

## **Finding a Bride for Isaac (Genesis 24:1–27)**

Grace Chapel November 4, 2009 Dr. John Niemelä

### **INTRODUCTION**

### **NEW EXPOSITION**

**The *Toledot* of Terah (Gen 11:27–25:11) is nearing a close**

**(24:1) Abraham enjoyed God’s blessing (even) as he became quite old**

According to Genesis 17:17, Abraham was ten years older than Sarah. Sarah died at age 127 (Genesis 23:1), so Abraham was 137 when she died.

Isaac was born when Abraham was 100 (Gen 21:5), so Isaac was 37 when Sarah died. Isaac was 40 when he married Rebekah (Gen 25:20).

The events of Genesis 24 occur when Isaac was 39+ and Abraham was 139+.

By Merrill’s chronology (which I accept), it would be 2026 BC

***THE SERVANT PUT UNDER OATH TO FIND A WIFE FOR ISAAC (24:2–9)***

**(24:2) Abraham put the servant under an oath in which he put his hand under Abraham’s thigh**

The servant is unnamed. Eliezer of Damascus (mentioned in Genesis 15:2) could have been as old as eleven in Genesis 15. Thus, he could have been 56 years old in Genesis 24.

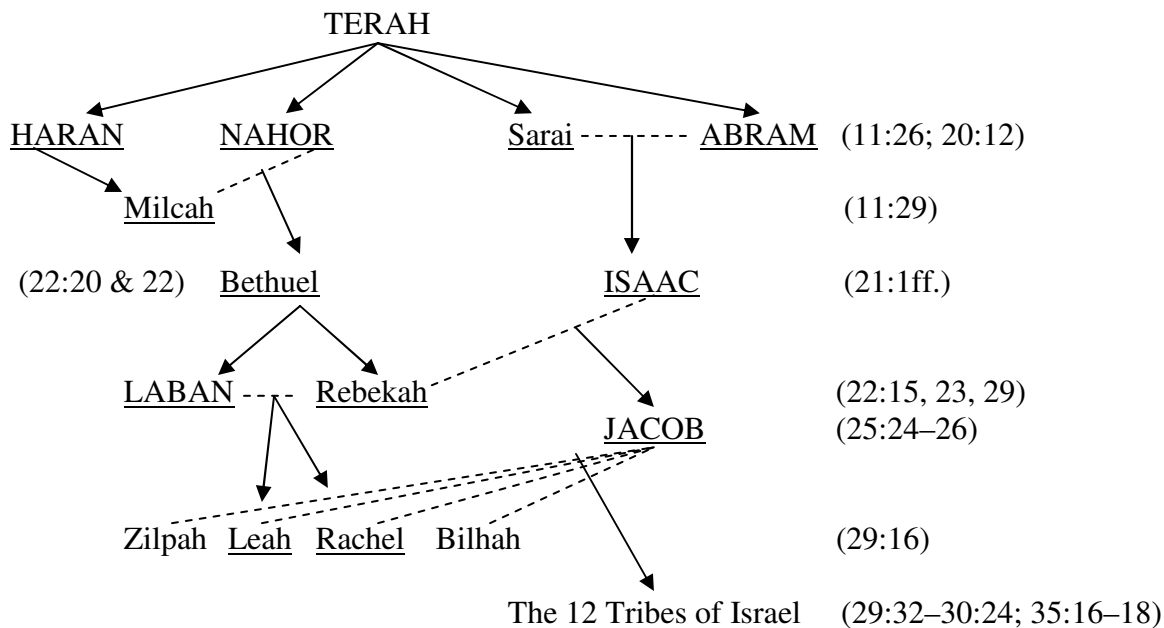
Punitive features in oath formulae

The placement of the hand under Abraham’s thigh



**3. From Abraham's family.** When we were in Genesis 22, we received a preview. When Abraham said from his family, Isaac's bride is his first cousin.

(22:20–24) Abraham learned that his brother Nahor & Milcah had 8 children (including Bethuel, the mother of Rebekah) as well as children through a concubine, Reumah



Remember, this was before the Law of Moses. God had not yet prohibited such marriages. In light of Divine prohibitions of treaties with the Canaanites, Abraham had few options.

This was at a much earlier stage in the gene-pool, so the genetic consequences were less severe than later.

Remember, this also is an effective counter-argument to the rabbinic theory that Genesis 15:6 means that Abraham obeyed the Law perfectly, even though it had not yet been given.

**(24:5) The servant was concerned that the woman would not come with him to Isaac, so he asked whether he should take Isaac to her.**

**(24:6–7) Abraham prohibited taking Isaac out of the land, and said that the LORD God of heaven (who took him from family & country) swore this land to Abraham & his seed will send His angel before him, so the servant is to take a wife for Isaac from Haran.**

**(24:8) Abraham would release the servant from the oath, if the woman would not come with him**

**(24:9) The servant placed his hand under Abraham’s thigh and took the oath**

***IN HARAN HE ASKED FOR A SIGN & THANKED GOD FOR GIVING IT (24:10–27)***

**(24:10–11) The servant’s ten-camel entourage arrived at the city well in early evening (when women come to draw water)**

**(24:12–14) The servant prayed for the LORD to show esed to Abraham by granting him success this day, specifically, that the young woman from whom he requests a drink will also water his camels**

Dromedary camels (if allowed to drink daily) will consume 5–21 gallons of water daily, depending on conditions. If they have not had water for several days, they can drink 30 gallons in a little over 10 minutes.

Dromedary caravans could make the trip from Hebron to Haran in 7–10 days.

Clearly, the servant is looking for an unusual girl.

**(24:15–21) Right then, the beautiful virgin Rebekah (of the right lineage) filled her pitcher, gave a drink to the servant when he requested it, and offered to water the camels, as the servant silently waited to see if the LORD prospered his journey**

Word-play in verse 11: He made the camels kneel: B\_R\_K

Verse 1: B\_R\_K = \_\_\_\_\_

**(24:22–23) After the camels finished drinking, he gave her a gold nose-ring (.2 oz. avoirdupois) & gold bracelets (4 oz. avoirdupois), asked her father's identity, & requested lodging at her father's home**

**(24:24–25) Rebekah said she is the daughter of Bethuel (of Milcah of Nahor) and they had lodging for both the camels and the people**

**(24:26–27) The servant bowed in worship, thanking the LORD for  *esed* in leading him to the proper family**

**CONCLUSION**