and Nahor, in order to fetch a wife for Isaac the son of Abraham; and whilst they were gone Abraham sent to the house of Shem and Eber, and they brought from thence his son Isaac.

35 And Isaac came home to his father's house to Beersheba, whilst Eliezer and his men came to Haran; and they stopped in the city by the watering place, and he made his camels to kneel down by the water and they remained there.

36 And Eliezer, Abraham's servant, prayed and said, O God of Abraham my master; send me I pray thee good speed this day and show kindness unto my master, that thou shalt appoint this day a wife for my master's son from his family.

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<sup>33</sup> [Torahclass.com/index.html](http://Torahclass.com/index.html), Thomas Bradford, Merritt Island, Florida

37 And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Eliezer, for the sake of his servant Abraham, and he happened to meet with the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, brother to Abraham, and Eliezer came to her house.

38 And Eliezer related to them all his concerns, and that he was Abraham's servant, and they greatly rejoiced at him.

39 And they all blessed the Lord who brought this thing about, and they gave him Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, for a wife for Isaac.

40 And the young woman was of very comely appearance, she was a virgin, and Rebecca was ten years old in those days.

41 And Bethuel and Laban and his children made a feast on that night, and Eliezer and his men came and ate and drank and rejoiced there on that night.

42 And Eliezer rose up in the morning, he and the men that were with him, and he called to the whole household of Bethuel, saying, Send me away that I may go to my master; and they rose up and sent away Rebecca and her nurse Deborah, the daughter of Uz, and they gave her silver and gold, men servants and maid servants, and they blessed her.

43 And they sent Eliezer away with his men; and the servants took Rebecca, and he went and returned to his master to the land of Canaan.

44 And Isaac took Rebecca and she became his wife, and he brought her into the tent.

45 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebecca, the daughter of his uncle Bethuel, for a wife.<sup>34</sup>

### **What we have learned from this story:**

#### **A Bride for Isaac**

Abraham commissions Eleazar to gather a bride for Isaac. Eleazar qualifies her by a well; she agrees to marry the bridegroom; he gives her gifts...she joins her bridegroom at the well of *Lahai-Roi*.

#### **Typology**

Abraham = The Father

Isaac = The Son

Eleazar = The Holy Spirit... sent to gather the Bride for the Son

*(Gen 22:19) So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.*

**Where's Isaac?** Isaac is personally "edited out of the record" until he is united with his bride by the well of *LaHai Roi*...two chapters later. (The well of *LaHai Roi*: "the well of Living One [who] sees me.")

**One Integrated Design:** The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed; The Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed.

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<sup>34</sup> The Book of Jasher, Faithfully Translated 1840, Hebrew to English, J.H.Perry & Co, Salt Lake City UT

**Marriage Model:** Gentile Brides are types of the Church (Eve, Rebekah, Asenath, Rahab, and Ruth—all have *no death recorded*...

## **PROFILE: REBEKAH**

Some people are initiators. They help get the ball rolling. Rebekah would easily stand out in this group. Her life was characterized by initiative. When she saw a need she took action, even though the action was not always right.

It was Rebekah's initiative that first caught the attention of Eliezer, the servant Abraham sent to find a wife for Isaac. It was common courtesy to give a drink to a stranger, but it took added character to also fetch water for ten thirsty camels. Later, after hearing the details of Eliezer's mission, Rebekah was immediately willing to be Isaac's bride.

Several later events help us see how initiative can be misdirected. Rebekah was aware that God's plan would be channeled through Jacob, not Esau (Genesis 25:23). So not only did Jacob become her favorite; she actually planned ways to ensure that he would overshadow his older twin. Meanwhile, Isaac preferred Esau. This created a conflict between the couple. She felt justified in deceiving her husband when the time came to bless the sons, and her ingenious plan was carried out to perfection.

Most of the time we try to justify the things we choose to do. Often we attempt to add God's approval to our actions. While it is true that our actions will not spoil God's plan, it is also true that we are responsible for what we do and must always be cautious about our motives. When thinking about a course of action, are you simply seeking God's stamp of approval on something you've already decided to do? Or are you willing to set the plan aside if the principles and commands of God's Word are against the action? Initiative and action are admirable and right when they are controlled by God's wisdom.

### **Strengths and accomplishments:**

- When confronted with a need, she took immediate action
- She was accomplishment oriented

### **Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Her initiative was not always balanced by wisdom
- She favored one of her sons
- She deceived her husband

### **Lessons from her life:**

- Our actions must be guided by God's Word
- God makes use even of our mistakes in his plan
- Parental favoritism hurts a family

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Haran, Canaan
- Occupation: Wife, mother, household manager
- Relatives: Grandparents: Nahor and Milcah. Father: Bethuel. Husband: Isaac. Brother: Laban. Twin sons: Esau and Jacob

**Key verses:**

“Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death” (Genesis 24:67). “Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob” (Genesis 25:28).

Rebekah’s story is told in Genesis 24-49. She is also mentioned in Romans 9:10.

**PROFILE: LABAN**

We’re all selfish, but some of us have a real corner on the weakness. Laban’s whole life was stamped by self-centeredness. His chief goal was to look out for himself. The way he treated others was controlled by that goal. He made profitable arrangements for his sister Rebekah’s marriage to Isaac and used his daughters’ lives as bargaining chips. Jacob eventually outmaneuvered Laban, but the older man was unwilling to admit defeat. His hold on Jacob was broken, but he still tried to maintain some kind of control by getting Jacob to promise to be gone for good. He realized that Jacob and Jacob’s God were more than he could handle.

On the surface, we may find it difficult to identify with Laban. But his selfishness is one point we have in common. Like him, we often have a strong tendency to control people and events to our benefit. Our “good” reasons for treating others the way we do may simply be a thin cover on our self-centered motives. We may not even recognize our own selfishness. One way to discover it is to examine our willingness to admit we’re wrong. Laban could not bring himself to do this. If you ever amaze yourself by what you say and do to avoid facing up to wrong actions, you are getting a glimpse of your selfishness in action. Recognizing selfishness is painful, but it is the first step on the road back to God.

**Strengths and accomplishments:**

- Controlled two generations of marriages in the Abrahamic family (Rebekah, Rachel, Leah)
- Quick-witted

**Weaknesses and mistakes:**

- Manipulated others for his own benefit
- Unwilling to admit wrongdoing
- Benefited financially by using Jacob, but never fully benefited spiritually by knowing and worshipping Jacob’s God

**Lessons from his life:**

- Those who set out to use people will eventually find themselves used
- God’s plan cannot be blocked

**Vital statistics:**

- Where: Haran
- Occupation: Wealthy sheep breeder
- Relatives: Father: Bethuel. Sister: Rebekah. Brother-in-law: Isaac. Daughters: Rachel and Leah. Son-in-law: Jacob

**Key verse:**

“If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been with me, you would surely have sent me away empty-handed. But God has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands, and last night he rebuked you” (Genesis 31:42).

Laban’s story is told in Genesis 24:1-31:55.

**CHART: ELIEZER: PROFILE OF A TRUE SERVANT**

Have you ever approached a responsibility with this kind of single-mindedness and careful planning, while ultimately depending on God?

Gen. 24:3, 9	Accepted the challenge
Gen. 24:5	Examined alternatives
Gen. 24:9	Promised to follow instructions
Gen. 24:12-14	Made a plan
Gen. 24:12-14	Submitted the plan to God
Gen. 24:12-14	Prayed for guidance
Gen. 24:12-14	Devised a strategy with room for God to operate
Gen. 24:21	Waited
Gen. 24:21	Watched closely
Gen. 24:26	Accepted the answer thankfully
Gen. 24:34-49	Explained the situation to concerned parties
Gen. 24:56	Refused unnecessary delay
Gen. 24:66	Followed through with entire plan

