

**FOR PERSONAL PREPARATION**

**1. God was working behind the scenes** to insure Abraham's lineage would be guarded. God uses the prayerful servant to procure a proper wife for Isaac. This episode could be likened to a kind of death-bed scene for Abraham.

**2. Possible outline:**

- Abraham's care for Isaac's marriage. (1-9)
- The journey of Abraham's servant to Mesopotamia; his meeting with Rebecca. (10-28)
- Rebecca and her relatives consent to her marriage. (29-53)
- The happy meeting & marriage of Isaac & Rebecca. (54-67)

**3. Family tree.** vss. 24:15, 24, 29. Cf. Gen. 22:20-22

<i>prog-eny</i> ▼	Sarah >	<Abra- -ham	< <i>bro- thers</i> >	Nahor >	<Mil- cah	<i>prog-eny</i> ▼
Isaac <sup>1</sup>						Bethuel
					▼	▼ <b>Re- becca</b>
					Laban	

**4. "Get a wife for my son Isaac."** (24:2-4)

- Abraham was now about 140 years old; Isaac was 40.
- "Abraham's pious care . . . was that he [Isaac] should not marry with a daughter of Canaan, but with one of his kindred because he saw the Canaanites were degenerating into great wickedness and . . . would not marry his son among them, lest they should be a snare to his soul. . . . Yet he would not go himself among his kindred, lest he should be tempted to settle there."<sup>2</sup>
- "Intermarriage with the Canaanites, a lethal threat to Abraham's identify and destiny, is strictly forbidden in Deut. 7:1-4."<sup>3</sup>
- "It was dangerous for Isaac to go into a family, where though there was some knowledge of the true God, yet there was much superstition and idolatry in it, as appears by various hints in the sequel of this history, lest he should be corrupted . . . from true religion."<sup>4</sup>

**5. The servant's prayer** (vss. 12-14, 42-44)

- "The woman appropriate to marry into Abraham's household must practice the extraordinary kindness and generosity characteristic of her future father-in-law."<sup>5</sup>
- "Who . . . answered the characters [sic] he wished for in the woman . . . healthful, humble and industrious, courteous and obliging to a stranger. And Providence so ordered it, that she did that which exactly answered his sign. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

• He prays God, that He would please to make his way plain and clear before him, by the concurrence of minute circumstances in his favor.<sup>7</sup> ▶▶

▶▶ **6. Rebecca's initiative "** (24:18ff.)

- "The Jews say she was but fourteen years of age. . . ."<sup>8</sup>
- "It was Rebecca's initiative that first caught the attention of Eliezer. . . . 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 . . . Rebecca was immediately willing to be Isaac's bride."<sup>9</sup>
- The pots used for carrying water were large and heavy. It took a lot of water to satisfy a thirsty camel — up to 25 gallons per camel. . . . Seeing Rebecca go to work, Eliezer knew this was a woman with a heart for doing far more than the bare minimum."<sup>10</sup>
- "Rebecca had physical beauty, but the servant was looking for a sign of inner beauty."<sup>11</sup>
- ". . . she proposed to go back to the well . . . until the camels had enough; and this now was the sign . . . the servant had desired might be, by which he would know who was the person intended for the wife of his master's son; and this was granted him . . . agreeable to the will of God and to which he was directed by an impulse of His."<sup>12</sup>

**7. "bowed down and worshiped. . . ."** (vs. 26)

- "The bowing of the head was to Rebecca, to return her thanks for her kind invitation. The prostration [upon the earth] was to Jehovah in gratitude for the success with which he had favored him"<sup>13</sup>

**8. The blessing on Rebecca** (24:60).

- "The near-identity of the last two lines, with the latter words of the angel . . . (end of 22:17) reinforces the appropriateness of Rebecca for Abraham's son and the providential nature of the match."<sup>14</sup>
- ". . . be thou [the mother] of thousands of millions; as she was, the Edomites and Israelites both springing from her. . . ."<sup>15</sup>
- Let your progeny ". . . be . . . numerous . . . powerful and victorious . . . particularly this had its accomplishment in Christ, Who sprung from her in the line of Jacob, Mt. 1:2 Lk. 3:34. . . ."<sup>16</sup>

**10. "Will you go with this man?" "I will go."**(vs. 58)

<sup>1</sup> Compare Rom. 9:7-13.

<sup>2</sup> Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament, by John Wesley.

<sup>3</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, page 48.

<sup>4</sup> An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill.

<sup>5</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, page 49.

<sup>6</sup> Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament, by John Wesley.

<sup>7</sup> Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament, by John Wesley.

<sup>8</sup> On-line Bible, by Kay Hall.

<sup>9</sup> Life Application Bible, page 43.

<sup>10</sup> Life Application Bible, page 44.

<sup>11</sup> Life Application Bible, page 44.

<sup>12</sup> An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill.

<sup>13</sup> Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible, by Adam Clarke.

<sup>14</sup> The Jewish Study Bible, page 51.

<sup>15</sup> An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill

<sup>16</sup> An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill

- "It fully appears to be the will of God that it should be so, and I consent."<sup>17</sup>
- Rebecca "... having no manner of objection on her mind to it; but ... was determined on it; and perhaps was under a divine impulse ... and caused her to be so willing to leave her own people. ..."<sup>18</sup>

**QUESTIONS TO USE IN GROUP<sup>19</sup>  
OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY**

**Passage: Genesis 24**

**LAUNCHING**

**For married folks**

1. How much input did your parents make (or want to make) into the decision of who to marry and when? If you disagreed with them back then, how do you feel about what they said, now?
2. How did you meet? Was someone acting as an intermediary?

**For others**

3. How do you feel about family and/or friends trying to "fix you up" with someone?

**For young adults**

4. What part, if any, should parents have in who your friends are and/or whom you might date?

**UNDERSTANDING Genesis 24**

1. Give some extra time for a dramatic reading of the chapter. Let various persons in the group take parts: a narrator, Abraham, Eliezer, Rebecca, Laban, Bethuel (only 1 line!), Laban's mother.
2. Why did the author of Genesis go into such great detail in this narrative?
3. Why did Abraham entrust such a significant task to a servant? Why not send Isaac himself?
4. "What problems would be created if Isaac married a Canaanite? How would marrying a relative avoid those problems? How does this demonstrate what is important to Abraham?"<sup>20</sup>
5. What was right about the servant's asking God for such a specific prayer? What was right about Eliezer asking the young stranger for a drink? What did he hope to find out?
6. What did Abraham's servant learn from this experience? What did Abraham learn? How about Isaac? Rebecca?

**MUSING on Genesis 24**

1. How appropriate is praying to God, asking for a particular sign? Like Abraham's servant, what specific prayer would you like to  
 ▶▶ see answered in the near future? Share as you wish.<sup>21</sup>
2. In light of your life's path with its up's and down's, please comment on the validity of this quotation from John Wesley. — "It is the comfort . . . of a good man that God's Providence extends itself to the smallest occurrences. . . . And it is our wisdom, in all our affairs, to follow Providence. . . . we may lawfully pray . . . that He will . . . direct us in the way of our duty and give us indications what His mind is. Thus He guides His people with His eye and leads them in a plain path."
3. Compare your usual approach to a major task with Eliezer's. Check (✓) in one column **for each category**; share any insights about yourself.

Eliezer <sup>22</sup> Gen. 24:3-66	Often true of me	At times true	I need to grow.
Accepted the challenge			
Examined alternatives			
Promised to follow instructions			
Made a plan			
Submitted the plan to God			
Prayed for guidance			
Devised a strategy with room for God to operate			
Waited			
Watched closely			
Accepted the answer thankfully			
Explained the situation to concerned parties			
Refused unnecessary delay			
Followed through with the plan			

**FURTHER MUSING (on your own)**

**Gen. 24:12** *Then he prayed, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, give me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.*

- "We have leave to be particular in recommending our affairs to the care of Divine Providence. Those that would have good speed [success] must pray for it this day, in this affair. Thus we must, in all our ways, acknowledge God."<sup>23</sup>
- With God, things don't just happen by chance."<sup>24</sup>
- God, in His Providence, does sometimes wonderfully . . . gratify the innocent desires of His praying people even in little things, that He may show the extent of His care

<sup>17</sup>Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible, by Adam Clarke.

<sup>18</sup>An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, by John Gill

<sup>19</sup>Leader should duplicate page 2 for easier application by group members; pass out pencils to those who need them.

<sup>20</sup>Serendipity Bible for Groups, page 66.

<sup>21</sup>Adapted from Serendipity Bible for Groups, page 67.

<sup>22</sup>Life Application Bible, page 45.

<sup>23</sup>On-line Bible, by Kay Hall.

<sup>24</sup>Thanks, by Leslie Flynn, page 173.

and may encourage them at all times, to seek Him, and trust in Him. . . ."25

Have feedback? Tell Dan at [NananDrDan@aol.com](mailto:NananDrDan@aol.com)

---

<sup>25</sup>*Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, by John Wesley.