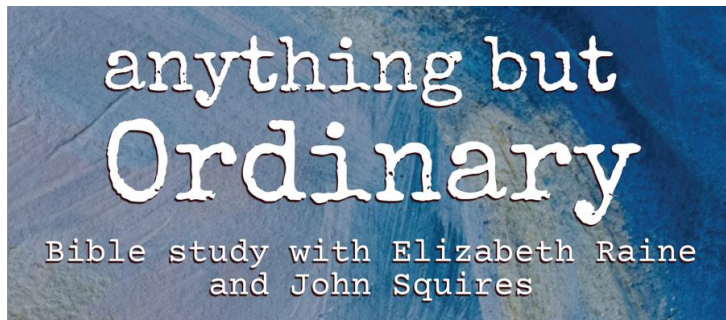




2 July

Pentecost 14
Gen. 24:34-38,
42-49, 58-67

A marriage arrangement out of the ordinary
(Isaac marries Rebekah)

With deep gratitude, O God,
we receive the Scriptures
in which your Word is proclaimed.
**May we read them seriously,
preach from them diligently,
and share in the life of faith;**
may we be signs of the Gospel,
through our obedience
to the Christ who is proclaimed
in these words. **Amen.**

Please read these Genesis 24 before the study, if you are able:
The questions we may discuss are listed on the following pages.

Genesis 24 34 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. 35 The Lord has greatly blessed my master, and he has become wealthy; he has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female slaves, camels and donkeys. 36 And Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master when she was old, and he has given him all that he has. 37 My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in whose land I live, 38 but you shall go to my father's house, to my kindred, and get a wife for my son.'

42 "I came today to the spring and said, 'O Lord, God of my master Abraham, if now you will only make successful the way I am going! 43 I am standing here by the spring of water; let the young woman who comes out to draw, to whom I shall say, "Please give me a little water from your jar to drink," 44 and who will say to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also"—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master's son.'

45 "Before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah coming out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew. I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' 46 She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I will also water your camels.' So I drank, and she also watered the camels. 47 Then I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her arms.

48 Then I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me by the right way to obtain the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son. 49 Now then, if you will deal loyally and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so that I may turn either to the right hand or to the left."

58 And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will." 59 So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse along with Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "May you, our sister, become thousands of myriads; may your offspring gain possession of the gates of their foes."

61 Then Rebekah and her maids rose up, mounted the camels, and followed the man, and the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

62 Now Isaac had come from[a] Beer-lahai-roi and was settled in the Negeb. 63 Isaac went out in the evening to walk[b] in the field, and, looking up, he saw camels coming. 64 And Rebekah looked up, and when she saw Isaac, she slipped quickly from the camel 65 and said to the servant, "Who is the man over there, walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took her veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent. He took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

Questions on Genesis 24:34–67 (selected verses)

I Attitudes towards “others”

Why was Abraham so concerned that his son not marry a Canaanite?

How might Abraham’s attitude towards the Canaanites be reflected in contemporary situations and debates?

What do we do with the “biblical model” provided by Abraham?

II The past

For Abraham and his family, the decision has been made (Gen 12:4–5) and the journey completed (Gen 13:12). They now reside in the land promised by the Lord, and there could be no turning back to the past. *What is your attitude to the past?*

Are you learning to release the traditions of the past, like Abraham, and beginning to actively negotiate what the future might look like, like the servant?

Are you being invited to consider a new future, like Rebekah, and recognising new opportunities that may be presenting themselves like Laban did?

Are we all about to enter a new phase in the church’s life where we are prepared to lose one thing in order to gain another, like Isaac?

III Wealth and status

When she sees the man with ten treasure-laden camels behind him, Rebekah shows the servant attention and hospitality and gives him and the camels a drink (vv.15–20; vv.45–46). Her brother Laban also demonstrates the same attitude when he sees the jewelry carried by the servant (vv.29–33).

What does this say about their attitude to wealth and status?

How might the attitude of Rebekah and Laban toward the servant and his riches be reflected in contemporary situations and debates?

What do we do with the “biblical model” provided by Rebekah and Laban?

IV Rebekah and Isaac

Rebekah is far more dynamic and proactive than Isaac in this story. She is prominent throughout the narrative. No independent episode is reported about Isaac. A number of the verbs used in the passage highlight her active character and proactive role.

What contrasts do you notice between Rebekah and Isaac in this narrative?

Why do you think the narrator is making these contrasts?

V Where are you in the story?

Reaching the end of the story, where do you now find yourself in this story??

Are you Abraham, someone who began the journey, but must now entrust your hopes for the continuation of God's promise to other people of the next generation?

Are you the trusted servant, who trusts God and who is prepared to journey into an unknown land; someone who has faith that God's purpose will somehow reveal itself.

Are you perhaps Rebekah, suddenly finding yourself unexpectedly invited to be a central character in a story that you didn't even know existed?

Are you Laban, impressed by wealth and status, and prepared to make a bargain that involves a lot of trust in ideas and people unknown to you?

Or are you Isaac, content to let everyone else do most of the work for you, but prepared to accept the results and move forward?

VI Your church community

Where does your church community find itself in this story?

Are you a community that is creating networks with others across cultures, places and even faiths? What networks can you describe?

How might this story encourage you to understand better the kind of role or roles you may have in continuing to embody God's promise in your community today?

John's blog on Genesis 24:

<https://johntsquires.com/2023/07/04/a-ring-on-her-nose-and-bracelets-on-her-arms-gen-24-pentecost-6a/>

John's blog on the nature of the stories in Genesis

<https://johntsquires.com/2021/05/27/how-can-we-preach-on-passages-in-the-bible-that-are-myths/>