

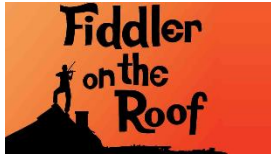
Genesis 24:1-27 Match Making, Legacy, Wisdom, Guidance

Genesis 24: 1-28 – 1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh, 3 that I may make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, 4 but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.” 5 The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?” 6 Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there. 7 The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.” 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

10 Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor. 11 And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. 12 And he said, “O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Let the young woman to whom I shall say, ‘Please let down your jar that I may drink,’ and who shall say, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels’—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master.”

15 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. 16 The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. 17 Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.” 18 She said, “Drink, my lord.” And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. 19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.” 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. 21 The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.

22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, “Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?” 24 She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” 25 She added, “We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night.” 26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the LORD 27 and said, “Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master’s kinsmen.” 28 Then the young woman ran and told her mother’s household about these things.



The Facts

Abraham is getting old, Sarah is dead, Isaac needs a wife.

Abraham has servant swear to go back to his homeland and get Isaac a wife from Abraham's people; not allow Isaac to marry a Canaanite or to go back and live in Mesopotamia.

Servant packs up treasures and heads to homeland, to the city of Nahor, over 450 miles away.

Servant prays for guidance, Rebekah arrives and fulfills the necessary requirements.

Problem solved. Mission accomplished.



Let's peel off a few layers of the onion:

Genesis 24: 1-9 – ¹ Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. ² And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh, ³ that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, ⁴ but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac."⁵ The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?" ⁶ Abraham said to him, "See to it that you do not take my son back there. ⁷ The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there."⁸ But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there."

V 1. Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things.

Wouldn't we all want this said about us at the end of our lives.

Q1. Why did Abraham demand Isaac's wife not be a Canaanite?

Q2. Why did Abraham demand that Isaac NOT be taken back to homeland to find a wife?

Q3. Why did Abraham ask the servant put his hand under Abraham's thigh when he had to swear to fulfill Abraham's command?

Abraham wishes to have the promises given to him fulfilled, and his heirs to inherit the land of Canaan. He wishes that Isaac marries one of their own, from his homeland, who has the same beliefs and customs. He does not want Isaac to return to Mesopotamia to find a wife or then resettle there, thus leaving Canaan forever. If his servant succeeds, only then can God fulfill His covenant promises to bless Abraham with many descendants and give the land of Canaan for their inheritance.

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.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Genesis 24:9-10 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter. Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor.

Q1. What is the servant's response to Abraham's command?

Q2. What lesson can we take from this when commanded of our Master to do something?

Q3. What is the significance of ten camels and all sorts of choice gifts?

The servant: The servant whom Abraham commissioned to find a wife for Isaac was thought by many to be Eliezer (15:2), who would have been Abraham's heir had Isaac died without a son. To undertake this mission was to deny any personal ambition of his own. Thus, he represents the dedicated servant of God in any age and a model for all who are called upon to work for God.

He demonstrated intelligent obedience and was ready to serve. He asked for directions and information. He asked to know what was to be done if certain circumstances might arise.

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.

Genesis 24: 11-14 ¹¹ And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹² And he said, "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."



Q1. Why stop at the well outside the city?

Q2. Why at that time of day? Why have the camels kneel down?

Q3. Why this prayer? Why so specific?

The servant prays for success and guidance from God. 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, as we will see, while he was praying God was sending the answer. The servant was not impulsive but waited on the Lord to see what He might do (Gen. 24:21).

The servant used knowledge and wisdom to ask the Lord's guidance in discovering God's chosen bride for Isaac. He knew she had to be a daughter of Abraham's kin so he chose this town. He knew that the well was where the women would come at this time of day to draw up water for the families. He was wise in asking for a sign that would help perceive the character of the chosen bride-to-be. To ask for a drink of water and get a single drink drawn up from the well by any woman would be common courtesy and expected. To respond to the request for a drink with the willingness to draw a serving for him and then draw well over five gallons of water for each of his ten camels, would be evidence of a woman with a most humble and generous servant's heart.



Genesis 24:15-20 Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶ The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up. ¹⁷ Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar." ¹⁸ She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹ The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.

- Q1.** How much time did it take for the servant's prayer to be answered?
- Q2.** How did the servant respond? Why did the man gaze in silence?
- Q3.** How do we determine what is God's will or plan in making major decisions?

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.



Genesis 24: 22-28 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, ²³ and said, “Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?” ²⁴ She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.” ²⁵ She added, “We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night.” ²⁶ The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord ²⁷ and said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen.” ²⁸ Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

Q1. What was the meaning of the gifts of a golden nose ring and bracelets?

Q2. Why ask about whose daughter she was, and for lodging?

Q3. What was the servant's response when Rebekah answered?

The servant waited till the camels had finished drinking, perhaps to make sure she could fulfill her promises and complete the difficult task. The gifts would have been given as appreciation for the service, though extremely generous. Now that he had a glimpse of her character with the offering of water and lodging, the servant needed to know if the next criteria could be met; proper family connections.

After confirmation of being related to Abraham's family (on both sides), the servant acknowledged that God had worked out the plan more perfectly than he could imagine. The servant immediately bowed down and worshiped the Lord, right there on the spot.

Answered prayer. Gen. 24 tells us the servant prayed three times: to request a sign (vv. 12–13), to praise God for leading (vv. 26–27), and to give thanks for the fulfillment of his mission (v. 52).

⁵¹ Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed.” ⁵²When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord.

Note the change of posture. He stands to make his request, bows his head at evidence of God's leading, but bows “down to the ground” when it is clear God enabled him to complete his assignment. Answers to prayer deepen our awe of God too. As we see God work in our lives, we are moved to praise and to worship.

The Special Meaning of this story:

The Final layer, a higher connotation, a metaphor

Abraham- God the Father / Isaac- Jesus waiting for his bride /
Servant- the Holy Spirit preparing the bride / Rebekah- the bride



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 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)

Abraham was determined that his son will have a bride. God the Father has promised His Son will have us as his Bride. There are certain requirements of who that bride shall be. We must be in the family of God.

Isaac- son of Abraham, metaphor for the son of God, is the father's one thought. In the Son all the purposes of the Father are to be fulfilled.

The servant- Illustrates the work of the Holy Spirit in the world today. 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 "first fruits" and "down payment" of our spiritual riches in Christ (Eph. 1:13–14). 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.

Rebekah- The bride, the church, was thought of before she knew it herself. Arrangements were made before the foundation of the world that we would be given to the Son as a holy and unblemished bride.

- Rebekah's decision to go was based on believing the word of the servant and the evidences of Abraham's good faith. She ventured everything and chose to go back with the servant. We, as the bride, also must decide based on believing the Word and the evidence of faith to follow the Holy Spirit and accept the offer of becoming a member of the family of God.

- Rebekah is heading to Canaan to be with her husband, to find her true life and be in her permanent home. The soul coming to Christ enters true fellowship, rejoices in eternal life, and knows there will be the heavenly Canaan above.