



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Genesis 24:12-21, 61-67 English Standard Version October 28, 2018

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, October 28, 2018**, is from **Genesis 24:12-21, 61-67**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Genesis 24:12) And he said, "O LORD, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham.

Abraham sent his servant to his relatives in Haran to find a wife for his son Isaac. Abraham did not want Isaac to marry a Canaanite or be taken back to Haran to find a wife. Abraham's servant knew the LORD, so he prayed to the LORD to help him successfully complete the task that Abraham had set before him. The servant recognized that if the LORD helped him find the perfect wife for Isaac that would show the LORD's kindness to Abraham. The servant prayed a God-centered prayer that interceded for his master.

(Genesis 24:13) Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

The servant prayed in a way that would make it possible for him to know the LORD's choice of a wife for Isaac. He did not trust in his own understanding to select a wife for his master. Even though he knew the qualities that a good wife should have, he wanted God to reveal the woman he should select. The servant went near a spring that probably ran into and filled a well; then, water would be collected to a depth that would make it easier for people to lower their jars and fill them with water. A shallow spring would make filling jars difficult for the daughters of the village. He saw the daughters of the townspeople coming out to fill their water jars and thus began his prayer to know the LORD'S will.

(Genesis 24:14) Let the young woman to whom I shall say, 'Please let down your jar that I may drink,' and who shall say, 'Drink, and I will water your camels'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."

The servant's prayer was practical and detailed, so he would know if or when the LORD had answered him. He wanted a wife for Isaac who would be hospitable to strangers. He wanted a woman who would see a need of others and volunteer to meet that need no matter the extra exertion or time required. The servant had left home with 10 camels carrying gifts, supplies, and riders. The town provided a watering trough for animals, and the servant would not let his camels pollute the town's water supply by letting them drink from the stream that filled the town's well. A thirsty camel can drink 25 gallons of water. So, theoretically, the potential wife for Isaac would need to fill her water jar many times and carry 250 gallons of water to the water trough for 10 camels. The servant prayed that by this sign he would know the woman the LORD had chosen and that the LORD had shown his kindness to his master Abraham.

(Genesis 24:15) Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder.

Most probably the Holy Spirit inspired the prayer of the servant, and most probably the Holy Spirit inspired Rebekah to go for water at the precise time she left the house. God begins to answer the prayers of His people before He inspires their specific prayers. The first woman the servant saw fulfilled Abraham's command to choose a wife from his relatives in Haran, though the servant did not know that fact yet. Abraham's brother, Nahor, had stayed in Haran when Abraham left for Canaan. Rebekah was the granddaughter Nahor and the grandniece of Abraham.

(Genesis 24:16) The young woman was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up.

In addition to qualities of character that the servant had prayed for, the servant saw that Rebekah was beautiful and morally qualified to be Isaac's wife. As in some cultures, to distinguish married from unmarried women, Rebekah may have been wearing her hair or clothing differently from the way a married woman would wear her hair or clothing, thus indicating externally that she was not married. [For example, the hairstyle of Princess Leia in the Star Wars Trilogy (sometimes called "cinnamon buns" or "the squash blossom whorl" hairstyle) was first worn by unmarried Hopi Indian girls in Arizona.] Rebekah did not waste any time going down to the spring and filling her water jar and coming back up again to do her family tasks.

(Genesis 24:17) Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar."

After seeing that Rebekah's appearance was pleasing, and she was unmarried, and after she filled her water jar and was returning home, the servant did exactly as he had planned and prayed. He politely asked her for a drink from her water jar.

(Genesis 24:18) She said, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink.

Rebekah showed her respect for Abraham's servant and her spirit of hospitality without delay and quickly gave him a drink of water. Later, the

servant spoke to her father and asked him to give his daughter to be the wife for Isaac, and he recounted his prayer and how Rebekah had exactly answered his prayer. Her family then acknowledged that what had happened was from the LORD. Though Abraham had left Haran when he went to Canaan, his relations still had some knowledge of the true God, that God answers prayer, and the true God should be obeyed.

(Genesis 24:19) When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.”

As the servant drank, Rebekah probably watched the man as he drank the water from her jar, perhaps to judge if he were an honorable or dishonorable man. After she saw him drink, no doubt the Holy Spirit inspired her exact words to the servant that showed her willingness to do more than the servant asked. By offering to draw water for his camels, she gave the servant two ways to measure her character. First, she freely offered to water the servant’s camels without being asked or asking for compensation. Second, she said she would water them until they had enough to drink. She said she would begin and complete what she had offered to do and was willing to work hard to do what she had promised without charge. She expressed her desire to meet the needs of these thirsty camels, so she would probably have the character and willingness to care for a husband and her family.

(Genesis 24:20) So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.

Notice: Rebekah “ran” to begin keeping her word, and she kept her word. She did exactly what she said she would do. This character trait would make her a true blessing to Isaac as his wife. The fact that she went to the well indicates that the spring water obviously fed into the well. We are not told how many trips she made to the trough, but enough times to demonstrate that she was not only beautiful, but healthy and strong and willing to work quickly and hard to help others, even strangers in need.

(Genesis 24:21) The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the LORD had prospered his journey or not.

Without needing to be reminded or encouraged to complete her task, Rebekah did what she promised, and the servant watched to see how she did what she did. She was careful and not slack or haphazard in doing her duty. Her offer may have been made from compassion for thirsty camels and the way she watered the camels would reveal how she truly felt about animals. This too would reveal more of her character traits. It became obvious to the servant that the LORD had made his journey successful if Rebekah and the family would agree for her to go with him to marry Isaac, also a stranger to her.

(Genesis 24:61) Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

After Rebekah and her family agreed to the servant's request that they leave quickly and return to Abraham and Isaac (without waiting ten days or so as the family had at first requested), Rebekah and her attendants mounted some of the camels the servant had brought and went with him. The journey through the Fertile Crescent from Haran to Canaan could have been about 500 miles and last many days, so the camels would be needed for tents, food, and other supplies as well as to be ridden (at least ridden by Rebekah and her attendants).

(Genesis 24:62) Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb.

Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, meaning "Well of the Living One that sees me," which was the place where Hagar met the angel of God who showed her the water well that saved her and her son Ishmael from dying of thirst — the LORD had seen her (Genesis 21:17-19). The Negev or Negeb was an area that would become the southernmost part of Judah. Therefore, Isaac was living in an area that would eventually be occupied by the tribe of Judah and the kingdom of Judah — just as the LORD had promised Abraham.

(Genesis 24:63) And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming.

Isaac had been brought up by Abraham in the ways of the LORD, as was Abraham's servant, and the LORD did what was best for Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, and Abraham's servant. Isaac went into the field to be alone with the LORD, to pray, to think on God's promises, and perhaps to think about if and when his servant would return with the woman who would be his wife. God worked out the perfect timing of the selection of Isaac's future wife and God also worked out the perfect timing for Isaac to see his future wife for the first time.

(Genesis 24:64) And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel

Rebekah had probably been looking forward to the end of their long journey with increasing anticipation for she was coming in faith that all Abraham's servant had said about the LORD's leading and Isaac were true. She had probably been told that they were nearing where Isaac was living; therefore, she was naturally interested when she saw the man in the field and got down from her camel to talk to Abraham's servant.

(Genesis 24:65) and said to the servant, "Who is that man, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself.

Isaac would have recognized the servant and his caravan even from a distance. Perhaps he had even prayed that evening that the servant would return soon. So, when he saw his servant and the caravan he began walking toward them with anticipation rather than waiting for the caravan to come to him. The servant told Rebekah that Isaac was the man walking toward them, so she covered her face, which she may have uncovered while talking to the servant or at various times during the journey.

(Genesis 24:66) And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

The servant told Isaac exactly what he told Rebekah's parents about his prayer and the LORD's answer and the LORD's leading of Rebekah to him at the well. He probably told him about the gifts that he had given to Rebekah and her family, and their willingness for him to take Rebekah to Isaac without delay. He gave this accounting as a responsible servant and to show Isaac that Rebekah had indeed been chosen for him by the LORD.

(Genesis 24:67) Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

According to the customs of the day, which may have been more complex than detailed here, Isaac married Rebekah. The Bible does not describe this marriage ceremony as it will describe in more detail the marriage of Jacob to Leah and Rachel in Haran. As Sarah had cared for Isaac, so Rebekah cared for Isaac and Isaac loved the one the LORD had chosen for him.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What did the servant pray for God to do for himself and for his master?
2. From the servant's prayer, what are some of the qualities that he wanted Isaac's wife to possess?
3. What are some of the additional personal qualities that Rebekah showed she possessed?
4. What are some things that illustrate the spiritual life of Abraham's family.
5. How do you think Isaac knew that his servant had chosen the right wife for him?

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