

Dec 31, 2006 AM

**A BRIDE FOR THE PROMISED SEED  
GENESIS 24.1-67**

Structure: 22.20–25.18. A and A<sup>1</sup>: Nahor (22.20-24) and Ishmael (25.12-18). B and B<sup>1</sup>: deaths of a mother, Sarah (23), and a father, Abraham (25.7-11). C and C<sup>1</sup>: the promised seed:: the provision of a bride (24) and the protection of the seed by separation (25.1-6).

**1. THE NECESSITY OF A BRIDE FOR THE SEED (1-9)**

*The blessing of Abraham (1):* Necessity set up by death of Sarah; Abraham's time is coming to an end.

Now it is time for Isaac to pick up the promise and live out the story. But in order to do this the new man must have a new bride because it is not good for man to be alone. In order for there to be a new Adam and a new Eve, there must be a new Eve.

*The commissioning of the servant (2-4):* Could be Eliezar of Damascus (15.2), but not named. He is an adopted son of Abraham.

This servant stands to inherit everything if Abraham doesn't have a seed (cf. 15.2). Temptation for the servant: become a rival.

Under the thigh: assoc. with private parts; the mission of the servant has to do with providing a bride for Abraham's seed; the servant is being trusted not to attack the seed.

The servant is commissioned to go to Abraham's family. Isaac must marry his "sister." The brother-sister relationship is foundational to and precedes the marriage relationship. (I explained this earlier when dealing with Abraham and Sarah.)

*The son must not go back to that land (5-8):* He cannot go back because God called him out to possess the land of Canaan.

Angel of YHWH: three earlier occasions in Genesis: (1) when Hagar fled from before Sarai (16); (2) when Hagar was driven out of the house (21); and (3) when Abraham offered up Isaac (22). The Angel provides, protects, and leads people in "strange lands."

But if the servant cannot find a wife, he will be released from the oath. Temptation: don't work too hard finding a bride.

*The loyalty of the servant (9):* Abraham entrusts the servant with the preservation of the seed line, and the servant commits himself by oath to fulfill this responsibility.

**2. THE SECURING OF A BRIDE FOR THE SEED (10-61)**

*Arriving in the land of living water (10-11):* The servant had the authority to do what needed to be done, to give what needed to be given, in order to secure the bride.

Mesopotamia = Aram Nahariaim = Aram of the two rivers. In this area was the city of Nahor, his brother.

The servant stops by a well of water in the evening when the women come to draw water.

Water is prominent in the story. Water, wells, women, and marriage are all symbolically connected in Scripture. Cf. Song 4.12ff.; Prov 5.15-18; women/wives are garden springs/fountains from whom is supposed to flow living waters.

Connection with original Garden and Eve, the mother of all living. From her will come children that will go into the four corners of the earth to take dominion as the rivers flow through the Garden to the four corners of the earth.

In marriage the husband unlocks this spring or unseals this fountain so that her waters flow. Several times in the Bible the connection is made between meeting women at wells and marriage. Cf. Gen 29.1ff (Jacob and Rachel); Ex 2 (Moses and Zipporah); John 4 (Jesus and the Samaritan woman).

God is about to arrange a marriage from which waters will flow in a new creation. Note though: Rebekah is barren (25.21).

*Request for a sign (12-14):* servant prays on the basis of God's covenant love for Abraham.

*The woman at the well (15-28):* Rebekah is beautiful; she is a virgin. The promised seed must marry a virgin.

The virginity of the bride-to-be is an important theme in Scripture. Note the High Priest in Lev 21.13-15. Others could marry widows and divorcees (under certain circumstances), but not the high priest.

Christ will have a virgin bride presented to him; cf. 2 Cor 11.2.

Rebekah is hospitable and industrious: empties jar “quickly” and “runs” back to draw more water; cf. Prov 31.

Once he learns that she is Abraham’s great-niece, Bethuel’s daughter, son of Nahor by Milcah (another of Abe’s nieces), he puts the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. She knows what this means: these are tokens of marriage.

All of this jewelry is not only for adornment, but it is the money given to a bride that will be her “insurance” for the future. That is, she will have some financial independence so that if something happens to her husband—death or divorce—she will have enough to live on. (Heb = *mohar*).

Tells her *mother’s household* (v. 28). Mothers emphasized: Sarah, Milcah, Isaac takes Rebekah into his mother’s tent later. Mothers are “producers,” protectors, and providers of/for the seed. Cf. Gen 3.15

**Laban’s hospitality (29-33a):** Laban sees the tokens of marriage, and being his sister’s protector, the one who will negotiate the terms of his sister’s marriage, he runs to meet this man by the well. Laban could believe that this is simply a good match or he could be greedy. Reality probably falls between the two.

**Fasting until the mission is fulfilled (33b-49):** Later: Jews vow to kill Paul and refuse to eat or drink until the mission is accomplished (Ac 23.12); Jesus fasts from wine until mission is accomplished.

The repetition of the event could be a second witness to God’s Word. It is relayed to Laban, Bethuel, and Bethuel’s wife.

**Submission to the will of YHWH (50-51):** There is fear of YHWH here.

**Adornment of the bride (52-53):** This is not a “bride-price;” the servant is not buying Rebekah. Not quite a dowry as we understand in the West. This is the Heb *mohar*, “insurance” provided by the bride-groom for the financial security of the wife in case anything happens to the husband.

The brother is generally responsible for seeing this price negotiated. He must make sure that his sister is protected. This Abraham’s servant provides for Rebekah. Remember, he has all of Abraham’s wealth in his hands.

**Eating and drinking when the bride is secured (54a):** A meal is eaten once the bride has been secured.

**Leaving father and mother, brothers and sisters (54b-61):** The woman must leave family as well as the man to est. household.

Family doesn’t want Rebekah to leave immediately. Rebekah makes the final decision. (Note: the bride-to-be has a choice, she is not be forced into an unwanted marriage.)

Rebekah is referred to as her family’s *sister* (vv. 59, 60). There is a larger family understanding.

Blessing on Rebekah: multiplication (a productive fountain) and seed possessing gate of enemies (cp. 22.17; little did Laban know at that time that Rebekah’s seed would possess *his* gates).

### 3. THE MARRIAGE OF THE BRIDE TO THE SEED (62-67)

**Women, wives, and wells ... again (62):** Beer-lahai-roi = well where Hagar met Angel of YHWH. “God sees.”

**The man and the woman in the field (63-66):** “my master” = Isaac; he is the “replacement” of Abraham. “Veil” = “an enclosed garden.” She is a virgin. At their wedding the husband will be able to remove the veil and enter his garden.

**The tent of Sarah and the new mother (67):** Now there is a new mother so Isaac can be comforted.

(1) Christ, the Bridegroom, will be presented with a pure virgin on the day of marriage.