

## 08.17 A Bride for Isaac (Genesis 24:1-67)

✓ “Check” it out: opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher, not the student. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- (optional) A Beka Flash-a-Cards® from “Abraham and Isaac,” Lesson 5
- Pictures and/or visual aids found at the end of this lesson (Please give credit to the sources of pictures.)
- Check also “Activities” and “Handwork” below for additional suggested items.
- A five-gallon pail

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Flashcard words are enlarged at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *Canaanites*: people who lived in the land called Canaan, the land where Abraham lived
- *to swear*: to promise with a sincere oath
- *a nurse*: in this story it is the personal servant who cared for a girl from childhood to adulthood
- *to meditate*: to think thoroughly about something

### Scripture: (ESV)

24:1 Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years. And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, “Put your hand under my thigh, 3 that I may make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, 4 but will go to my country and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son Isaac.” 5 The servant said to him, “Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?” 6 Abraham said to him, “See to it that you do not take my son back there. 7 The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine; only you must not take my son back there.” 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

10 Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia to the city of Nahor [probably the city named Haran]. 11 And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at the time of evening, the time when women go out to draw water. 12 And he said, “O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. 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. 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.”

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. 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. 17 Then the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.” 18 She said, “Drink, my lord.” And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. 19 When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.” 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. 21 The man gazed at her in silence to learn whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.

22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels, 23 and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?" 24 She said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night." 26 The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord 27 and said, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen." 28 Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

29 Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring. 30 As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of Rebekah his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. 31 He said, "Come in, O blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels." 32 So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. 33 Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, "I will not eat until I have said what I have to say." He said, "Speak on."

34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. 35 The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys. 36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and to him he has given all that he has. 37 My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell, 38 but you shall go to my father's house and to my clan and take a wife for my son.' 39 I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' 40 But he said to me, 'The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way. You shall take a wife for my son from my clan and from my father's house. 41 Then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

42 "I came today to the spring and said, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now you are prospering the way that I go, 43 behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, Please give me a little water from your jar to drink, 44 and who will say to me, Drink, and I will draw for your camels also, let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.'

45 "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' 46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also. 47 Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms. 48 Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. 49 Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good. 51 Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken."

52 When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord. 53 And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. 54 And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." 55 Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." 56 But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to

my master.” 57 They said, “Let us call the young woman and ask her.” 58 And they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” She said, “I will go.” 59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

“Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!”

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.

62 Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb. 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. 64 And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel 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. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 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.

### **Introduction/Review:**

Thirty-seven years and more had passed since Isaac had been born. How old had Abraham been when Isaac was born? [100.] How old was Abraham thirty-seven years later? [One hundred plus thirty-seven equals 137.] How old had Sarah been at the time of Isaac’s birth? [90.] Now how old was Sarah? [Ninety plus thirty-seven years equals 127 years.] The Lord had given Sarah thirty-seven years of special joy as she watched Isaac grow from a babe to a man. Then, as will happen to us all, Sarah died.

**Story:** [Much of this narrative is directly quoted from the ESV.] (Note: The Bible does not name this servant. Many scholars think the servant was the Eliezer of Genesis 15:2, but Abraham was a mere 85 years old at that time. Fifty-two years had passed by the time of today’s story! Since the servant in today’s story is unnamed, we can assume it was not Eliezer because he had died.)

Abraham and Isaac missed Sarah terribly. Isaac, close to forty years old, needed a wife; so Abraham acted to get him one.

### ***Bible-time marriage***

Now, preparing for marriages in those days was not like it is today. People did not ignore their parents’ opinions. They did not date one person and then another and then another and another and another before they decided to get married to a particular somebody. Parents, who knew their children and wanted the best for them, chose a bride for a son and arranged for the marriage.

### ***Abraham’s charge***

That’s what Abraham did. “My faithful chief servant,” he said to his faithful chief servant, “promise me—swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and God of the earth—that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell, but will go to my country and to my extended family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

The servant said to him, “If the woman is not willing to follow me to this land, shall I then take your son back to the land from which you came?”

“Absolutely not!” Abraham replied. “See to it that you do not take my son back there. The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my family, and who swore to me, ‘To your offspring I will give this land,’ he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from my oath; only you must not take my son back there.”

### ***The servant’s task***

So the servant swore to Abraham concerning this matter. In so doing, he promised a lot—to prepare food and animals for a long journey of 450 to 600 miles, about four to six weeks of travel each way; to prepare gifts for the prospective bride and her family; and to perform the nearly impossible task of persuading a girl to leave her home and family, probably never to see them again.

The servant got ten camels and some servants ready and set out. One day, one week, 14 days, three weeks, 28 days, 5 weeks, and maybe another 17 days—six weeks! What a long, long journey! Finally, one evening he arrived at the city Haran [locate on map] just as the maidens of the city were coming to draw water for their families. He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water.

### ***The servant's arrival***

✓ Abraham's servant was no doubt exhausted and weary of travel. In addition, seeing all the maidens of the city coming to the well might have overwhelmed him. Which of all these young women would be the one for his master's son? How could he know? Ah! He would pray: he would ask God to fulfill a certain requirement. This is what he prayed: "O Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 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." Students, how would the servant know who was the right bride for Isaac? [The one who volunteered to give water not only to him but also to his camels.]

### ***Rebekah's work***

Before he had even finished his prayer, pretty Rebekah, the granddaughter of Abraham's brother, came to the well with her water jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up.

Abraham's servant did not yet know who she was, but he ran to meet her and asked, "Please give me a little water to drink from your jar."

She answered, "Drink, my lord." And she quickly let down her jar and gave him a drink. Oh, that was nice. She is giving a drink to the servant, but will she offer to water the camels? I wonder—. [Pause for effect.]

When Rebekah had finished giving the servant a drink [pause], she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking."

✓ "Whew! and wow! Is this really happening?" That's what I would have thought. But the servant gazed in silence, thinking, "Is this already the woman God wants?"

She quickly emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well to draw water, and she drew for all his camels—back and forth, back and forth until all the camels were satisfied. [The amount of water Rebekah provided for the camels is given in the camel puppet script below.] Abraham's servant could only stare at her in silence, still wondering whether the Lord had prospered his journey or not.

### ***The servant's revelation***

When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half shekel [✓ worth about \$250 in 2013], and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels [✓ worth over \$5000 in 2013] and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

She said to him, "I am the granddaughter of Nahor. We have plenty of both food and room to spend the night."

Yes, God had answered the servant's prayer! Rebekah was from Abraham's family! The man bowed his head and worshiped the Lord and said out loud, "Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the Lord has led me in

the way to the house of my master's kinsmen.”

✓ “Abraham?” Rebekah asked. “Did you say Uncle Abraham? I need to go tell my family!” And she ran and told her mother and her brother, Laban, about these things.

### ***The family's response***

As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms and heard the words of Rebekah, Laban ran out to the man, to the well. He said, “Come in, O blessed of the Lord. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

So the servant came to the house, unharnessed the camels, gave them straw and fodder, washed his feet, and went in to dinner. But he would not eat. He said, “I will not eat until I have said what I have to say.”

Laban said, “Go ahead; speak on.”

Then the servant reported everything that had happened—from his oath to Abraham to his prayer to God at the well to Rebekah's obvious answer to prayer. Giving glory to God, this faithful servant said, “Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master by giving Rebekah for my master's bride, tell me; and if not, tell me, ✓that I may do something else.”

“Obviously,” Laban answered, “the thing has come from the Lord. Look, Rebekah is here; you may take her. Let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken.”

When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord. He brought out silver and gold jewelry and clothes and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

### ***Rebekah's departure***

When they got up in the morning, the servant announced, “I need to get back home to my master.”

“So soon?” said Laban and Rebekah's mother, “Let Rebekah stay with us at least ten days; after that she may go.”

But Mr. Servant replied, “Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.”

They answered, “Well, let us call Rebekah and ask her.”

They called Rebekah and asked her, “Will you go with this man today?”

She said, “I will go.”

So Laban and the mother ✓packed quickly and sent away Rebekah with her nurse—the lady who had cared for her since she was a child. But before she left, Rebekah's family blessed her, saying,

“Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!” (“Possess the gates of your enemies”? That sounds like part of the Abrahamic covenant! It is!)

### ***The caravan's trip***

Then Rebekah and her nurse rode on the camels and followed the man, traveling about another month or six weeks in order to get back to Canaan.

Late one afternoon as they drew closer to Rebekah's new home, Isaac was out meditating in the field.

✓Maybe he was wondering about his servant's task. “Has he found a girl? Will she return with my servant? What is she like?” He lifted up his eyes and, look, there were ten camels coming.

Rebekah lifted up *her* eyes, and when she saw Isaac out in the field coming out to meet them, she dismounted from her camel and asked the servant, “Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?”

The servant said, “It is my master.”

So, as was the custom in those days, Rebekah took her veil and covered her face.

When Isaac drew near, the servant told Isaac all the things he had done and how God had blessed his task. Then Isaac married Rebekah and brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother. He loved Rebekah and was comforted after his mother’s death.

### Lessons from this lesson:

- We see Jesus:  
This story is a picture of God's finding a bride for His Son, Jesus. Those who are born again—the church—are called the Bride of Christ.
- If you are a servant, and you are (of Christ and of earthly employers), be faithful even if it means you have to do hard, difficult things.
- When God blesses your efforts, give Him the praise.
- The servant was an ambassador—always drawing attention by his actions and words to his master, Abraham. We are ambassadors for Jesus Christ. Our words and actions should draw attention to Him, not ourselves.
- The servant is unnamed. “He [Christ] must increase; I must decrease” (John 3:30).

### Activities:

- Play dough: camel; well; jar
- Add two items to the bulletin board, “Well, Lots of Things Happened at Wells.” For printables and a photo of the finished bulletin board, go to the Extras page at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org).
- Sing the whole song, “Abraham” or just the 13<sup>th</sup> stanza found in Lesson 08.01 or on the Songs page at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org).
- Present the camel puppet skit found below. (A two-dimensional camel puppet pattern with instructions and three skits can be found on the Extras page at [teachingthebibletokinds.org](http://teachingthebibletokinds.org).)
- Designate an area in the classroom for Canaan and for Nahor/Haran. As the teacher reads a word, students go to the correct area associated with that word. Abraham (Canaan); Rebekah (Nahor/Haran); Laban (Nahor/Haran); altars to God (Canaan); Sarah’s grave (Canaan); well (Nahor/Haran); six weeks’ journey from Hebron (Nahor/Haran); fields where a future husband meditated (Canaan); the servant (Canaan and Nahor/Haran)
- Sword drill:  
How many camels? 1 Samuel 30:17 (400); 2 Kings 8:9a (40); 1 Chronicles 5:21a (50,000); Job 1:3a (3,000); Job 42:12 (6,000)  
What did camels carry? Genesis 37:25 (spices, balm, myrrh); 1 Kings 10:2 (spices, gold, precious stones); 2 Kings 8:9a (every good thing of Damascus); 1 Chronicles 12:40 (bread, meat, meal, figs, raisins, wine, oil, *etc.*); Isaiah 60:6b (gold, incense); Esther 8:14 (postmen, mail); Isaiah 30:6b (treasures)
- Snack: camel-shaped cut-out sugar cookies
- Review questions: (Game: place a felt water jar on the flannel board for each correct answer.)
  1. How many years did Isaac live before his mother, Sarah, died? [Thirty-seven years.]
  2. What did Abraham ask his chief servant to do? [Go to his father’s land to find a wife for Isaac.]

3. How did the God answer the servant's prayer at the well? [A girl gave him a drink and watered his camels.]
4. What was the name of the girl who watered the camels? [Rebekah.]
5. What did the servant do every time God answered his prayers? [Praised God and worshiped.]
6. What was the name of Rebekah's brother? [Laban.]
7. How did Rebekah respond when asked if she would go with the servant immediately? [She agreed to go.]
8. Who was walking in the field when Rebekah and the servant arrived in Canaan? [Isaac.]
9. Can people involved in arranged marriages love each other? If yes, give an example. [Yes. Isaac and Rebekah.]

**Memory Verse[s]:**

- Genesis 24:27 (KJV)—“Blessed be the LORD God . . . who has not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me . . .”

**Handwork:**

- Make a paper camel. See video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTIU-i2GeQU>.



*Canaanites*

*to swear*

*a nurse*

*to meditate*



## Camel Puppet Script, Part 2

by Marilyn Alexander

(Part 1 may be found at Lesson 08.01; Part 3 may be found at Lesson 10.07.)  
(Information taken from a National Geographic site for children and from other sites.)

Hello, children. Remember me, Camille the Camel, whose name means “beauty”? Even if you don’t think I’m pretty, I want to remind you that my Maker, the Lord of heaven and earth, made me so perfect for my environment that I actually am quite beautiful. I already told you about God’s design of my hump, my legs and feet, my spit, my eyes, and my size and age. Today I’ll tell you about my blood cells, my sweat, and my ability to drink water. Here we go.

1. My blood cells. Unlike other mammals who have round ones, camels have oval-shaped red blood cells. This design ensures that my blood will flow even if I become dehydrated. That brings up another cool feature.

2. My sweat. I rarely sweat; so I can conserve fluids for long periods of time. In fact, while most mammals can lose only 15% of their body fluids before becoming dehydrated, I can lose 25% of my body fluids. Also, God made my coat to reflect rather than absorb sunlight.

3. My nostrils. I can close my nostrils against wind and sand and still be able to breathe. Another thing: You know, don’t you, that when we exhale, we all breathe out water vapor. I do too, but Christ, my Creator, made my nostrils to trap my water vapor and return it to my body fluids. Oh, isn’t He amazing?!

4. My ability to drink water. In winter, eating plants gives me enough moisture to live without water for several weeks. When I do refill, however, I can soak up water like a sponge. If I’m really thirsty, I can drink 30 gallons of water in only 13 minutes.

Can you imagine the work Rebekah had to do in order to satisfy ten thirsty camels after crossing a desert? Do the math. Let’s say Rebekah had a five-gallon pail like this. [Teacher, show the pail.] She probably didn’t, but let’s calculate how many times she would have to go to the well in order to water just one camel. Five gallons times what equals 30? [Six.] It would take six trips to the well to water just one camel. How many camels did the servant bring? [Ten.] How many times would she go to the well for ten camels? [Sixty.] Her water jug probably wasn’t this big. No wonder the servant was pleased with such a hard-working maiden. God blessed the servant just as He has blessed me, the camel.

Thank you, my friends, for listening to me bragging about my awesome design. Of course, though, I can’t brag on myself. I am really bragging on my awesome Creator. He does everything right.



<https://theseandthose.pardes.org/2012/11/09/pcje-dvar-torah-chayei-sarah-the-power-of-prayer/>







[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexandre\\_Cabanel\\_-\\_Rebecca\\_et\\_Eli%27%20-%201883.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alexandre_Cabanel_-_Rebecca_et_Eli%27%20-%201883.jpg)









