



## STORY

7/31/06

Isaac's Marriage to Rebekah - Genesis 24

## TEACHER PRAYER

Lord Jesus, as You proved Your integrity to Abraham and Isaac, so I ask You to demonstrate to me also Your dependability. I need Your support every day in every way as I present You to my students. Bless my efforts with good results, as You did with Your servant Eliezer. Amen.

## VOCABULARY

Place names (Mesopotamia, Haran, Hebron) to be located on map; personal names (Isaac, Eliezer, Rebekah, Laban) to be written on the board

## OUTER AIM

The LORD led Isaac and Rebekah into marriage for His saving purposes.

## INNER AIM

In order to carry forward the family tree of the Seed-Savior, the LORD joined Isaac with Rebekah.

## BACKGROUND

*(Rupprecht Bible History References, Vol. 1, pp, 71-75)*

Chapter 23 is bypassed in this series, reporting Sarah's death, burial, purchase of cemetery plot. Of what importance is this step in Isaac's life for God's plan of salvation? Since Sarah had been selected to be the mother of the chosen lineage, and Isaac was her only child, it must follow that the Promise will be carried on through Isaac--and thus he must marry and sire a child.

This chapter presents the LORD's handling of Isaac's approach to marriage.

### Ch. 24: v.1

Abraham had lost his wife and was well into his "golden years"; the LORD had blessed him with a respectful and loving son, food, shelter, house, home, wealth, etc.; his faithful servant Eliezer ("God is a Helper") will become a major player in Isaac's future.

### vs.2-4

This oath was more serious than a handshake; since Abraham's health would not allow him to undertake traveling to Haran, he commissioned a trusted friend to do it. The substance of the commission was double: Negative side: NOT a wife from the heathen Canaanites; Positive side: DO get a girl who would share his religion and confess the Savior with him. This was worth a lot of effort to find the special person (not a concubine or "valley girl" to entertain him) for his special son's welfare, future blessing, and for continuing the family tree of the Savior.

v. 5

Potential problems: perhaps she would figure the losses (no more family visits; friends left behind; end of her individuality and virginity) as a poor trade for what had to be more than a "blind date." She would need blind faith that there is a God who controls such things as preparing you for a spouse...and that a pre-arranged marriage could lead to love and happiness. If she declined, should Eliezer come back, get Isaac, then make a second round trip so that he and she could meet each other? (What if they found out they didn't even *like* each other?)

vs.6-8

Abraham was not going to take the chance that if Isaac left, he might be tempted to never return, and thus lose the future which the LORD had promised him IN the promised land. So he was depending on help that could not and would not get this situation messed up--by putting it into God's hands and leaving it there. And if--even with an angel overseeing the mission--the girl chosen did not become convinced that this was the LORD's will, then Eliezer need not feel that he had failed in his mission, because it was not *his* job to make it work.

vs. 9-10

With this clarified, the servant was willing to bond himself to the mission. "Thy will be done." There are no data noted for us re. the month-long 500 mile trip by camel caravan.

vs. 11-14

Women servants would come to the village well for the family's daily water supply.

The secret of success in seeking a spouse is devout prayer to the LORD God, the One who delights in helping His children. Eliezer depended on the LORD having this all programmed for Isaac; he as helper would seek a girl having an attitude of generosity, service, and hospitality.

vs. 15-16

And how did it work out? The LORD sent a cousin of Isaac, a girl unaware that her future hung in the balance, doing her regular chores of service to others. Though she was *very beautiful*, she did not display her sexual attractiveness to arouse lust; she had graciously been spared the degradation of pre-marital sex, pregnancy without marriage, etc.

vs. 17-20

Like a movie scenario, each step follows verbatim. She was good at being thoughtful, eager to be helpful. [She had to drop the bucket down 50+ ft., get it to tip, let it fill, pull it up, empty it--maybe twice per camel--which adds to 20 or 25 repeat exercises--a lot of heavy muscle work!]

vs. 21-25

It was almost too good to be true that she would meet the qualifications.

She was given an extra-ordinary reward for her generosity. Meeting the family would reveal whether the LORD had been guiding the whole process. [He was, of course!]

vs. 26-27

The LORD had done the planning and arranging, so God deserved the credit: "*who has NOT forsaken His mercy (in caring about and caring for) and His truth (dependability/integrity /faithfulness) even when I was going ahead in blind faith....*"

vs. 28-31

The young woman (still not named) ran home to tell her experience, and her brother Laban took over the privilege of being the host for a stranger "*blessed by Jehovah.*"

vs. 32-41

After they had freshened up, and with the meal ready, Eliezer needed to get to the reason for his visit; so he reviewed with them the whole background, especially as it was connected with Abraham.

vs. 42-48

Then the meeting at the well and his prayer were rehearsed.

vs. 49-54

Finally, it was their turn to react--*either good or bad*--so that Eliezer could proceed.

Father and brother recognized that it was the LORD's doing, but it was out of their hands, so they had no advice one way or the other. [Did they perhaps have some small reservations?] When they did submit to the arrangements, a dowry was given to Rebekah and family. Eliezer would be ready by first light the next day to start the return trip with Rebekah and her retinue.

vs. 55-61

If Rebekah was entirely willing, they were agreeable to part--with a ceremony and a blessing.

vs. 62-67

Isaac was ready, waiting, and praying that this big step in his life would not be a mistake, but remain in the hands of God--first, last, and always.

The caravan approached; she dismounted, evidently feeling that this was going to be THE GUY; she checked it out...and then the curtain is drawn between us and them as they became marriage partners. They got to know and to love one another and to be comforted from feeling alone.

## **STUDENT PRAYER**

O LORD, now that I have heard how important marriage is to Your purposes for every generation, I ask You to prepare me even now for my future. Give me good Christian friends so that I may find the one You intend for me. I trust You to guide and direct, help and support me along the way. Sincerely Yours, in Jesus' name. Amen.

## **PRESENTATION**

Though the text is lengthy, be sure to read it aloud (and get student-readers to assist) because it reads like a suspense novel; stop and explain things during the reading; teach the lessons of the story during this first-and-only class-time reading.

There are two purposes for this lesson in our selection of items from OT Bible history:

- 1) to see how the LORD reaches His hand into human events--guiding us in matters such as finding a spouse--so as to bless us.
- 2) to show how the LORD brought it about that Isaac would become one of the ancestors of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## APPLICATIONS

1. When the child of God thinks ahead to dating and getting married, s/he must consider what qualities are valued in a friend and for a life-partner. Shall it be good looks, popularity, intelligence, wholesomeness, sense of humor...? What about mutual concern for Christian values and devout approach to life?... what about respecting parents...what about being hospitable, helpful? Does the person have a Christian background and family life? Would the person be approved of by my parents as a good influence? Is it someone I can love for a whole lifetime? Is it someone who shares my love of God's Word...of worship...of prayer?
2. What is a good process (program) in preparing for marriage?
  - ▶ what's the purpose of dating? ... of being "best friends"? ... of engagement?
  - ▶ what's the value of having God involved in working on this with you?
  - ▶ what's the way you are going to get God to help you? - how to get started?

## PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

### Lower

Romans 8:31b - *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

Matt. 21:22 - *And all things, whatever you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.*

Eph. 6:2-3 - *Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise--"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*

### Middle any of the above and...

Ps. 103:1-4 - *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies....*

Romans 8:28 - *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*

Philippians 4:6 - *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanks-giving, let your requests be made known to God.*

Upper any of the above and...

Prov. 18:22 - *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.*

Col. 3:18-19 - *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the LORD; Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

I Cor. 7:38 - *A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives...*

Eph. 5:25,28 - *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.*

Isaiah 65:24 - *It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*

### **HYMN CHOICES**

"While Yet the Morn is Breaking" (TLH #544 1,2,5)

"O God, Thou Faithful God" (TLH #395 1,2,5)

"May We Thy Precepts, Lord, Fulfil" (TLH #412 1-3)

"Oh, Blest the House, Whate'er Befall" (TLH #625 1-5)