

My Big Fat Mesopotamian Wedding

Genesis 24

Genesis 24:1-9

- 1 “well advanced in years”- this is after the death of Sarah, so he is older than 137
- 2 “oldest of his household”- term of honor, also might indicate Eliezer of Damascus (15:2)
“under my thigh”- a cultural gesture going along with the nature of the oath
- 3 “take a wife for my son”- Abraham’s old age prevents him from doing this parental obligation
“not...from the daughters of the Canaanites”- marriage with these heathens would be terrible
- 4 “my country”- Ur of the Chaldeans (11:28)
- 6 “Do not take my son back there”- it is imperative that Isaac stay in the Promised Land (see v7)
- 7 “He will send his angel before you”- Abraham makes this promise then allows the possibility that the woman will not want to return.
- 8 “you must not take my son back there”- This is more important than the wife to Abraham

Genesis 24:10-14

- 10 The camels carry presents for the bride and her family and will carry her back too
- 12-14 TLSB: “The servant began his search with prayer and ended it with thanksgiving (vv26-27), a practice worthy of imitation.”
- 14 “whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac”- he is trusting Abraham’s word about the angel

Genesis 24:15-21

- 15 Rebekah is Isaac’s second cousin
- 16 “the young woman was very attractive”- this spells trouble!
- 17 The servant trusts YHWH has heard his prayer in 12-14, so he asks her the test question
- 21 “gazed at her in silence”- while she is working he is observing YHWH answering his prayer

Genesis 24:22-28

- 22 “gold ring weighing a half shekel”- 5.5 grams
“two bracelets for her arms”- 110 grams!
- 23 “for us”- The servant did not travel alone over such a great distance with jewels (cf 24:32)
- 27 the prayer of thanks begins “Blessed be YHWH...”
- 28 “the young woman ran”- The news was exciting and life changing, the family needed to know

Genesis 24:29-33

- 29 “Laban ran out toward the man”- A good brother, he had to see for himself
- 31 “O blessed of YHWH”- Rebekah likely shared the servant’s prayer of thanks with her household
- 33 The servant refuses to eat until the betrothal has been negotiated

Genesis 24:34-49

- A wedding is a covenant and the servant must demonstrate what kind of family Isaac belongs to
- 35 “YHWH has blessed my master”- what follows is a list of material goods, theology of glory?
- 36 “to him he has given all that he has”- an indication of Isaac’s forthcoming wealth
- 37-48 The repetition of previous narrative details is another memory tool of oral transmission
- 47 “the ring on her nose”- Yep, that’s where the ring went, not on the finger
- 49 The whole verse is a bit idiomatic, basically saying, “So... what do you say?”

Genesis 24:50-60

- 50 “Laban and Bethuel answered”- It is unclear why the brother Laban is taking such an active role
“The thing has come from YHWH”- it is out of their hands, God has arranged the marriage
51 “Let her be the wife of your master’s son”- their version of “Who gives this woman to this man?”
52 Once more, the servant shows his thanks to YHWH
53 Wealth and riches are lavished on Rebekah, Laban, and Rebekah’s mother
54 “he and the men who were with him ate and drank”- the party begins now that the matter is settled
“send me away to my master”- this implies that Rebekah is to accompany him
55 “Let the young woman remain with us”- naturally they are not quite ready to separate
56 The servant is eager to show the blessing of YHWH to his master, Abraham
58 Rebekah makes her choice and wants to meet her husband
59 “and her nurse”- given the name Deborah in chapter 35
60 “may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him”- referring to 22:17

Genesis 24:61-67

- 61 “and her young women”- other servant girls accompanied Rebekah
63-64 They lift up their eyes as Abraham did with Moriah & the ram, God has arranged this marriage
65 “She took her veil and covered herself”- out of modesty, respect, and custom
66 “the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done”- see vv 37-48
67 “into the tent of Sarah his mother”- in polygamous societies each wife had her own tent, even here where Rebekah is the sole wife, she has her tent
“took Rebekah and she became his wife”- that’s one long wedding that began in Mesopotamia
“so Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death”- an odd reason to get married, but effective

Psalm 128

- ¹Blessed is everyone who fears YHWH,
who walks in his ways!
²You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.
³Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.
⁴Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
who fears YHWH.
⁵YHWH bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!
⁶May you see your children’s children!
Peace be upon Israel!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever, Amen.**

The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



Abraham was very old and said to his chief servant “Put your hand under my leg and swear by the Lord you will get a wife for my son from my country. **Ge 24:1-4.. ??** Maybe it’s just me, but I think would prefer a firm handshake.