

# Rebekah

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a. **Genesis 24**

b. An elegant love story

c. **vv.1-9**

d. **The Groom:** Isaac

Isaac was at least 37 years old (his age when his mother Sarah died). In the traditional Eastern culture then, as today, marriage was arranged by parents.

e. **The Matchmaker:** Abraham's business manager (chief servant)

Abraham did not want his son to have a wife that worshipped idols, so he sent his servant "*back to my country, to the land of my relatives, and get a wife for my son Isaac.*" (Genesis 24:3)

(Look at the map with the "Sarah" study sheet and find "Haran.")

Verse 1 & 9 seem odd to us. That was a custom for make a very serious vow to a close relative or friend.

f. **Why the Groom shouldn't look for his bride**

<sup>5</sup> *The servant said to him [Abraham], "What if this woman does not want to return with me to this land? Then, should I take your son with me back to your homeland?"*

<sup>6</sup> *Abraham said to him, "No! Don't take my son back there."* <sup>7</sup> *The LORD, the God of heaven, brought me from the home of my father and the land of my relatives. And he promised me, 'I will give this land to your descendants.' The LORD will send his angel before you to help you get a wife for my son there.* <sup>8</sup> *If the girl won't come back with you, you will be free from this promise. But you must not take my son back there."*

g. **vv.10-27**

h. **The "sign" from God**

<sup>12</sup> *The servant said, "LORD, God of my master Abraham, allow me to find a wife for his son today. Please show this kindness to my master Abraham."* <sup>13</sup> *Here I am, standing by the spring, and the girls from the city are coming out to get water.* <sup>14</sup> *I will say to one of them, 'Please put your jar down so I can drink.' Then let her say, 'Drink, and I will also give water to your camels.' If that happens, I will know she is the right one for your servant Isaac and that you have shown kindness to my master."*

And that is exactly what did happen...

i. **The Bride:** Rebekah (daughter of Abraham's nephew)

<sup>15</sup> *Before the servant had finished praying, Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel, came out of the city. (Bethuel was the son of Milcah and Nahor, Abraham's brother.) Rebekah was carrying her water jar on her shoulder.* <sup>16</sup> *She was very pretty, a virgin; she had never had sexual relations with a man. She went down to the spring and filled her jar, then came back up.* <sup>17</sup> *The servant ran to her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."*

<sup>18</sup> Rebekah said, "Drink, sir." She quickly lowered the jar from her shoulder and gave him a drink. <sup>19</sup> After he finished drinking, Rebekah said, "I will also pour some water for your camels." <sup>20</sup> So she quickly poured all the water from her jar into the drinking trough for the camels. Then she kept running to the well until she had given all the camels enough to drink.

<sup>21</sup> The servant quietly watched her. He wanted to be sure the LORD had made his trip successful. <sup>22</sup> After the camels had finished drinking, he gave Rebekah a gold ring weighing one-fifth of an ounce and two gold arm bracelets weighing about four ounces each. <sup>23</sup> He asked, "Who is your father? Is there a place in his house for me and my men to spend the night?"

<sup>24</sup> Rebekah answered, "My father is Bethuel, the son of Milcah and Nahor." <sup>25</sup> Then she said, "And, yes, we have straw for your camels and a place for you to spend the night."

<sup>26</sup> The servant bowed and worshiped the LORD <sup>27</sup> and said, "Blessed is the LORD, the God of my master Abraham. The LORD has been kind and truthful to him and has led me to my master's relatives."

j. **vv.28-61**

k. **The family meeting**

Contrary to the normal way of doing business (social courtesies first, business second), Abraham's servant goes straight to his purpose of his visit, tells his story, and makes his proposal. The family gave their permission.

<sup>50</sup> Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is clearly from the LORD, and we cannot change what must happen. <sup>51</sup> Rebekah is yours. Take her and go. Let her marry your master's son as the LORD has commanded."

Abraham's servant responded by (1) offering a prayer of thanks to God, and (2) giving rich gifts to Rebekah's family.

l. **Who made the final decision? (v.58) Rebekah**

<sup>57</sup> Rebekah's brother and mother said, "We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do." <sup>58</sup> They called her and asked her, "Do you want to go with this man now?"

She said, "Yes, I do."

m. **vv.62-67**

n. **The couple's first meeting**

<sup>63</sup> One evening when he went out to the field to think, he looked up and saw camels coming. <sup>64</sup> Rebekah also looked and saw Isaac. Then she jumped down from the camel <sup>65</sup> and asked the servant, "Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant answered, "That is my master." So Rebekah covered her face with her veil.

<sup>66</sup> The servant told Isaac everything that had happened. <sup>67</sup> Then Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent of Sarah, his mother, and she became his wife. Isaac loved her very much, and so he was comforted after his mother's death.

o. **Genesis 25:21-28**

p. Twin sons - rivals

<sup>21</sup> *Isaac's wife could not have children, so Isaac prayed to the LORD for her. The LORD heard Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant.*

<sup>22</sup> *While she was pregnant, the babies struggled inside her. She asked, "Why is this happening to me?" Then she went to get an answer from the LORD.*

<sup>23</sup> *The LORD said to her,*

*"Two nations are in your body,  
and two groups of people will be taken from you.  
One group will be stronger than the other,  
and the older will serve the younger."*

<sup>24</sup> *When the time came, Rebekah gave birth to twins. <sup>25</sup> The first baby was born red. Since his skin was like a hairy robe, he was named Esau. <sup>26</sup> When the second baby was born, he was holding on to Esau's heel, so that baby was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.*

<sup>27</sup> *When the boys grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter. He loved to be out in the fields. But Jacob was a quiet man and stayed among the tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac loved Esau because he hunted the wild animals that Isaac enjoyed eating. But Rebekah loved Jacob.*

Esau means "hairy." He was also called "Edom," which means "red."

Jacob means "he grabs the heel," which figuratively means "deceiver."

Those two boys were fighting even in the womb -- and their conflict never stopped.

What made the problem worse is that Mom & Dad (Rebekah and Isaac) had their favorites.

q. **Genesis 26:6-11**

r. Isaac's Deception

<sup>1</sup> *Now there was a time of hunger in the land, besides the time of hunger that happened during Abraham's life. So Isaac went to the town of Gerar to see Abimelech king of the Philistines...*

<sup>6</sup> *So Isaac stayed in Gerar. <sup>7</sup> His wife Rebekah was very beautiful, and the men of that place asked Isaac about her. Isaac said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to tell them she was his wife. He thought they might kill him so they could have her.*

<sup>8</sup> *Isaac lived there a long time. One day as Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out his window, he saw Isaac holding his wife Rebekah tenderly. <sup>9</sup> Abimelech called for Isaac and said, "This woman is your wife. Why did you say she was your sister?"*

*Isaac said to him, "I was afraid you would kill me so you could have her."*

<sup>10</sup> *Abimelech said, "What have you done to us? One of our men might have had sexual relations with your wife. Then we would have been guilty of a great sin."*

<sup>11</sup> *So Abimelech warned everyone, "Anyone who touches this man or his wife will be put to death."*

Isaac's father, Abraham, did exactly the same thing -- twice! (Genesis 12 & 20)

While we are in chapter 26, read the last verse:

*<sup>34</sup> When Esau was forty years old, he married two Hittite women—Judith daughter of Beeri and Basemath daughter of Elon. <sup>35</sup> These women brought much sorrow to Isaac and Rebekah.*

s. **Genesis 27**

t. **Rebekah's deception**

Rebekah and Isaac "pay the price" for having favorite sons.

This is a famous story. Read it & discuss it.

We often blame Jacob for deceiving his blind father. But it was Rebekah who dreamed up the scheme, and made all the arrangements. Because Jacob often took advantage of his twin brother, he was willing to play along with the deception.

Rebekah's story ends with her favorite son running away in order to save his life -- his twin brother wants to kill him. Jacob went to Mom's home hometown in hopes of finding a wife among his cousins (Genesis 28:1-5)

**LESSONS FOR US:**

- ✓ It is foolish and dangerous to try to solve our problems through dishonesty.
- ✓ Trusting God for guidance and blessing is a more joyful way to live.