

Skill Builder

Reread the passage; what else stands out?

Further Observations

Themes (Main Ideas)

INTERPRETATION – Lord, help me to understand it.

Genesis 24 provides the first instance that marriage customs are highlighted in the Bible. Marriage customs among nomadic groups such as Abraham's were often designed to maintain the social continuity as well as the continuation of the group. Marriage contracts were often arranged by the father or oldest male kin to benefit the family and ensure that the children would be brought up in a way that would be a credit to the group as a whole. Marriage outside the kinship group was generally discouraged.

This passage never mentions the servant's name. He may have been Eliezer, who is mentioned in Genesis 15:2, but this story takes place nearly 50 years later, so Eliezer may have been dead by this time. The probable reason he is not named is that he is going in the name of Isaac, not acting on his own behalf. Abraham is now 140 years old (Isaac was

40) and the journey to Mesopotamia was over 500 miles. It was too difficult a trip for Abraham to make himself.

The act of the servant placing his hand under Abraham's thigh to swear an oath to carry out his requests was a Middle Eastern custom that signified that it was a very solemn oath. Jacob's dying charge to Joseph in Genesis 47:29 was similarly enforced. The "thigh" was actually a euphemism for the body's procreative parts, the source of offspring. Some believed that a vow made by placing the hand there created the sense that the oath was being made in the presence of one's descendants, with them as witnesses to the vow. Because what was about to take place would determine the continuation of Abraham's seed, this was an appropriate form for the oath to take.

4. Abraham asks the servant to swear to two restrictions in his mission to find a wife for Isaac. What are they and why is each significant? See also Genesis 12:1, Deuteronomy. 7:3-4, 1 Kings 11:14, 1 Corinthians 7:39.

5. Why is it so important for Isaac's bride to be chosen with such care?

St. Augustine said, "The Old Testament is the New Testament contained; the New Testament is the Old Testament explained", and we know that all Scripture points to Jesus in some way. One technique used to accomplish this is the use of *types* in the Old Testament which relate to *antitypes* in the New Testament. A *type* is a person or thing in the Old Testament believed to foreshadow another in the New Testament (Webster). The *antitype* (or the person or thing being represented) is always easier to understand than the *type* and is superior to it, just as your shadow is not the complete, real you but the complete, real you is necessary to create the shadow. Two examples of type are Adam and Jonah (see 1 Corinthians 15:22 and Matthew 12:40).

6. The characters in Genesis 24 can be seen as types for entities in the New Testament. For each character, check the provided cross-reference and then list the New Testament antitype and how this character foreshadows what is to come.

Type	Antitype	Person or Event Foreshadowed
Abraham (John 14:26)		
Isaac (Hebrews 11:17, John 3:16)		
Servant (John 16:13-14)		
Rebekah (Ephesians 5:25-32)		

7. How is the purpose and importance of prayer demonstrated in this narrative? Why do you think the servant prayed so specifically, i.e.,

did he need to tell God exactly what to do? Explain your answer using examples from the Text.

The task the servant was asking of the girl in his prayer was no small feat. A camel drinks more than 20 gallons of water at a time, especially after a long journey in hot territory. Ten camels would drink about 200 gallons and the pitchers the girls carried likely held no more than 1 gallon. It would take several hours to provide water to all of them.

James M. Boice, *Genesis: A New Beginning*

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8. Identify Spiritual Principles: (Refer to p.11- 4 or the Spiritual Principles handout to review the concept.)
- What statements of truth about the themes and main ideas of Genesis 22:20 – 24, 24:1 – 27 can be declared?
 - What does Genesis 22:20 – 24, 24:1 – 27 reveal about God's character?

c. What do you know to be true according to God's Word that is applicable across time and culture?

what do I know
to be true? ✓

APPLICATION – Lord, help me to live it!

9. How is the servant's task similar to our task of evangelizing? What principles can we derive from this passage that could help us in sharing the gospel with others?

10. What elements of the servant's prayers and resulting actions can you use in your own prayer life? (See also James 4:2-3, Nehemiah 4:7-9, Isaiah 38:5, 21, 1 John 5:14.)

11. This passage illustrates both trust in God and in human relationships. What principles about trust can you apply to situations in your life right now? Are there circumstances where you need to learn to trust God more fully? Situations where you need to rely on the help of others or where others need to be able to depend on you?

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Further Applications:

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION OR CONTEMPLATION:

- I) Considering the types and antitypes identified in question 6, what similarities can you identify in each set? (Example: Rebekah/the Church – loved and cherished by the son/Son.)
- II) The Text states that the servant was the oldest in Abraham's household. Think about the years he had been with Abraham, watching Abraham's faith grow and be tested. The servant's journey to Nahor (Haran) would have been around 450 miles. Estimating that a loaded camel can travel about 25 miles per day, the servant would have had a three-week journey to ponder his task. Now review his prayer in verses 12-14. What can you surmise about the servant's faith?

 *Cole Women's Bible Study Writing Team, 2019*

Cross References for Lesson 21

☐ **Genesis 12:1**

Now the LORD said to Abram,

“Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;

☐ **Deuteronomy 7:3-4**

³ Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me to serve other gods; then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and He will quickly destroy you.

☐ **1 Kings 11:14**

¹⁴ Then the LORD raised up an adversary to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the royal line in Edom.

☐ **1 Corinthians 7:39**

³⁹ A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

☐ **1 Corinthians 15:22**

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

☐ **Matthew 12:40**

⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

☐ **James 4:2-3**

² You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

☐ **Nehemiah 4:7-9**

⁷Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, *and* that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. ⁸All of them conspired together to come *and* fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it.

⁹But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.

☐ **Isaiah 38:5**

⁵“Go and say to Hezekiah, ‘Thus says the LORD, the God of your father David, ‘I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life.’

☐ **Isaiah 38:21**

²¹Now Isaiah had said, “Let them take a cake of figs and apply it to the boil, that he may recover.”

☐ **1 John 5:14**

¹⁴This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.



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