

July 24th Genesis 24

This is the longest story in the Bible. Ideally you should read the entire chapter first.

We have reached the end of the story of Abraham. We have seen how his faith, his trust in God, had highs and lows. He now has a son, Isaac, but his wife Sarah has died. Obviously he himself is much older as well now. He still has God's promise of a land and of being a blessing.

1. Abraham knows: Isaac can neither return to Mesopotamia to get married nor marry a local girl, who would not serve the LORD. He himself had tried such a relationship with Hagar – he has learned his lesson. Marrying a non-believer can cause all kinds of trouble. So a woman will have to come from Abraham's homeland. He commissions his trusted servant with the job of finding such a woman.

Abraham here shows a strong faith. 'Go' is the key word in this story:

- Verse 4 ... **go** to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.
 - The servant said, 'Perhaps the woman may not be willing **to go** with me to this land'
- 8 If the woman is not willing **to go** with you, then you will be free
- 10 The servant ... arose and **went** to Mesopotamia
- 50 Laban and Bethuel answered, ... Here is Rebekah... ; take her and **go**, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken.
- 55 But they said, "Let her stay with us a few days ... after that she may **go**."
- 56 He said to them, Let me **go** so that I may **go** to my master.
- 58 Then they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you **go** with this man?"

And she said, "I will **go**."

By the way: we cannot go back to Mesopotamia either. Once God has led us in a certain direction, we can't go back to our old life.

2. The servant (no name is given) is a great man, who is doing all for the sake of his beloved master. He shows his gratefulness and he is an example of prayer.

Initially he does not know how to handle situation, so he seeks God's guidance; this shows his natural walk with God. Then he asks God for a specific girl.

So how does guidance work in a situation when you can't wait too long?

- i. You pray before and after you need it
- ii. You think well: in this case, the servant thinks of relevant qualities such as helpfulness
- iii. Ask not for a sign but for concrete thing or person
- iv. Then just go into the real life, trusting that God will guide.

Note that God never speaks in this story. He quietly directs the events. This is often how our lives go. Don't sit there waiting for God to speak. He can guide you best when you are moving. (And of course we have our Bible for guidance.)

3. Rebekah is not prominent in the story, but we learn that she is helpful (verses 18-20, 45-46). Camels are very thirsty creatures so she undertook a big job! As is typical in a patriarchal culture, Rebekah is silent when the men speak. But in the end the question also comes to her, 'Will you go?', and her reply expresses her faith: 'I will go' (58). She affirms her willingness to accept God's guidance and to marry someone she doesn't know.

Rebekah is a type of the church. Others have gone ahead of us. There is a covenant and we inherit it. We have been chosen – but not to be passive. We too are asked to say, 'I will go'. To follow Jesus wherever he leads us.

This is a story about God's faithfulness, his guidance, his call, and our response. We discovered some specific steps to find God's guidance for decisions in life. Note that God's plan is not the same for all of us. Some are called to remain single; some are called to stay at home but others will live abroad. In any case it is an encouraging story!