

Genesis 24:42-49

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The servant recaps what happened at the well. He prayed for a sign from God revealing the woman whom Isaac should marry. Rebekah appeared and gave him a drink, then watered the ten camels of Abraham. So, the servant asks if her family will consent to the marriage of Rebekah and Isaac.

The servant explains his experience upon first arriving in Haran. He reveals the prayer he prayed to God, which led him to Rebekah, *So I came today to the spring, and said, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now You will make my journey on which I go successful;'* The servant calls God the *God of my master Abraham*. This further indicates the servant's loyalty to Abraham, that he is asking on behalf of Abraham. The servant now expresses a circumstance in which he makes his request, stating *behold, I am standing by the spring*. The servant is standing by the spring of water, with his camels, after arriving from a long journey.

Now the servant adds to the circumstance the proposition: *and may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar"; and she will say to me, "You drink, and I will draw for your camels also*. The sign the servant asks of God has three aspects. First he asks that a *maiden* come to the spring, which means his focus is on an unmarried woman. Second, he intends to ask the maiden for a drink of *water from her jar*.

The picture is of a maiden who has drawn water in her jar, who is now being asked to interrupt her work and give a drink to a stranger. But the main request is that *the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son* be a maiden who not only pauses to give the stranger a drink, but also offers to water all of his *camels*. Here the servant recounts exactly what he did, including his prayer to God. The passage tells us that the servant offered this prayer silently, in his *heart*.

The LORD's answer came immediately. Even quicker than immediately, because *before* the servant *had finished speaking in his heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder*. It is new information that he was *speaking in his heart*, since it was not specified earlier if he had prayed aloud or privately. *Rebekah came out with her jar* while he was in the midst of

his prayer. God had already sent the chosen woman to him, the woman who would ultimately bear Isaac's twin sons, Jacob and Esau. Jacob would go on to be renamed "Israel" by God, and father the twelve tribes of Israel.

The servant recounts the interaction he had with Rebekah, that she *went down to the spring and drew, and I said to her, 'Please let me drink.'* He noted that she had no reluctance at all, *She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder.* The fact that she lowered the jar *quickly* is noted, as she had an apparent readiness to be hospitable. Then the maiden spoke *and said, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also.'* At this point, the sign asked for by the servant looks more like God putting a thought in his heart. The servant waited to make sure the girl did as she committed to do, and says; *so I drank, and she watered the camels also.* The servant continues his story, recounting the events of the day. The maiden did exactly as she promised.

So the servant *asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?'* He might have been holding his breath, because the specific requirement from Abraham was that the servant fetch a bride for Isaac from among his relatives. *And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'.* It is a miracle, because Nahor is the brother of Abraham ([Genesis 11:27](#)). So the servant is now speaking to one of Abraham's relatives, just as he requested, and God has answered the sign.

At this point the servant notes the giving of the gifts of gold that he bestowed upon the girl, saying *and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.* Then, the servant was overwhelmed with gratitude for the LORD's answer to his prayer. Accordingly, he adds *And I bowed low and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham.* The servant notes in his story the miraculous events, that were clearly ordained by *the God of his master Abraham.* It was clear that this was providence at work. The servant declares that God *had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son Isaac.*

From this retelling we see that he had not yet gifted Rebekah with the *ring* for her *nose* and *the bracelets on her wrists* until he learned whose *daughter* she was. Upon learning that she belonged to Abraham's relatives, since she was *the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him,* the servant gave her the golden jewelry.

The servant has emphatically praised God in all his actions and speech. He attributed Abraham's wealth to the LORD, that his safe journey to Haran was due to the angel of the LORD leading him, and that the LORD *had*

guided him in the right way to take the daughter of his master's kinsman for his son Isaac.

His telling of his business functioned also as the marriage proposal. The gifts from Abraham, the gold *ring on her nose, and the gold bracelets on her wrists*, are possibly promises that a costly dowry will be paid to Rebekah's family, as was the custom of the day. It would also ensure that she will be well taken care of by Isaac.

The servant asks Laban if this marriage offer is acceptable to him, *So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left.*

The way he phrases this question is blunt. Since the servant is confident in the LORD's leading, he puts it to Laban, *if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master*. The proposition is clear. If Laban says "yes" then he will be dealing *kindly* with Abraham, the servant's *master*. If he says no, then he will be dealing unkindly. If he answers yes, he will be dealing *truly* with Abraham, the servant's master. The sense here is likely "do right by my master."

If Laban rejects the marriage proposal, the servant wants to know right away, so that he *may turn to the right hand or the left*, meaning so that he can decide what to do next. He waits for Laban's answer before he will say or do anything further.

It is noteworthy that the servant appears to be dialoging primarily with Laban, Rebekah's brother, in the presence of Bethuel the father. This is likely due to custom of the time, that the marriage and dowry was negotiated directly with the brother. This is why Abraham asked Sarah to tell the Egyptians she was his sister (which was true) instead of telling them she was his wife. Pharaoh was known to murder husbands in order to take women into his haram. The Egyptians would have to negotiate with Abraham for a dowry, and in doing so Abraham would have time to plot a rescue, as he would eventually for Lot ([Genesis 12:10-13; 14:16](#)).

Biblical Text:

⁴² **"So I came today to the spring, and said, 'O Lord, the God of my master Abraham, if now You will make my journey on which I go successful; ⁴³ behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, "Please let me drink**

a little water from your jar"; ⁴⁴ and she will say to me, "You drink, and I will draw for your camels also"; let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.' ⁴⁵ "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew, and I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' ⁴⁶ "She quickly lowered her jar from her *shoulder*, and said, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also'; so I drank, and she watered the camels also. ⁴⁷ "Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter are you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him'; and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. ⁴⁸ "And I bowed low and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. ⁴⁹ "So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left."