

Exegetical Notes – Genesis 24:29-66

“She Became His Wife”

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(Genesis answers three basic theological questions. The first question is, “Whose world is it anyway?” The text answers the question by affirming that it is God’s world by right of creation. It is God’s world because God made it. The second question Genesis asks is “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way?” The answer is by trusting God and obeying Him. To this point in the text, Abraham has been the model of a man who trusts God and obeys Him even though Abraham is not a perfect model of trust and obedience. The first two questions have been answered. At this point in the Book of Genesis the text turns toward the third question which Genesis asks, “How do I get along in God’s world God’s way particularly with the members of our own family. Abraham’s family has grown with the births of his sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Abraham has an extended family with the births to his brother, Nahor (see Genesis 22:20-24). Family becomes the concern. And Genesis begins to answer the third question.)

Genesis 24:29-66

Verses 29-33

²⁹ Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. ³⁰ As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. ³¹ “Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

³² So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. ³³ Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.” Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. ³⁰ As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister’s arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near

the spring. ³¹ “Come, you who are blessed by the Lord,” he said. “Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels.”

³² So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. ³³ Then food was set before him, but he said, “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.”

“Then tell us,” Laban said.

- After meeting Rebekah at the town well, the chief servant in Abraham’s household, who had been sent to find a wife for Isaac, Abraham’s son, was convinced that she was the woman God had chosen for Isaac to marry (see Genesis 24:1-28). The servant gave her rich gifts and asked if he might spend the night under the protection of her family. She then returned home and told her family what had happened.
- Laban, Rebekah’s older brother, listened to Rebekah’s story and went to the well to invite the servant to come and stay in his household, which the servant did.
- The requirements of hospitality were followed, and Abraham’s servant was welcomed into Laban’s household. But before eating the meal prepared for him, the servant felt compelled to tell Laban why he was in their town.

Verses 34-38

³⁴ So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. ³⁵ The Lord has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ My master’s wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. ³⁷ And my master made me swear an oath, and said, ‘You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, ³⁸ but go to my father’s family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.’

- Abraham’s servant then explained his mission to Laban.

Verses 39-41

³⁹ “Then I asked my master, ‘What if the woman will not come back with me?’ He replied, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father’s family. ⁴¹ You will be released from my

oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.'

- It is important to note that Abraham's servant does not leave out any of the details in recounting his story to Laban. He is entirely open and tells it all to Laban. There is no deceit or deception in this conversation. All the details are revealed.

Verses 42-46

⁴² "When I came to the spring today, I said, 'Lord, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. ⁴³ See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar," ⁴⁴ and if she says to me, "Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too," let her be the one the Lord has chosen for my master's son.'

⁴⁵ "Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.'

⁴⁶ "She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

- Abraham's servant then revealed to Laban the circumstances that convinced him that Rebekah was the woman God wanted to become Isaac's wife.
- Again, there is nothing held back.

Verses 47-49

⁴⁷ "I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?'

"She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.'

"Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, ⁴⁸ and I bowed down and worshiped the Lord. I praised the Lord, the God of my master

Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. ⁴⁹ Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

- After revealing all that had happened honestly and openly to Laban, the servant asked if he was willing to allow Rebekah to become Isaac's wife or not.
- There is no deceit or deception in this family conversation. The fact that so much space is given to the repetition of all the details reveals the

importance of honesty in family dealings. There is no deceit or deception here. All is revealed.

Verses 50-51

⁵⁰ Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has directed."

- Hearing the details, everyone agreed that Rebekah should become Isaac's wife. They are agreed that this is YHWH's will, and they are resolved to please God above all else. This should be the attitude in every family. Their mission should be to put the will of the Lord above all else.
- Notice that the decision to give Rebekah in marriage to Isaac is made by her father and her brother without first discussing it with her. There are two extenuating circumstances which make this fact of less concern. First, it is assumed that Rebekah will share the family's concern to do as YHWH directs. She will submit to the plan God has for her and for her family without question. Her self-interests are less important than those of her family and of pleasing God. She knows that God's will comes first. Second, she has accepted the rich gifts of Abraham's servant which means that she has obligated herself to him.

Verses 52-56

⁵² When Abraham's servant heard what they said, he bowed down to the ground before the Lord. ⁵³ Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. ⁵⁴ Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

⁵⁵ But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you may go."

⁵⁶ But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the Lord has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master."

- Abraham's servant worships YHWH and give thanks that the matter has all been settled. His mission is successfully completed.
- The next morning, when he is prepared to leave, Laban and his mother tried to delay the departure. They ask the servant to delay the departure for 10

days or so so that they can say good bye to Rebekah. It is unlikely that they will ever see her again once she leaves.

- But Abraham's servant is eager to leave because he seeks to please Abraham.
- In this detail, there is no agreement between all the members of the family.

Verses 57-61

⁵⁷ Then they said, "Let's call the young woman and ask her about it." ⁵⁸ So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

"I will go," she said.

⁵⁹ So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you increase

***to thousands upon thousands;
may your offspring possess
the cities of their enemies."***

⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

- They all agree to ask Rebekah about the departure. She was perfectly willing to leave immediately.
- A parting blessing is prayed over her by her family, and she left her father's house to go to become Isaac's wife.

Verses 62-66

⁶² Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. ⁶³ He went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. ⁶⁴ Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel ⁶⁵ and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?"

"He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

⁶⁶ Then the servant told Isaac all he had done.

- One evening, Isaac had gone out into the fields to meditate. As he did so, he looked up and saw a caravan approaching.
- At the same moment, Rebekah looked up and saw him in the fields.
- She asked Abraham's servant if he knew the man she saw and the servant told her that it was Isaac.

- She covered her face with a veil. It was a sign of modesty and respect.
- The servant then repeated the details of what had happened to Isaac. As all the details were revealed to Rebekah's family so the details are revealed to Abraham's family. Again, the text emphasizes the necessity for family members to be open and honest with each other and that the family's highest goal should be to follow the plan of God.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon based on Genesis 24:29-66. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. All rights are reserved by Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)