

Isaac and Rebecca - Part 2

Genesis 24:34-67

[Recognize Avi Missrahi, He is a Messianic Jew, with Ministry to Israel]

CONTEXT: Remember, we said last week, Genesis 24 is the longest single chapter in the book of Genesis, and it sits at a crucial hinge point in the story of God's covenant people. Abraham is nearing the end of his life. God has kept His promise to give Abraham a son through Sarah, but the covenant line cannot advance unless that son, Isaac, receives a wife. The survival of the Abrahamic promise — land, seed, and blessing — depends on the next generation being secured.

Earlier in the chapter (vv. 1–27), Abraham sends his oldest and most trusted servant — likely **Eleazar of Damascus**, though unnamed here — on a sacred mission: do **not** take a wife for Isaac from the Canaanites, but go back to Abraham's kin in Mesopotamia.

We said that Abraham wanted his son to marry a woman who had taken the same journey of faith that he had. She had to believe the testimony of the servant that Abraham had indeed heard from God, had gone to the land of Canaan, and had greatly increased in wealth and possessions. Furthermore, he had a son who would make her a worthy husband. Now that's a lot of faith. I'm sure there were stories around Mesopotamia about Abraham and his journey of faith. But nevertheless, this was asking a lot of Rebecca.

The servant prays for divine guidance at the well outside the city. God answers decisively. Rebekah appears, showing remarkable hospitality and a servant's heart — she not only gives him water but draws water for all his camels, an exhausting task demonstrating character, initiative, work ethic, kindness, and generosity. The servant recognizes God's hand immediately and worships on the spot.

He tells Rebecca of his mission and how God had chosen her to be Isaac's bride. Now: Notice the first thing young Rebecca does.

TEXT: Genesis 24:28 (ESV) ²⁸ Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things.

Now, let me point out a couple of things. First, we catch a glimpse of the dynamics within Rebecca's household. It is described as her mother's household. That is uncommon in scripture. But it is here to give us a clue that Rebecca's father, for whatever reason, isn't fully engaged in the life of his family. Nevertheless, notice the first thing that Rebecca does is turn to her family...Point number one is...

Later, in v. 50, both **Laban** and **Bethuel** answer the servant, but the order is telling: Laban is listed before the father. Now, this sort of home where the mother leads isn't always indicative of an overpowering personality; it could indicate weak leadership from the husband.

Regardless of the reason, notice that Rebecca immediately sought...

I. The Family's Counsel

The next narrative shows the servant now standing before Rebekah's family, including her father, Bethuel, and brother Laban, and he recounts everything that God has done.

This section is essentially his formal testimony — a rehearsing of God's providence to validate the marriage proposal and demonstrate that the matter is from the Lord word for word in verses 34-49.

Genesis 24:34–49 (ESV)

³⁴ So he said, "I am Abraham's servant.

Just notice the fact that Eliazar has just witnessed a major miracle, but he didn't even mention his name in the retelling of the story.

ILLUSTRATION: My son recently accepted a new job. My advice to him is, you take that job with an absolute commitment to making your employer a success. You see, this job is not about you, it's about what you do for him. If you can make your employee a winner, you can work anywhere you want, AND you will one day make far more than you deserve.

That was the heart of Eleazar - this is all about Abraham and what God is doing through him.

From there, Eliazar recounts the story, testifying to his belief that God is sovereignly working to bring these two people together for Covenant Marriage.

Recognize that as soon as there is a potential for a romantic relationship, the family is involved. You say, but Pastor, that's back in the Bible times - so much has changed. You are right, but I'm not sure it's for the better.

Keep in mind that this is the first instance of an arranged marriage mentioned in Scripture. We have no textual evidence that this was a normal practice for them any more than it is for us. However, we do see that as soon as romance enters the picture, the family becomes involved.

The History of Dating¹

Language is changing and evolving. I learned the hard way one Sunday. I said, you know, on a Sunday evening Julie and I like to just "Netflix and Chill", turns out that means something different than I thought.

¹ <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/markdriscoll/2016/02/a-history-of-dating/>

The History of Dating

Era	Key Development	Impact on Family Involvement
Late 1800s	"Dating" as slang for prostitution; courtship formal and family-centered.	High: Parents supervised all interactions.
Early 1900s	"Calling" in parents' parlor; limited privacy.	High: Family present, trust built gradually.
1920s-1930s	Rise of automobiles; shift to "dating" outside home.	Medium: Less supervision, more independence.
1950s-1960s	Playboy magazine; sexual revolution.	Low: Cultural norms shift to casual sex.
1970s	Legalization of abortion (1973), no-fault divorce (1974).	Very Low: Barriers to premarital sex removed.
1980s-1990s	AIDS epidemic; rise of personal computers and porn access.	Minimal: Privacy increases, risks rise.
2000s-2010s	Average porn exposure at age 12; pride parades normalize sin.	None: Digital isolation, cultural celebration of immorality.

According to patheos.com, dating once meant something very different. In the late **1800's** "dating" was a slang term that referred to prostitution. A man who was going to pay a woman for sex told his buddies that he was "going on a date."

Interestingly, while dating isn't overtly a euphemism for prostitution any longer, for many men, the process is similar. In our culture, a man takes a woman on a date, spends lots of money, and by the world's standards expects the woman to be a friend, which eventually has benefits.

- In the early **1900s**, "calling on a girl" was the primary means of finding a marriage partner. A young man would call on a young woman by visiting her in the parlor of her parents' home. The parlor was a room that was decorated for this purpose. It was elegant, formal, and did not have doors - in other words, privacy was limited. Her parents may join them for tea and conversation and if the trust was there, they might give them a few moments to chat alone.
- By the **1930s**, however, the social landscape changed dramatically with the rise of the automobile. Cars gave young people freedoms and mobility they never had previously, resulting in increased opportunities for men and women to go out alone and typically away from the family.
- In the **1950s**, Playboy magazine was brought to publication, and porn began to be sold in every city in America. However, it was still taboo, the magazines were stored under the counter, and you had to ask for them. This discouraged men from buying.
- That changed in the **1960s**, with the onset of the sexual revolution. Playboy moved from under the counter to the shelves. Larry Flynn began to publish Hustler, which rocketed past Playboy in the level of explicitness depicted.

- The **1970s** cemented the concept of dating and casual sex as normative by removing any physical consequences through the legalization of abortion in 1973 and making no-fault divorce legal in 1974. Add to that the birth control pill and other contraceptive measures, and most of the cultural and practical reasons to restrict sexual activity outside of marriage were obliterated.
- The result was that by the **1980s**, an epidemic of AIDS and other STDs had ravaged the landscape.
- In the **1990s** the personal computer was commonplace and a man or woman could access porn from the privacy of their own home.
- By the **2000's** the average age of exposure to porn was 12 years of age, many being 10 or younger.
- In the **2010's** what do we do? Do we repent of this trajectory and ask God to give us a narrow path home? NO! We begin to parade sexual sin down the main streets of our cities and dedicate a month to the celebration of pride.

Culture and Dating

Sex outside of marriage is now the norm, a huge change from just a century ago.

Approximately 70% of couples in America cohabit before getting married. This trend has become the norm, with recent data showing that three-quarters of marriages (76%) were preceded by cohabitation, according to one source.

A new term, the **“Cohabitation Effect,”** has been coined to describe the higher divorce rates, lower marital satisfaction, and increased conflict and infidelity compared to couples who do not cohabit before marrying.

The Cohabitation Effect (sociology):

- Cohabiting couples have **33% higher divorce rates** (Stanley, Galena, Rhoades – Univ. of Denver)
- They report **lower marital satisfaction** and **higher rates of infidelity**
- Cohabitation is correlated with:
 - More conflict
 - Less commitment
 - Slower emotional bonding
 - Higher anxiety and insecurity in the relationship

The Effect of Cohabitation on Marriage

Group	Divorce Rate Within 10 Years	Source
Cohabited Before Engagement	34%	University of Denver Study (2023)
Cohabited After Engagement	19%	ST Network (2024)
No Cohabitation Before Marriage	10-23%	Multiple Studies (2023)

All of that to say, there might be a better way to find a marriage partner?

While scripture doesn't give us a set of rules to follow, it does give us relationships to cultivate. The first step after Rebecca recognizes the potential for romance is to involve her family.

Romance Clouds Logic. When you are romantically interested in someone, you will do the dumbest things, but here is what God does: he gives us a Dad or a Mom who isn't infatuated in the slightest. Rebecca didn't trust herself to decide this alone - she got her Mom, her Dad, and her brother involved.

ILLUSTRATION - KITE; I think of a parent's role in the son or daughter's courtship much like the relationship of a string and a kite. The kite may think to itself, if I could only be free, I could soar as high as I want. However, the truth is that the tension in the string is what keeps the kite from crashing to the ground.

Genesis 24:50–61 (ESV)

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing has come from the Lord; we cannot speak to you bad or good. ⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the Lord has spoken." ⁵² When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the Lord. ⁵³ And the servant brought out jewelry of silver and of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave to her brother and to her mother costly ornaments. ⁵⁴ And he and the men who were with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." ⁵⁵ Her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman remain with us a while, at least ten days; after that she may go." ⁵⁶ But he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master." ⁵⁷ They said, "Let us call the young woman and ask her." ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" She said, "I will go."

Now, the family had determined that Rebecca was spiritually mature enough to make this decision for herself.

There is a book in the Bible called the Song of Solomon, which is filled with God's wisdom for romantic relationships. At the end of that book, there is a very interesting passage. The young lady is called the Shulamite; her Father seems to have passed away, so her brothers are there to protect and provide for her.

Song of Solomon 8:8–10 (ESV)

⁸ We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister on the day when she is spoken for?

This is a flashback to when the Shulamite was 11 or 12 years old. These brothers are talking about how they will know when she is ready to be married. Parents, have you thought about that day? When your son or daughter wants to get married. ***How do you know if they are ready?...*** Well, this verse tells you.

⁹ If she is a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver...

A wall keeps others out. Earlier, she said that she had described herself as a private garden, not a public park. The brothers are saying, "If our sister learns how to properly manage her single life, to not awaken her love, to not push the limits, to not develop improper intimacy with boys.... we will know she is ready... we will build a battlement of silver... this speaks of adorning her with precious jewels on her wedding day.

9b but if she is a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.

Doors aren't made to keep people out; they are made to let people in. They open and close. This describes a girl who encourages her heart to go boy crazy; this is the girl who is prone to infatuation and lust. This is a girl who doesn't set clear boundaries. This is a girl who treats her boyfriend like a husband.

The brothers are saying, "If she doesn't know how to live as a single, she's not ready to marry".

That is the role of the family.

ILLUSTRATION: We have two daughters, and this has been the deal I've made with them. In high school, since they lived at our house, I wanted to know the young men they were going out on dates with. Which meant they didn't date very much.

When Carly went off to college, we made a deal. She could date young men; I trusted her to be wise about it, but our deal was that after the 3rd date, I needed to meet the guy before it continued. None has made it to the third date yet. You see, it causes her to take a guy seriously if she knows Dad is going to meet him.

ILLUSTRATION: Door of the Father: In the OT, the penalty for sexual immorality before marriage was stoning. Did you know that scripture indicated that the young man or young lady was to be put to death at the threshold of the Father's house?

God expects Parents to be involved in guarding the purity of the home. Whenever everything is in order - a blessing results... look at verse 59.

⁵⁹ So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her, "Our sister, may you become thousands of ten thousands, and may your offspring possess the gate of those who hate him!" ⁶¹ Then Rebekah and her young women arose and rode on the camels and followed the man. Thus the servant took Rebekah and went his way.

Not only the family's involvement, notice secondly...

2. The Couple's Character

In verse 62, we are introduced to Isaac, but before we read that, let's consider what we know about

a. Rebecca's maturity:

- **She Shows Hospitality, Work Ethic, and Kindness Without Hesitation (24:18–20)**
 - She responds immediately: *"Drink, my lord."* She goes **above and beyond**, drawing water for ten camels — a massive, exhausting task.
- **She Demonstrates Discernment With a Stranger (24:21)**
 - The servant watches her closely, and she remains composed, modest, and respectful. She doesn't flirt, flatter, or get swept up emotionally.
- **She has Fostered Strong Family Relationships (24:24–28)**
- **She Responds to God's Work With Quick Obedience (24:58)**
 - Asked directly, *"Will you go with this man?"* she answers simply, "I will go." *She doesn't defer to fear or sentimentality.*
- **She Carries Herself With Modesty and Honor (24:64–65)**
 - When she sees Isaac, she dismounts and veils herself — a cultural sign of dignity, purity, and respect. She knows how to conduct herself appropriately in serious moments.
- **She Trusts God With Her Future (24:61)**
 - She leaves her homeland, security, and family — an enormous emotional step. She anchors her future not in circumstances but in God's revealed leading.

B. Isaac's Maturity:

Genesis 24:62–67 (ESV)

⁶² Now Isaac had returned from Beer-lahai-roi and was dwelling in the Negeb.

So, it appears he has achieved some independence from his father.

⁶³ And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening. And he lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, there were camels coming.

Biblical meditation isn't new ageism.

⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel ⁶⁵ and said to the servant, "Who is that man, 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.

- **He Honors His Father's Leadership and God's Covenant Plan**

Isaac receives Abraham's arrangement without rebellion or resentment. He trusts the spiritual authority and the covenant purpose behind it. Mature men welcome godly guidance rather than resisting it.

- **He Waits Patiently on the Lord**

Isaac isn't scrambling for a wife or forcing God's timing. His steadiness shows a settled heart. Patience is a mark of spiritual maturity.

- **He Cultivates a Devotional Life**

When Rebekah arrives, Isaac is out in the field *meditating*. He practices reflection, prayer, and communion with God. This shows he seeks the Lord before seeking a spouse.

- **He Handles Emotion With Self-Control and Respect**

When he sees Rebekah, he doesn't rush, gawk, or behave foolishly. He remains disciplined and composed. Emotional restraint is a sign of manhood, not weakness.

3. The Covenant's Comfort

⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother and took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

This single verse is one of the richest relational moments in the Old Testament. Everything in Genesis 24 has been leading to this quiet but powerful conclusion: God heals His people and advances His promise through covenant relationships. Let's develop it piece by piece.

A. The Marriage Covenant Restores What Loss Has Broken

Isaac had lost Sarah three years earlier (cf. Gen. 23).

Grief can leave you uncertain, lonely. But notice how the text wraps this chapter: "...and

he was comforted.”

Hebrew word = *nāḥam* — to be consoled, strengthened, steadied, restored.

Rebekah did not replace Sarah — no one could. But God used this marriage to *restore* what grief had taken. This is a man whose heart is finally *settled*, because God brought the right person, in the right way, at the right time. Covenant relationships don't remove all sorrow — but they make sorrow bearable.

When Julie and I were married, the Pastor said it this way, *“When a marriage is built God's way, every sorrow is halved and every joy is doubled.”*

Biblical truth:

Marriage is one of God's ordinary means of comfort in a fallen world. Not an escape. Not a distraction. But a stabilizing gift God uses to strengthen a man for His purposes.

B. The Marriage Covenant Establishes a New Home of Faith

“Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother...”

Sarah's tent was the symbolic center of the matriarchal authority in the Abrahamic home. By bringing Rebekah into that tent, Isaac was: Honoring the legacy of Sarah Publicly installing Rebekah as the covenant matriarch Affirming that the promise of God would advance through her

C. The Marriage Covenant Produces a Maturing Love

“...and she became his wife, and he loved her.”

This is the *first explicit statement* in the Bible of a man loving his wife. In ancient literature, this is stunning. Most ancient marriage accounts speak of duty, lineage, or property — rarely love.

Isaac didn't “fall in love.” He *grew* in love — because covenant love matures as covenant faithfulness deepens.

“The world says love creates commitment; God says commitment creates love.”

D. The Marriage Covenant Points Forward to Christ and His Bride

The whole story anticipates the gospel storyline:

- Abraham → picture of the Father
- The Servant → picture of the Spirit drawing the bride
- Rebekah → picture of the Church, responding in obedience, “I will go”
- Isaac → the promised son receiving His bride

And how does the story end?

Comfort. Peace. Love. Rest.

Exactly what Christ brings to His people.

“Isaac didn’t find comfort in a feeling — he found comfort in a covenant. Because when God writes the story, marriage becomes a shelter, not a storm.”