

34 “I am Abraham’s servant,” he explained. **35** “And the Lord has greatly blessed my master; he has become a wealthy man. The Lord has given him flocks of sheep and goats, herds of cattle, a fortune in silver and gold, and many male and female servants and camels and donkeys.

36 “When Sarah, my master’s wife, was very old, she gave birth to my master’s son, and my master has given him everything he owns. **37** And my master made me take an oath. He said, ‘Do not allow my son to marry one of these local Canaanite women. **38** Go instead to my father’s house, to my relatives, and find a wife there for my son.’

39 “But I said to my master, ‘What if I can’t find a young woman who is willing to go back with me?’ **40** He responded, ‘The Lord, in whose presence I have lived, will send his angel with you and will make your mission successful. Yes, you must find a wife for my son from among my relatives, from my father’s family. **41** Then you will have fulfilled your obligation. But if you go to my relatives and they refuse to let her go with you, you will be free from my oath.’

42 “So today when I came to the spring, I prayed this prayer: ‘O Lord, God of my master, Abraham, please give me success on this mission. **43** See, I am standing here beside this spring. This is my request. When a young woman comes to draw water, I will say to her, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.” **44** If she says, “Yes, have a drink, and I will draw water for your camels, too,” let her be the one you have selected to be the wife of my master’s son.’

45 “Before I had finished praying in my heart, I saw Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water. So I said to her, ‘Please give me a drink.’ **46** She quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and said, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’ So I drank, and then she watered the camels.

47 “Then I asked, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ She replied, ‘I am the daughter of Bethuel, and my grandparents are Nahor and Milcah.’ So I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.

48 “Then I bowed low and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master, Abraham, because he had led me straight to my master’s niece to be his son’s wife. **49** So tell me—will you or won’t you show unfailing love and faithfulness to my master? Please tell me yes or no, and then I’ll know what to do next.”

50 Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The Lord has obviously brought you here, so there is nothing we can say. **51** Here is Rebekah; take her and go. Yes, let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has directed.”

52 When Abraham’s servant heard their answer, he bowed down to the ground and worshiped the Lord.

Leader: The Word of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

BLESSED

7.9.17

Opening remarks

God is with us, and wants to provide for our every need.

God is with us, and hears our cries.

God is with us, and does what seems impossible.

Scripture summary - Genesis 24

“Find a wife for my son!” he instructed his servant, Eliezer. “And make sure it is someone from my homeland, not a local Canaanite girl. Whatever you do, do not take him with you to my homeland, She must come here to live with him. If he returns to my homeland, he may forget about all the blessings God has promised and given. The Lord will be with you and will bless you in your efforts.”

“But what if I can’t find someone who is willing to move here?”

“Then, the deal is off.”

So, Abraham's servant loaded up the caravan with all sorts of treasures: jewelry, clothing, accessories, food. He began his journey to Mesopotamia, to Abraham's homeland of Haran.

At this moment, Eliezer decided this task was too great to leave to chance. So he called on the Lord, the God of his master Abraham.

"O God of Miracles, You have blessed my master richly. Now I ask you to bless me on this mission. Help me to find a suitable wife for my Master."

Looking over his situation, it seemed an impossible task.

So, he asked the Lord to give him a sign.

"I will ask the first girl to walk toward me for a drink. If she agrees, and then offers to get a drink for these, then I will know she is the one You have chosen."

When one young girl came by, the servant decided to engage her in conversation and he asked her for a drink.

"Of course," she said, giving him a drink. As he finished it, she offered to give some water to the others.

At this point, the servant was amazed. God had provided a clear sign. Or was it?

So, Eliezer opened up a bag and handed her all sorts of jewelry.

"Do you live around here?"

"Yes, my family is from Haran. My father is Bethuel and my grandfather is Nahor."

Nahor? Could it be? Isn't that Abraham's brother? Have we struck gold?

Could it be that this was Abraham's great niece?

At this, Eliezer, fell to the ground and praised God.

"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name."

Then, he asked Rebekah a favor.

"Would it be possible for my friends and me to stay the night at your father's house?"

"Of course! There is plenty of room."

Her brother, Laban, came to meet them and lead them to their home.

While there, the whole household was in a frenzy. They recognized the jewelry as a little more than a "thank you" gift for the hospitality.

Before long, a full fledged feast was underway. The fatted calf had been butchered and prepared. They pull out all the stops.

"Friends, this is all wonderful, but before we eat, let tell you why were are here."

And then he rehearsed the entire story.

Abraham was greatly blessed.

Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age.

Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac from his homeland.

He prayed for God's blessing and direction to fulfill his mission. And he asked God for a specific sign.

Rebekah fulfilled that sign when she offered water to his fellow drivers.

"Well," they thought. *"This must be God's wonderful purpose. Take her with you. How can we question the One True God?"*

After dinner, they enjoyed an evening together.

Early the next morning, the servant loaded up and wanted to go home.

"But wait!" Laban protests. *"We want to enjoy our sister a little longer. Can't you stay here awhile? Or can you come back later to get her?"*

"No way! The Lord has blessed me with a successful mission and so I want to get back to my master to let him know."

Before loading her and her servants, Eliezer brings out several large chests of jewelry and clothing for Laban and his mother.

And then, they load up and begin the long journey to Canaan.

Before they depart, however, the family offers a blessing to Rebekah.

"May you be greatly blessed with millions of descendants."

Meanwhile, back at the ranch in Canaan, Isaac is waiting patiently. One evening while he was meditating out in the fields, he saw the caravan.

Rebekah, also was looking around and taking it all in, when she noticed Isaac in the field. She asked Eliezer who the man was.

"That is my Master."

With that, she covered her face.

When they arrived, the servant told Isaac the whole story. And then he took the fair maiden Rebekah to his mother's tent and she became his wife. ("The Bible Story," Arthur Maxwell, © 1975, Review and Herald Publishing Association; volume 1, Part IV; story 10 "the Girl with a Kindly Heart" pp. 177-186)

Stuart Briscoe - pastor, author, radio/tv ministry host- asserts that Choosing a wife for Isaac was no small challenge. It is hard to grasp the concept of a father sending a servant to a far away land to find a wife for a son, who is not allowed to go on this adventure. *"But this was normal practice for a people who believed that healthy, stable marriages require more than physical attraction and romantic and sentimental feelings to make them work."*

He believes that the real reason for this prolonged process was that *"... commitment was at the heart of the matter."* (Communicator's Commentary, Genesis, © 1987 Word, Inc; D. Stuart Briscoe, OT Vol ; ch. 24 "Commitment"; pp. 201 - 212)

When Abraham's servant observed Rebekah's kind heart and eagerness to serve, and willingness to haul all that water, he bowed down and worshiped the Lord. *"Blessed be the Lord, Who has led me in this way!"* (Communicator's Commentary, Genesis, © 1987 Word, Inc; D. Stuart Briscoe, OT Vol ; ch. 24 "Commitment"; pp. 201 - 212)

The Lord had blessed Abraham and his servant!

God is with us!

God can do what seems impossible.

God hears our cries.

God will provide!

God is with us and not only provides for our needs, but also wants to BLESS us, with more than we can ask or imagine. Bless us in ways we never expected. Bless us beyond our hopes and expectations.

BLESSED - when used in relation to God, it signifies praise; when used with people, it usually means happiness. (New Bible Dictionary, 2nd edition, © 1962, The Inter-Varsity Fellowship; Inter-Varsity Press, Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, Wheaton, IL, Editor, JD Douglas; "Blessed", p. 144)

God Blessed Abraham in so many ways.: flocks, herds, camels, donkeys, servants, silver and gold

God blessed Sarah, who was barren, with a son in her old age.

God blessed Eliezer with a successful mission of finding a wife for Isaac.

God blessed Isaac with a kind-hearted wife.

God blessed Rebekah with a loving husband and two sons and millions of descendants.

Just as our fathers and mothers in the faith have been greatly blessed, so God is always ready to BLESS us.

We are Blessed, not for our own enjoyment, but to be a BLESSING to others.

IWW have we been blessed?

We are blessed so that others will see the Good that God does and give glory to God.

Friends, God is with us.

God can do what seems impossible.

God hears our cries.

God will provide!

And God is ready and willing to bless us... so we can be a blessing to others. Whoever they are, whatever they have done. Wherever they are.

God blesses us so we can be a blessing to others.

God is with us. We are Blessed.