

# Bible Stories for Adults

## Isaac Marries Rebekah

Genesis 23-24, 26

### Opening

Gathering: Tell of a situation that appeared to be random at the time, but God's hand is evident when looking back.

Today's Focus: To recognize that God is in control of everything that happens in our lives and even works in what we might call coincidences or random occurrences.

Key Verses: *This is from the Lord; we can say nothing to you one way or the other.* Genesis 24:50

*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.* Genesis 2:24

*Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.* Galatians 4:28

Opening Prayer

### Lesson

Sarah Dies (*Genesis 23:1-9*)

What happened when Isaac was 37 years old?

Genesis 23:1-2 = His mother Sarah died

Besides losing his lifetime partner, what problem did this present for Abraham?

Genesis 23:3-4 = He didn't own any property, so he was unable to bury her

How did the Hittites respond to his request to buy a burial site?

Genesis 23:5-6 = They happily welcomed Abraham to name the site of his choosing

Did Abraham have a site in mind?

Genesis 23:7-9 = Yes, a nearby cave that could serve as a tomb

Ephron's Field (*Genesis 23:10-20*)

How did Ephron respond to this request?

Genesis 23:10-11 = He was present and offered to GIVE not only the cave but also the field

Note: Hittite laws said that a landowner remained liable for all dues if he sold only a part of a property

If an entire tract of property was passed on, the new owner was responsible for the dues

How did Abraham respond to this generous offer by Ephron?

Genesis 23:12-13 = He wanted to pay the full price for it, Didn't want it as a gift

Where have we seen a similar reaction by Abraham before, and why did he respond this way?

Genesis 14:21-23 = He limited his income to gifts from God, not from men

Did Ephron accept Abraham's money? = (contrast with field sold for 17 shekels in Jeremiah 32:9)

Genesis 23:14-16 = Yes, and named a very steep price (20 shekels for Joseph in Gen. 37:28)

Did Ephron deed over the entire field or only the cave that Abraham requested?

Genesis 23:17-20 = The whole field - Doing so removed Ephron from all liabilities

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### Abraham Puts His House In Order (*Genesis 24:1-9*)

What did the death of Sarah prompt Abraham to take care of before he died?

Genesis 24:1-4 = Get a wife for Isaac from his relatives

Why was it important that Isaac marry from within the family?

Genesis 17:7-10,14 = God had commanded Abraham to be a separate people

Who was this chief servant to whom Abraham entrusted the mission?

Genesis 15:2 = Possibly Eliezer of Damascus

What concerns did the servant have?

Genesis 24:5-6 = What if the woman doesn't come? Should Isaac go?

Why didn't Abraham want Isaac to go to Haran? = Abraham didn't know when or where slavery waited

Genesis 15:13, 18 = He was in the promised land, Descendants to be slaves in another land

Why wasn't Abraham concerned that the woman wouldn't come?

Genesis 24:7-8 = God would send His angel ahead to get a wife

How did Abraham make sure this would be done, even if he died first?

Genesis 24:9 = He made the servant swear an oath

### At The Well (*Genesis 24:10-14*)

How far was the servant's journey? = Aram Naharaim - *Aram of the rivers* (Mesopotamia)

Genesis 24:10 = Hebron to Haran, 500 miles, Around a month's journey

What tactic did the servant use to meet local girls? = God would bring the right one

Genesis 24:11 = Waited at well when women would come for water

What other wives did God bring to the well?

Genesis 29:1-2, 9 = Jacob met Rachel

Exodus 2:15-16, 21 = Moses met Zipporah

What did the servant do as soon as he arrived at the well?

Genesis 24:12-14 = He prayed for God's guidance & success

### God Brings Rebekah (*Genesis 24:15-27*)

How long did it take God to respond to the servant's prayer?

Genesis 24:15 = *Before he had finished praying*

What was Rebekah's relation to Isaac? = Draw family tree on board

Genesis 11:27-29 (22:20-24) = Rebekah was daughter of Isaac's cousin, Bethuel

What requirements had Abraham given his servant for his son's wife?

Genesis 24:4 = From my own relatives

What bonuses did God throw in? = ... energetic, kind, hospitable, industrious, decisive (rest of story)

Genesis 24:16 = Very beautiful, a virgin

How much did the servant coax Rebekah to complete the sign from God?

Genesis 24:17-21 = *Without saying a word, the man watched to see*

What did the servant do when it appeared that Rebekah might be the one?

Genesis 24:22 = Gave her a gold nose ring and gold bracelets

What was the final proof that Rebekah was the one God had sent?

Genesis 24:23-25 = She was of Abraham's family

How did the servant respond to this proof?

Genesis 24:26-27 = He bowed down and praised God

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### Brother Laban (*Genesis 24:28-32*)

How did Rebekah's brother Laban respond when he saw the expensive gifts Rebekah received?

Genesis 24:28-31 = He ran to invite the man into his house

What character traits does this indicate of Laban that are confirmed later?

Genesis 29:20-23 = Laban substituted Leah for Rachel after Jacob's 7 yrs

Genesis 31:19 = Laban kept household gods

Genesis 31:43, 29 = Claimed ownership of Jacob's family & possessions

### The Servant's Mission (*Genesis 24:33-52*)

How did the servant respond to the lavish hospitality?

Genesis 24:32-33 = He was anxious to fulfill his calling & refused to eat first

NOTE: It was bad manners to decline a host's food & to raise issues before casual meal talk

Did the servant say he would force Rebekah to return with him? = Put matters in God's hands

Genesis 24:34-41 = His oath was complete, She wouldn't be forced to go

What was the underlying message of the servant's recounting of events?

Genesis 24:42-48 = God had selected Rebekah to be Isaac's wife - God provides

Did Laban and Bethuel recognize this message?

Genesis 24:49-51 = Yes ... *This is from the Lord*

How did the servant respond when his mission met success?

Genesis 24:52 = He praised God

### Marriage Customs in Patriarchal Times (*Genesis 24:53-67*)

Parents of the man would choose the woman their son would marry

Was this custom followed for Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:3-4 = Abraham sent servant to get a wife for Isaac

Was this custom followed in the next generation?

Genesis 26:34-35 = Esau took Hittite wives for himself; *source of grief to Is and Reb*

Genesis 27:46-28:2 = Isaac sent Jacob to marry a cousin

The father of the woman would give his daughter to the future husband

Was this custom followed for Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:50-51 = Bethuel gave Rebekah to Isaac

A purchase price (*bride price*) was paid to the bride's father

Was this custom followed for Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:53 = The servant gave costly gifts

The bride's father gave his daughter a gift of property or a maid (*dowry*)

Was this custom followed for Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:59 = They sent Rebekah off with her nurse

The *betrothal* was an engagement period that was legally binding = Reversible only by divorce

Was this custom followed for Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:54-58 = Servant was in a hurry to return & begin the marriage

What was significant about the blessing Rebekah's family gave her?

Genesis 24:60 = Not knowing, they stated God's covenant thru Isaac

After the betrothal, the bride was brought to her husband's home

Was this custom followed for Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:61-66 = Rebekah was brought to Isaac's house

In this process, people would marry first, then love

Did this occur in Isaac's marriage?

Genesis 24:67 = *she became his wife, and he loved her*

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God Passes Covenant Promises to Isaac (*Genesis 26:1-5*)

Where did Isaac go during a time of famine, and why didn't he go to Egypt as his father had?

Genesis 26:1-2 = He went to Gerar in Philistia; God told him not to go to Egypt

What else did God say to Isaac, and why? = Because of the faithfulness of his father Abraham

Genesis 26:3-5 = He gave promises of blessings, land & descendants He'd made to Abraham

Who Is She? (*Genesis 26:6-11*)

How had Abraham displayed a lack of trust in God when living in other nations?

Genesis 12:11-13; 20:1-2 = He said Sarah was his sister, not his wife

Did Isaac learn from the mistakes of his father?

Genesis 26:6-7 = No, he took the same tactic

How did Isaac's situation turn out?

Genesis 26:8-11 = He was scolded by Abimelech, then given protection

God Blesses Isaac (*Genesis 26:12-33*)

How did God bless Isaac in Philistia?

Genesis 26:12-13 = He made him very wealthy with crops, flocks, herds and servants

How did this become a problem?

Genesis 26:14-16 = He grew too large and wealthy to be a welcome visitor in Philistia

Did Isaac take offense at Abimelech's request for him to leave?

Genesis 26:17-18 = No, he moved to the valley and reopened his father's wells

How did wells in this dry land become a problem for Isaac?

Genesis 26:19-22 = Philistines kept disputing water rights, finally found a place he could stay

Where did Isaac move next and what happened there?

Genesis 26:23-25 = Beersheba; God appeared to him & restated promise; Isaac worshipped

Why did the Philistine leaders track him down all the way to Beersheba?

Genesis 26:26-29 = They saw God was with him and wanted a treaty for protection

Abraham made a similar treaty at the same place with an earlier Abimelech (*Genesis 21:22-34*)

Did Isaac accept or refuse this request for a treaty?

Genesis 26:30-31 = He accepted it and made an oath just like his father had

How did this story reinforce the name of this place given earlier by Abraham?

Genesis 26:32-33 = They dug another well and named it *Well of the Oath* - Beersheba

Closing Prayer

## Response

1. Do I deal honestly with everyone, even when it is easy to take advantage of someone? (*Genesis 23:12-16; 2 Kings 12:15; Jeremiah 5:1; Luke 19:8; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12*)
2. Do I look for and recognize God's guiding hand in my daily life? (*Genesis 24:39-52; 2 Chronicles 18:1-8; Psalm 25:4-5; 48:14; 73:23-24; 119:105; Luke 11:9-10; 12:31*)
3. If I am married, do I submit to and love my spouse as God desires? (*Genesis 24:67; 29:20; Proverbs 5:15-20; Song of Songs; Ephesians 5:21-33*)
4. Are there sins that my family has passed among generations? How can I stop them? (*Genesis 26:7-10; Deuteronomy 5:9-10; 1 Kings 15:25-26; Psalm 78:8; Ezekiel 18; Joel 1:3*)
5. Do I praise God when he showers me with His blessings? (*Genesis 24:26-27, 52; 26:22-25; Psalm 69:30; 100:4-5; 105:1; Ezekiel 34:25-31; Luke 17:12-19; 2 Cor. 9:15; 1 Thess. 5:18*)