

Gen. 24:1 And Abraham was old, *and* well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

Gen. 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:

Gen. 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:

Gen. 24:4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

Abraham is getting quite old. God had blessed him in ALL things. He called his chief servant and asked him to swear by the "Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth" (the one and the same) that he would not get a wife for Isaac among the Canaanites, but would go to Abraham's relatives and find him a wife. Of course, we have a hard time with that concept now since we choose our own mates today. (1/11) Isaac was 40 years old (cf 25:20) and still subject to his father's choice for a wife.

Gen. 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?

Gen. 24:6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:9 And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.

The servant doesn't agree right away; he has a question. What if the woman doesn't want to leave her home and come to Isaac; would Isaac then go to her? Abraham insisted that Isaac stay in Canaan because "the Lord God of heaven" had promised to give this land to Abraham's offspring. He was so confident because of God's leadership in his own life that he knew God would provide the woman. For the servant's peace of mind, however, he told him that he would be released from his oath if the girl refused to come with him. Then the servant swore his oath to Abraham with his hand under his master's thigh. (I'm sure that was the custom of the day, but I have no thoughts as to why the hand under the thigh.)

(11/05) I found an answer to my question in the Believer's Bible Commentary quoting Charles Pfeiffer.

"According to Biblical idiom, children are said to issue from the 'thigh' or 'loins' of their father. Placing the hand on the thigh signified that, in the event that an oath were violated, the children who had issued, or might issue from the 'thigh' would avenge the act of disloyalty. This has been called a 'swearing by posterity' and is particularly applicable here,

because the servant's mission is to insure a posterity for Abraham through Isaac."

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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*.

Gen. 24:12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

Gen. 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:

Gen. 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 shewed kindness unto my master.*

The servant left with ten of his master's camels and many gifts. He made his way to the town of Nahor, Abraham's brother. He had the camels kneel down by the well outside of town. It was near evening when the women came to draw water. So the servant prayed to the "Lord God of my master Abraham" for success in his quest. As the eldest servant in the house (24:2) he had seen the power of God at work in Abraham's life. He had no doubt that God could hear him. This indicates to me that he had faith as well, but didn't feel significant enough to approach God on his own.

(We often fall into the same trap. We figure that God really hears the prayers of those in high leadership positions, but maybe he won't recognize us if we come to him on our own.) He asks for a specific sign. He wants the Lord to show him the right girl by the way she answers his request for a drink of water. The right girl will not only get him a drink, but will offer to water the camels too.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

Gen. 24:18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:20 And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels.

Before the servant had finished praying, Rebekah showed up with her jar on her shoulder. She was Nahor's granddaughter. She was a virgin (emphasis made on the fact that no man had known her intimately) and she was beautiful. When she

had filled her jar from the spring, the servant hurried forward to ask for a drink. She quickly served him and then offered to water the camels. The servant watched her closely as she continued to serve until the camels were finished drinking. (11/07) This was no small feat—research indicates that a camel can drink as much as 21 gallons of water in ten minutes.

Gen. 24:21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

The servant was surprised, but probably not all that surprised to get such a quick answer to his prayer. After all, he had been with Abraham for many years. He was witness to Abraham's obedience and God's blessing. (11/07) You would think that such a specific response to his request would engender faith that she would agree to go with him and thus result in a prosperous journey.

Gen. 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;

Gen. 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?

Gen. 24:24 And she said unto him, I *am* the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor.

Gen. 24:25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

Gen. 24:26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD.

Gen. 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.

When she had finished, he took out a gold earring and two bracelets of gold. Then he asked who her father was and whether there was room in their home for him to spend the night. She told him her father was Bethuel, son of Nahor, and that they had plenty of straw and fodder and room for them to spend the night. This was cause for worship—God had answered the prayer of his master as well as his own.

I think the phrase “being in the way” is significant. It indicated that he was in the path of obedience. When we are in the path of obedience to our Father in heaven, we can expect God's blessings and answers to our prayers.

Gen. 24:28 And the damsel ran, and told *them of* her mother's house these things.

Gen. 24:29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name *was* Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.**

Rebekah ran to her mother to tell her all that had happened. Rebekah's brother, Laban, hurried out to meet the man at the spring after hearing his sister's story and seeing the extravagant gifts. (Some things never change; the wealthy always get immediate attention and service. Everyone wants to be friends with the rich and famous.) He recognized God's blessing on the servant and invited him home with him. They went to his home, unloaded the camels and fed them. Then water was brought so the servant and his men could wash their feet. Then they brought him food, but he wouldn't eat until he had told them his story.

(6/07) I remembered reading somewhere the importance of the bride price to the brother of the bride. This time through I decided to research it and document the information. Turns out, as with many other interesting things, it was part of my reading of the papers of Arthur Custance at www.custance.org.

"We have already noted the widespread custom which required that the groom bring a substantial bride price when seeking a wife. We have also noted that the special brother is often largely dependent upon the gift brought to his sister to enable him, in turn, to fulfill the proprieties when he takes a wife. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Laban, who seems to have been Rebekah's 'special brother,' should have been so interested in the gifts which were brought by the faithful old servant and at the same time should have played such a prominent part in the whole transaction."

Gen. 24:34 And he said, *I am* Abraham's servant.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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:

Gen. 24:38 But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.

Gen. 24:39 And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

Gen. 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:

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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:

Gen. 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;

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Again, God provides quite a bit of space to the specifics of this incident. The details have been inspired to be repeated.

The man identified himself as Abraham's servant. (11/07) I also noted that in reference to Abraham's instruction to him, the servant repeated Abraham's bold declaration that he was confident the Lord would prosper his journey. The Lord was identified as "He before whom Abraham walked"—in other words, he tried to live his life in obedience to God and acknowledged Him as His Lord.

He told how God had blessed his master and made him quite wealthy. His master had a son whom he had given ALL that he owned. Abraham wanted a wife for Isaac from his own family. Abraham had told him that the Lord would send an angel before him to make his journey successful; however, he would be released from his oath if the girl refused to return with him. Then he explained how he had prayed at the well and Rebekah had been the answer. He recognized God's leading him down the very road to Abraham's brother's granddaughter.

(11/07) Note – The servant prayed by "speaking in his heart." Scripture is clear in stating that God knows our thoughts. Most of my communication with God is "in my heart" throughout the day. I also noted that the servant's response to God's answer was to bow his head and pray and worship God. He was grateful that God had led him so specifically regarding his purpose.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:52 And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth.

Gen. 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.

The servant wanted to know their answer right away. Rebekah's brother and father felt there was only one answer since this was from the Lord—the girl would go with him and become Isaac's wife. Then the servant bowed in respect and brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing for Rebekah. He also gave expensive gifts to her mother and brother. (11/07) Again, the servant's response was to bow in reverence and worship God. He did not take God's direction and provision for granted. I can't help but wonder whether Rebekah's family knew the true God or just accepted that Abraham's God knew what was best for him.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth.

Gen. 24:58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

Gen. 24:59 And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 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.

THEN, he and his men ate and drank and spent the night. The next morning he was eager to be on his way home. Understandably, Rebekah's mother and brother wanted him to wait a few days. They had had no time to prepare. I'm sure they loved Rebekah dearly and were having a hard time letting her go—even at the Lord's leadership. (I certainly identify with these feelings. I know my children are God's first and have lives of their own. But I dread the day they may not be close to me.) They knew she would be well cared for, but they would be deprived of her presence in their lives. (At least in today's age of communication, we can interact to a great degree even when apart. Rebekah's family didn't have that luxury.)

But the servant was excited and wanted to leave right away. So, they decided to ask Rebekah about it, and she decided to go. Rebekah and her nurse were sent on their way with a blessing from her family. They prayed for her to increase to "thousands of millions" and that those descendants would not be bothered by their enemies.

Verse 60 shows the use of a phrase that God incorporated in his blessing to Abraham in verse 17 of chapter 22--"let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them" and "thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies." It would appear that God was using a recognized "desire" or "sign of great blessing" according to the culture of that time. I guess there were many aggressive "territorial" family groups that would try to increase their holdings by taking advantage of smaller groups or groups that were perceived to be weaker. It would be a sign of great blessing to "possess" (be victorious over) those who would threaten you.

Gen. 24:62 And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.

Gen. 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.

Gen. 24:64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel.

Gen. 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 vail, and covered herself.

Gen. 24:66 And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

Gen. 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*.

Isaac was living in the desert (the Negev) and went out in the field to meditate one evening. (I can certainly understand or relate with that. One of my favorite things to do is watch the night skies and the changing moon and cloud cover and lightning shows, etc.) He looked up and saw some camels headed his way. Rebekah looked up and saw Isaac headed out to meet them, and she got down from her camel to ask the servant who he was. The servant told her, so she covered herself with her veil. Then the servant told Isaac all that had happened. Then we are told that Isaac took Rebekah to the tent of his mother Sarah and married her. Rebekah became his wife, and he loved her and was comforted after his mother's death. (He must have been very close to Sarah and missed her fellowship greatly.)

Doesn't sound like any big hullabaloo here. Just a simple decision between two people before God to join together as one. I sometimes wonder if even in the most spiritual of ceremonies, all the window dressing doesn't at least mask the seriousness of this decision before God. They had just met, yet Isaac loved her. I also think our society has really botched up our thoughts about love. His love was a choice. I'm sure it grew into a greater love as the years passed, but at the beginning it was simply a choice on his part. I think that the success of a marriage is more than anything else a choice on the part of the individuals involved. That is why being equally yoked with another Christian is so important. (Abraham had a priority of obtaining Isaac a wife from his family.) Then you know that your mate is motivated to please God in his/her choices. We know that God's choice is one man for one woman with a commitment for life to one another.

Gen. 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

(6/06) Isaac was 40 when he took Rebekah to wife. It's interesting that he is still dependent upon his father to find him a wife. Just a generation later Isaac's sons will choose their own wives.