



# Isaac and Rebekah

# 1

## Key Themes

- God's plans are perfect.
- God is faithful to His promises.

## Key Passages

- Genesis 24:1–14, 24:50–66

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Recognize God's perfect plan in the events leading to the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.
- Describe God's sovereignty in the affairs of man.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

Write on the board, "How did God use a pitcher of water to provide a wife for Isaac?"



### Studying God's Word

page 4

When Abraham sent his servant to obtain a wife for Isaac, God demonstrated His control, even in humanly difficult situations. God kept His promise, providing Rebekah according to His perfect plan.

☐ Study the Prepare to Share section.

☐ Go Before the Throne.



### Activity: Examining Relationships

page 9

Students will use Scripture to identify the details of the timing of the events of Isaac's marriage to Rebekah, the birth of their sons, and the relationships between the various people in the account.

☐ Print one Examining Relationships worksheet from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.  
Keep the answer key for your use



### Activity: Find It on the Map

page 11

Students will find locations from this account of Scripture on a map of Canaan.

☐ Print one Map of Canaan from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.



# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Read Genesis 24, asking God to give you understanding and joy in His Word.

With a solemn oath, a quest to a distant land, an unexpected stranger, and the search for a bride, Genesis 24 is the remarkable account of God's sovereign provision of a wife for Isaac. Through Isaac and Rebekah, God would keep His promises to Abraham—to increase his descendants to as many as the sand and the stars, to give them a rich inheritance in the land of Canaan, taking possession of the cities of their enemies, and to bless all nations on earth (Genesis 12:2–3, 22:16–18).

It is significant to mention two events that are described in Genesis 22, two chapters before the account of this lesson. The first event is God's dramatic test of Abraham's faith. Abraham demonstrated trust in the sovereignty of God (Hebrews 11:17) by not withholding his son, the son of promise—Isaac. God then reiterated His promise of blessing all nations through Abraham's descendant. The second event, although a seemingly obscure fact, is the birth of Abraham's grandniece, Rebekah (Genesis 22:20–23). God was setting the stage for the fulfillment of His promises.

*Abraham*—By the opening of Genesis 24, Abraham's beloved wife Sarah had died (Genesis 23). Abraham was experiencing the blessings of wealth promised by God (Genesis 12:2). However, though God had promised that he would have descendants as numerous as the stars (Genesis 15:5), as of yet, Isaac (his son) had given him no grandchildren. In chapter 24, Abraham called his oldest servant to return to his homeland, Nahor, and bring back a wife for Isaac. It is interesting that Abraham did not go himself, nor did he allow Isaac to leave Canaan. Isaac's future was to be

in Canaan and nowhere else, for God had promised this land to Abraham's descendants (Genesis 12:1–9, 13:14–18, 15:1–21).

*The servant*—The servant proved obedient and loyal in every way, faithfully yielding to his master and the son. He modeled a walk of faith by praying for specific guidance while actively preparing, traveling, testing, and waiting for God's answer (Genesis 24:12–13). And when he received God's remarkable answer, the servant responded with worship and eagerness to return the bride to his master's son (Genesis 24:52–54).

*Rebekah*—Through the providence of God, Rebekah was gracious and eager to submit to His plans for her life in fulfilling His eternal purposes.

*Isaac*—Just as Isaac once trusted his father's will even though it meant stretching out on an altar for sacrifice, he now trusted his father to secure a bride for him.

The history of Isaac and Rebekah is a small reflection of the Creator God's great story of redemption. From before the time sin first entered the world, God has had a plan to call out a people for Himself. He poured out the awful penalty of sin upon His holy Son and then raised Him up. He sent His Spirit into the world to prepare a bride for His Son, the church. Those who have abandoned all, putting their trust in God, share fully in the inheritance promised through the Son (Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 19:29, 25:34; Ephesians 1:3–12; Colossians 1:22; Revelation 19:7).

## APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

It was important to Abraham that Isaac's wife be a relative from his homeland, Haran (Genesis 24:4). The history and descendants of Isaac's grandfather, Terah, are given in Genesis 11:27–32, allowing us to confidently determine the relationship between Isaac

and Rebekah. Terah was the father of three sons: Abraham, Nahor, and Haran. Of Terah's three sons, Abraham moved to Canaan, Nahor remained in northwest Mesopotamia, and Haran died in Ur (Genesis 11:28).

Abraham's brother, Nahor, became the father of eight sons. One of those sons, Bethuel, became the father of Rebekah (Genesis 22:21–23). Thus, God records for us that Rebekah and Isaac were first cousins once removed.

In considering marital unions in the Old Testament between family members like that of Rebekah and Isaac, keep in mind what Genesis 5:4 teaches. Adam and Eve had sons and daughters. This was the way the world was populated at the beginning and repopulated after the Flood. The law against close relatives marrying didn't come until the time of Moses (Leviticus 18–20). Before then there were few genetic defects (mutations) that today make it inadvisable for close relatives to marry. God's Word has the answers—we need to begin with His truth.

Often people are quick to discount the Old Testament as untrue, unrelated, or unreliable. However, God has provided this information—all of it—so we can see that it is precisely recorded and intended to weave a tapestry of redemption from beginning to end.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

God often reveals things in the world today that confirm His history. This account we are studying is a good example.

Because of what we know today of the city of Ur, we can understand Abraham's reluctance for his son to return to Mesopotamia. And we can see why God had to call Abraham away from that city. Archaeological dis-

coveries in this area reveal that it was once a religious center devoted to the worship of the moon god, Sin. There are rather horrifying accounts of royal burial pits which include not only a royal personage but numerous servants and musicians who evidently committed cheerful mass suicide. It becomes clear that God intended Abraham, the one through whom He planned to bless all the families of the earth, to journey to a new location—one which, by the way, was in a far more strategic spot for disseminating this global blessing.

The fact that the ancient city of Haran still exists today is further confirmation of the Bible's history. The Bible tells us that this is where Abraham's father, Terah, took Abraham, Sarah, and Lot (Genesis 11:31). In this same area, Turkish villages still bear the name of Abraham's grandfather and great-grandfather, Nahor and Serug (Genesis 11:22). God's Word is true and provides us with answers to questions we may encounter from skeptical friends.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear God, Creator of heaven and earth, I come before you as simply a servant rejoicing in the privilege of ministering to your children. In trust, I leave my worries at your feet and ask you to call the students of my class to follow you with their whole lives. I rejoice in the privilege of serving your Son, and I ask you to speak through your Word to call this generation to follow you wholeheartedly and with joyful abandon.

► **Pace your lesson!** You can use the provided clocks to indicate the time each section should be completed to keep the lesson on schedule. While teaching, you can compare your anticipated times with the actual time and shorten or drop sections as necessary.





## Review

We are starting a new quarter of lessons today, so I want to take a few minutes to summarize what we have learned up to this point. Since this is a chronological walk through the Bible, we want to make sure that we are following the flow of history. *Use the Seven C's Timeline to help the students remember the flow of events as you discuss them.*

2,000 years before the time of Abraham, God created the world and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Creation). They rebelled against God, bringing sin (Corruption) into the world. The increasing sin of man was judged by God in the Catastrophe of the Flood about 1,600 years later. Shortly after the Flood, the people rebelled against God again and God confused their languages (Confusion) as a punishment.

So remember that as we talk about Abraham, we are looking at a period about 2,000 years after creation and about 2,000 years before Christ.

? Abraham was given a great promise from God and that promise was to come through whom? *Isaac.*

God had called Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, and Abraham obeyed God's command. At the last moment, God stepped in to stop Abraham and provided a ram for Abraham to offer in Isaac's place. If you recall, we talked about how this was a foreshadowing of the perfect sacrifice that Jesus would offer on the Cross.

There is a wonderful thread weaving throughout the Bible of how God has a plan to redeem a people for Himself. Knowing that He is faithful, we can trust God to fulfill His promises. We are going to see more of those promises fulfilled today.

? What part of the promise given to Abraham is Abraham a key part of? *God promised Abraham that he would have many descendants. Isaac was the son that would continue Abraham's line—a line that would ultimately bring the Messiah.*

As we look at the beginning of the family of Isaac and Rebekah, we are going to see how God is sovereign over every detail and is bringing His perfect plans to pass.



➤ Write on the board, "How did God use a pitcher of water to provide a wife for Isaac?"



## Studying God's Word

As we look at the beginning of the family of Isaac and Rebekah, we are going to see how God is sovereign over every detail and is bringing His perfect plans to pass.

To give us a little more context for this lesson, we are going to start with a short activity. I want you to take a minute to find the answers to the first three questions listed in your Student Guides. And then we will review them in a few minutes. *Allow students some time to look up the verses and answer the questions.*

? Abraham and Sarah were very old when they had Isaac, but how old was Isaac at the time of his mother's death? 37. She was 127 at her death (Genesis 23:1), and Isaac had been born when she was 90.

As we look at the passage today, how old will Isaac be when he marries Rebekah? 40.

Looking into the future a bit—a preview of next week's lesson—how long will it be before Isaac and Rebekah have children? Twenty more years, since Isaac is sixty at the birth of the twin sons, Esau and Jacob.

How amazing to think that we have such detailed information about these events that happened thousands of years ago. This should be another great encouragement knowing that God has seen fit to provide us with a true history of His redemptive work.

## READ THE WORD

Let's read Genesis 24:1–14 together and see how the events unfold. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Genesis 24:1–14

## EXAMINE THE WORD

Now that we have read the text, let's take some time to observe what it is saying to us. This process is an important part of understanding what God's Word is telling us.

### Observe the Text

*Refer to the Bible Study poster to remind your students how to dig deeper into God's Word by asking the right questions.*

► The character of God is revealed in Scripture.

- ? What type of literature is this passage? *Historical narrative.*
- ? When did this account occur? *According to Ussher, this occurred in 1856 BC. Refer to the Seven C's Timeline to place this account between Abraham offering Isaac and the birth of Jacob and Esau.*
- ? Who are the characters in this account? *Abraham and his servant. This was likely Eliezer from Genesis 15:2.*
- ? How is Abraham described in verse 1? *Old and blessed by God.*
- ? What did Abraham ask Eliezer to promise him? *Abraham asked him not to take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites but to go to his country and take a wife from Abraham's family.*
- ? Who was Eliezer to swear by? *The Lord God of heaven and earth.*
- ? What was the sign of the oath? *Abraham asked Eliezer to place his hand under his thigh to confirm the oath. This would be equivalent to shaking hands or swearing on a Bible.*
- ? What was Eliezer's objection in verse 5? *He thought the woman he finds might not come to Canaan and he wanted to take Isaac along.*

## sovereign

- ? **How did Abraham respond to the request?** *Abraham forbade Isaac going with Eliezer.*
- ? **What did Abraham remind Eliezer of (verse 7)?** *Abraham reminded him of the promise of God to give Abraham's descendants the land.*
- ? **How did Abraham reassure Eliezer?** *Abraham told him that God would send His angel before him to ensure his success.*
- ? **In your own words what was Abraham asking his servant to do?** *He wanted his servant to return to his country or homeland and bring back a bride from Abraham's relatives to marry Isaac.*

Abraham was a man known for believing God. He knew Him and he trusted that God would keep the promises made years before.

We will see that Abraham also understood that God is sovereign. Will someone read what that means from the Attributes of God poster? *Assign a student to read. God is sovereign—in complete control of everything; does all that He pleases.*

Keep that in mind as we continue our lesson. We are about to see more of God's sovereignty.

- ? **What would happen if no woman accepts the proposal (verse 8)?** *Eliezer would be released from the oath.*
- ? **How did Eliezer respond?** *He swore the oath, took ten camels, and headed to Nahor in Mesopotamia.*
- ? **Where did Eliezer go in verse 10?** *Mesopotamia, the city of Nahor.*

Nahor was actually the name of Abraham's grandfather. This confirms that this was the land of Abraham's family. And the ancient city of Nahor still exists today!

Abraham's servant Eliezer had been given a serious obligation. He was to make a long trip, about 500 miles. He was to go to a family that didn't know him and bring back a wife to a man she had never seen!

- ? **How did Eliezer acknowledge his dependence on God (verse 12)?** *He prayed that God would give him success and show kindness to Abraham, and that the woman he asked to give him and the camels a drink would be the woman to marry Isaac.*
- ? **What word did Eliezer use to describe how God would provide a wife for Isaac?** *He said that he would know which woman God had "appointed" for Isaac.*

### Discover the Truth

Abraham desired to have his son married to a woman of his own family, a common custom, and not to a woman of the pagan Canaanites around him. So he sent his servant, Eliezer, to Haran to take a wife for him. Abraham showed his clear trust in God's providence by assuring Eliezer that the angel of God would go before him.



As Eliezer left, he took ten camels and other men (verse 32 tells us of them) and gifts for the family of the woman he would take as a wife for Isaac. The trek was about 500 miles north from Canaan to Nahor's city, Haran. This is where Abraham had left (Genesis 11:31) to go on to Canaan with Lot and others. His brother Nahor had stayed in Haran and established a family. In fact, you can still find this city in Turkey today.

Eliezer showed his trust in God's providence by offering a very specific prayer to God and asking God to show him who He had appointed as a wife for Isaac. Eliezer trusted that God would bless his master Abraham.



## READ THE WORD

For the sake of time, I am going to summarize what happened next and then we will pick up the reading. As Eliezer was offering his prayer, a young woman came to the well and gave him a drink when he asked, and then she offered to water his camels as well. Eliezer was not certain that his mission had been accomplished, but he gave Rebekah jewelry and she invited him to lodge at her father's house—the house of Nahor!

Eliezer responded (in verses 26–28) by bowing down and worshipping God as he recognized that God had led him to a young woman from Abraham's family. Eliezer knew that God had sovereignly directed him.

sovereign

Rebekah's brother Laban came and invited Eliezer and the others to his home. When they offered food to Eliezer, he rejected the meal until he had the opportunity to tell them of the message from his master Abraham, so he recounted the events to them. We will start reading with their response to Abraham's request.

Let's read Genesis 24:50–61 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Genesis 24:50–61

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

- ? **How did Laban and Bethuel respond to Abraham's request for a wife for Isaac?** *They both recognized that the Lord had appointed this situation and that they were in no place to reject what God had appointed. They offered Rebekah to become Isaac's wife.*
- ? **How did Eliezer respond to their acceptance? Genesis 24:52** *He again fell to the ground in worship to God. He also offered them the gifts he had brought from Abraham, as would have been customary at the time.*
- ? **How did the house of Bethuel treat the men from Abraham?** *They offered them great hospitality, giving them food and lodging as well as caring for their animals.*

? When Eliezer requested to leave the very next morning, how did the family respond? *Initially they asked him to give them at least 10 more days, but they relented and asked Rebekah her preference.*

Eliezer's request might seem at first to be an unfeeling attitude toward Rebekah and her family. However, when God's will has been clearly revealed, as it had been here, any delay can open the door for second thoughts.

? When Rebekah was asked to leave immediately, how did she respond? *She was willing to go.*

? How did Rebekah's family send her off? *They offered her a blessing—that she would have many descendants and that they would be powerful.*

### Discover the Truth

So Eliezer took Rebekah and the accompanying servants and they headed back to Canaan less than 24 hours after Eliezer had arrived. The sovereign hand of God can be clearly seen in all of the events. Rebekah fulfilled the prayer of Eliezer, she offered lodging, the family took in the men, the family recognized God's hand in the events, and Rebekah submitted and was willing to be obedient to God's obvious plan for her marriage to Isaac.

We can't read a passage like this without recognizing that God is sovereign over the affairs of men—even to the details of the marriage of a certain man to a certain woman. We can trust that the same God who was guiding these affairs is intimately involved in the lives of each believer today, as well.







# Examining Relationships

## MATERIALS

- ☐ Examining Relationships worksheet for each student
- ☐ Examining Relationships answer key
- ☐ Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Hand out the Examining Relationships worksheets.*

As we saw earlier, God reveals very specific details to us in the text about the timing of the events. In part 2, we are going to look at the details of the relationships between the people mentioned in this account.

Use the passages on the worksheet to identify the relationships and fill in the pedigree. We will go over the relationships in just a minute. *Allow the students to work on the answers and discuss them as they finish. Use the answer key to help them.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

As you looked at these relationships, it may have made you a bit uncomfortable. However, we need to make sure that we

remember that marrying close relatives was the only option for our earliest ancestors, and it was not forbidden by God for another 300 years after Abraham.

? How were Abraham and Sarah related? *They shared the same father but had different mothers, so she was his half-sister. Abraham had used this fact to deceive several people in earlier times.*

? Looking at the pedigree diagram, which is incomplete, who is the father of Bethuel? *Nahor.*

? We don't know the name of Bethuel's wife, but what was his daughter's name? *Rebekah, who is the sister of Laban.*

On the left side of the diagram we know that the wife of Abraham was Sarah and that their only son was Isaac. Abraham had Ishmael by Hagar and in Genesis 25 you can read about his other children with Keturah.

Interestingly, this pedigree helps us see that Lot and Isaac were first cousins and that, technically speaking, Rebekah was Isaac's first cousin once removed.



## READ THE WORD

Our last passage today will be the arrival of the travelers to Canaan. Let's read Genesis 24:62–66 together. *Have someone read the passage aloud.*

Genesis 24:62–66

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? What was Isaac doing as Eliezer and the others approached his home? *He was meditating in the field.*

Keep in mind, when the Bible talks about meditation, it means prayer and contemplating on the Word of God. It does not refer to the New Age concept of repeating a mantra or emptying one's mind.

- ? **How did Rebekah approach Isaac?** *She dismounted the camel she was riding and covered her face with a veil. It was customary for a waiting bride to veil her face until the day of the marriage.*
- ? **What was Isaac's response to the arrival of Rebekah?** *He took her as his wife.*

### Discover the Truth

Just as Rebekah had submitted to God's clear plan for her marriage to Isaac, Isaac received her as his wife. The perfect plan of God had been accomplished as the people involved in the events recognized God's will and submitted to it.

After Isaac and Rebekah's marriage, it would be twenty years before their sons, Jacob and Esau, were born. Fifteen years after that Abraham would die and be buried with Sarah (Genesis 25:7–11). Abraham had other sons with his concubine Keturah, but he sent them away with gifts to ensure that it was clear that Isaac was to inherit the land (Genesis 24:1–6), just as God had promised.

Next week we will pick up this amazing history with Jacob and Esau and the continuing hand of God in the affairs of His people.



## Applying God's Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

I trust that you can recognize this section of Scripture as a clear example of how God uses people to accomplish His plans. Abraham knew that God would be faithful to His promise to multiply his descendants through Isaac, and he sent Eliezer to find a wife for his son. Arriving at the city of Abraham's brother Nahor, the servant prayed to God and acknowledged his dependence in finding the woman he already trusted God had appointed.

In kindness toward Abraham, God brought along Rebekah. She completely fulfilled the requests of Eliezer's prayer and just "happened" to be one of Abraham's relatives. But there is no accident in these events, rather it is an example of God's providence and faithfulness to fulfill His promise. God demonstrated His control over all of these affairs—His sovereign hand guiding all of these things. Through all of this, God provided a wife for Isaac and through this marriage the nation of Israel would come. Their son Jacob would be the father of the twelve tribes that were the foundation of the people who would eventually inhabit the land promised to Abraham.



# Find It on the Map

## MATERIALS

- ☐ Map of Canaan for each student
- ☐ Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Pass out the Map of Canaan to each student. Read the instructions below and have the students fill out their maps.*

Find Ur on the map. It is northwest of the Persian Gulf.

Cross out the word Ur because Abraham left Ur.

Follow the Euphrates River up until you find the city of Haran.

Draw a line from Ur to Haran because Abraham traveled there with his father.

Cross out Haran because God called Abraham out of Haran.

Find Canaan along the Mediterranean Sea.

Draw a line from Haran to Canaan.

Draw a tent in the land of Canaan because Abraham and Isaac lived there in tents.

Find Nahor back near the city of Haran.

Draw ten humps between Canaan and Nahor to represent the ten camels Abraham's servant took with him to Nahor.

Draw a jug of water at Nahor to represent Rebekah carrying water to all the servants' camels there.

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

Unfortunately, we sometimes slip into thinking that the history of the people in the Bible isn't real because it was so long ago. However, these people lived as surely as you do and their cities were just as real as your city is today.

The same God who sovereignly completed His plans through Abraham, Abraham's servant, Isaac, and Rebekah will complete His plan in your life.



## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

**?** Why did Abraham refuse to have Isaac marry a woman from the Canaanites, and what parallel can we draw to God's plan for marriage as described in the New Testament? *Abraham did not want Isaac's wife to come from among the pagans of Canaan, but from his own family. It is clear that Abraham's family knew God as they recognized that these events were from the Lord (Genesis 24:50–51). Likewise, God calls Christians to marry only those who are believers as well (2 Corinthians 6:14).*

**?** What comfort can you draw from understanding that the same God who appointed Rebekah to be Isaac's wife is still in charge of the world we live in today? *Romans 8, especially verses 28–39, points us to the truth that it is God who will work all of the events in our lives for good. It is His sovereign control that we can rest in and know that all of the providences of God—bitter and sweet—are from His hands and will accomplish His purposes.*

➤ If time allows, read Romans 8:28–39 aloud for the class.

- ? What is the significance of Eliezer's worship at the granting of his prayers? Do you respond the same way? *His reaction was to bow to the ground and praise God for working in such a remarkable way. Many people fail to recognize God's providence in similar situations and they don't offer Him the worship He is due for so many things that we take for granted.*
- ? What benefit is there in uncovering the details of the timing and relationships surrounding this passage of Scripture? *The details give us a clear picture of what was happening at the time. We are not left with vague ideas of what might have taken place, but a detailed, historical account that we can trust, including customs of the day and historical places consistent with what we know from other sources. We must remember, though, that these outside sources confirm what we already trust to be true from Scripture.*



### MEMORY VERSE

**Genesis 50:19–20** Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.”



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

Be sure to pray with your class before you dismiss them.

- Praise God for His sovereign control over His Creation.
- Thank God for being faithful to the promises He has made.