

Genesis 24:10-15

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Abraham's servant loads ten camels with costly gifts and journeys to the city of Haran in Mesopotamia. At the well there, the servant prays for a sign from God. He asks that a woman would give him water and water his camels, and that this would confirm that she was the wife for Isaac.

Abraham's servant prepared for the journey to *Mesopotamia*, where Abraham originally came from.

Abraham's servant *took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand.* This *variety of good things* is shown later in the chapter, including "articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments" to prove the wealth of Abraham and provide gifts ([Genesis 24:53](#)). The camels alone were a sign of wealth.

Fitted for the great journey, Abraham's servant *arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.* Mesopotamia is the Greek name for that region, literally meaning "between the two rivers," specifically the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers. Abraham's extended family had settled in Haran, in Mesopotamia, on the journey to Canaan ([Genesis 11:31](#)). The *city of Nahor* was most likely Haran, since that is where Nahor (Abraham's brother) put down roots. It was also where Laban, the future brother-in-law to Isaac, is shown to live ([Genesis 27:43](#)). Laban appears in this chapter as well.

After such a journey, the servant made *the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time*, which was around *the time when women go out to draw water.* The servant took this moment to pray to God. It weighed on his mind to successfully find a wife for Isaac. This servant was probably Eliezer, who at one point in time was in line to be Abraham's heir, when Abraham had no children of his own ([Genesis 15:2](#)). Therefore, as Abraham's oldest and most trusted servant, and someone essentially considered a part of the family, this errand was personal for Eliezer. He had known Isaac from birth and was something of an older brother to him, he wanted to please Abraham his master and make sure his heir married the right woman.

So the servant prayed to God. First he makes a general request for help, *O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and*

show lovingkindness to my master Abraham. It is interesting to note the motivation for this plea; the servant asks for *success*, if the *LORD, God of his master Abraham* will *grant* it, because this would be a *show of lovingkindness* to his *master*. The servant loves Abraham and Abraham's family, and is not praying only from personal anxiety about completing the task. It is a prayer for the love of his *master*.

The servant then constructs a scenario which would prove God's will. He asks for a sign from God, but it is a specific sign he asks of God, given his present circumstance: *Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.* It was apparently a time of day when people came to draw water from the spring. That is the servant's current circumstance. He then makes a request for a sign: *now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'—may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac;*

The *jar* of a *girl* coming would be the container used to draw the water, then carry back into the *city*. The servant is asking God to direct him to a girl who will have the kindness and generosity to not only provide him a drink from the jar, but also offer to water his camels. Camels can drink a lot of water. Each camel might have been able to drink 20 gallons or more, after their journey. Assuming the girl's jar held four gallons, that means she would have been offering to refill her jar fifty times in order to serve this stranger with hospitality. This sign would make it clear that God has granted real favor. The servant tells God *and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master.*

There are a few other times in the Bible where people pray to God for signs of their own construction. Gideon puts a fleece of wool on the floor and asks God to put dew on it and keep the floor dry, to answer the question of whether or not God would truly save Israel from the Midianites through his leadership ([Judges 6:36-40](#)). During war with the Philistines, Prince Jonathan and his armor bearer openly challenge a company of Philistines, determining that based on the enemy's response, God would either hand him victory or defeat. The Philistines called Jonathan to come fight them, and so he knew God would grant him success ([1 Samuel 14:8-10](#)).

The prayer of Abraham's servant asks God simply that whichever *girl* who had come to the *spring* to *draw water* would offer to give him and his *camels* water *also, may she be the one* whom God chose for *Isaac*. By this generous reaction from the young woman, the servant would *know that* God

had *shown lovingkindness* to his *master* Abraham, that she was the one whom Isaac should marry.

God answered the servant's prayer before it had ended: *Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder.*

Rebekah was mentioned in [Genesis 22:23](#), "and it was Bethuel who fathered Rebekah." She was Abraham's great-niece, and Isaac's second cousin, though neither of them had ever met her.

Biblical Text:

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. ¹¹ He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹² He said, "O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham. ¹³ "Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; ¹⁴ now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'—*may she be the one* whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master." ¹⁵ Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder.