

Genesis 24:32-41

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At dinner, Abraham's servant explains his reason for coming to Haran. He tells Rebekah and her family of Abraham's wealth, that he has been blessed by God. He reveals that he journeyed to Haran to find a wife for Abraham's son.

So the man, Abraham's servant, entered the house of Rebekah's family.

Laban, her brother, takes care of the animals. Leading them to the family's barn, he unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels. His hospitality extends to Abraham's servant, bringing him water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. These men who were with him were other servants of Abraham, previously unmentioned but implied, who had accompanied him on the journey. No single man could have made the journey from Canaan to Haran leading a train of ten camels. Laban would likely have been quite impressed at this point. A caravan of ten camels was formidable. It demonstrated considerable wealth.

Using *water to wash feet* is seen elsewhere in the Bible. Sandals were the most common footwear, and any length of travel would result in filthy feet. Washing guests' feet was a sign of respect and honor. Abraham called for water to wash the feet of his guests in [Genesis 18:4](#). Jesus noted the rudeness of Simon, a Pharisee who had invited Him to his house to eat, in that he did not offer Jesus water for His feet when He first arrived ([Luke 7:44](#)). Most notably, Jesus washed His disciples' feet at the Last Supper and told them to serve others likewise.

Dinner is prepared for the hungry travelers, but *when food was set before Abraham's servant to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business."* His sole purpose for having come to Haran weighs on his mind. He asked for a specific sign from God to confirm the woman who was meant for Isaac, and God answered him with perfect clarity: Rebekah. She gave the servant a drink and watered his camels; she is a blood relative of Abraham. So the servant does not want to delay in explaining his *business* being there, not even to eat, though he was surely very hungry.

And Laban said, Speak on.

So the servant said, *I am Abraham's servant*. Until now, Rebekah's family did not know who this stranger was or who he represented. Earlier, in [Genesis 22](#), Abraham received news about the many children his brother had. It is unknown if Abraham ever sent news back that he finally had a son of his own—Isaac. These families lived far apart and had not seen each other in decades. Laban and Rebekah would have heard of Abraham, their great uncle who followed God's command to settle in Canaan, who took their cousin Lot and other family members with him many years ago.

The servant updates Laban and Rebekah on Abraham's life since leaving Haran. He tells them, *The Lord has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys*. Abraham is wealthy and powerful—he is *rich*, he has *flocks and herds*. He has made his living as a successful herdsman or rancher. He possesses *silver and gold, servants and maids, camels and donkeys*. But this great wealth is attributed to the *LORD*, not Abraham. The *LORD has greatly blessed Abraham*.

But, the servant explains, the *LORD's* greatest blessing on Abraham was the Son of Promise, Isaac: *Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age*. This servant has not forgotten the miraculous nature of Isaac's birth, that his mother *Sarah bore him to Abraham in her old age*. Both Abraham and Sarah had thought this impossible at first, but ultimately had faith that God would fulfill His promise. And so Isaac was born. He was now a grown man, and *Abraham has given him all that he has*. All of Abraham's wealth belongs to Isaac. This is important for what the servant is building up to—the marriage proposal. His master is rich, and now the master's son, Isaac, is the sole inheritor of his master's estate. The servant was clever in giving the great gifts of gold, which made it clear that the riches were substantial.

The servant then gives the reason for his long journey to Haran: *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 live; but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.'*

The servant explained his own reservations about how successful this journey would be, *I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.'* He said to me, *'The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house; then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'*

Again, the LORD, *before whom* Abraham has faithfully *walked*, is given due credit for guiding the servant to Haran and making the *journey successful*. The servant cites Abraham's total confidence that he *will take a wife for his son from his relatives and from his father's house*. But, the servant specifies that he is off the hook too if no woman will follow him back to Canaan. As Abraham promised him, *you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath*. The servant is making it clear that there is no obligation laid upon Laban. This is an opportunity and an invitation.

At this point, the servant has fulfilled his *oath* to Abraham. He has made it to the house of Abraham's *relatives*. Whether or not any woman returns with him (*if they do not give her to you*) he is *free from the oath*.

But the servant seems to have a personal and sincere interest in the success of this journey. He prayed before at the well to find the right woman for Isaac, and she appeared immediately. He explains this in the following passage, attributing once more all successes to the LORD God.

Biblical Text:

³² **So the man entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. ³³ But when *food* was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business." And he said, "Speak on." ³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant.**

³⁵ **"The Lord has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ "Now Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age, and he has given him 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 live; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.' ³⁹ "I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.' ⁴⁰ "He said to me, 'The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house; ⁴¹ then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'**