

A. Choosing of the Girl (1-28)

Occurs 3-years after Sarah's death (Gen 23:1, 25:20) – Abraham was 140 years old

What to Look For in a Mate

-The Spiritual Requirement

"[Y]ou will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites"

*Refers generally to all the inhabitants of Canaan, regardless of individual ethnicity (see Gen 10:19)

*Gen 9:25-27 "Cursed be Canaan... Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem"

*Gen 15:16 "[T]he iniquity of the Amorites..."

*2Co 6:14 "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers."

-The Role Requirement

"Perhaps the woman may not be willing to follow me to this land."

"[I]f the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine."

*The wife of Isaac must be willing to submit to coming back to Canaan

*We should look for a spouse who is willing to fulfill their role as intended by God (Eph 5:22-33)

-The Dependability Requirement

"[T]he time when women go out to draw water." – In preparation for the evening meal.

*He was looking for a girl who was dependable in completing her duties.

*The servant prayed that God's choice for Isaac would come from the girls who came to the well.

¹Now **Abraham** was old, well advanced in years. And the **LORD** had blessed **Abraham** in all things.
²And **Abraham** said to *his servant*, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he had, "Put your hand *under my thigh*,
³that I may *make you swear* by the **LORD**, the **God** of heaven and God of the earth, that *you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites*, among whom I dwell,
⁴but will go to *my country* and to *my kindred*, and *take a wife* for my son **Isaac**."
⁵The servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman *may not be willing to follow me* to this land. Must I then take your son back to the land from which you came?"
⁶**Abraham** said to him, "*See to it that you do not take my son back there*.
⁷The **LORD**, the **God** of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my kindred, and who spoke to me and swore to me, 'To your offspring I will give this land,' *he will send his angel before you*, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. <- Angel - 16:9-16; 21:17
⁸But *if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this oath of mine*; only you must not take my son back there."
⁹So the servant put his hand *under the thigh of Abraham* his master and *swore to him* concerning this matter.
¹⁰Then the servant took *ten of his master's camels* and departed, taking all sorts of choice gifts from his master; and he *arose and went to Mesopotamia* to the *city of Nahor*.<- 11:24-27 (Grandfather / Brother)
¹¹And he made the *camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water* at the time of evening, *the time when women go out to draw water*.
¹²And he said, "O **LORD**, **God** of my master **Abraham**, please grant me success today and show steadfast love to my master **Abraham**.
¹³Behold, I am standing by the spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water.

His Servant (2)

-Possibly Eliezer (15:2) but he is not identified.

-“Oldest” apparently means seniority and highest trust, since he was steward over all Abraham had.

Under My Thigh (2, 9)

-Swearing oaths typically involved symbolic acts in the ancient world.

-Compare to covenant ritual in Gen 15:9-20

Gen 47:29 – Jacob asks Joseph to swear that he will not bury him in Egypt

My Country / Kindred (4)

-The servant does not go to Ur in southern Mesopotamia in response to this command.

-He goes northward, across the Euphrates (see v. 10) to the country of Laban (v. 29; compare 27:43)

Take a Wife (4)

-Take = לקח *laqach* (Gen 6:2; 12:19).

-The language reflects the usual patriarchal sense—women were given like property in exchange for a dowry payment.

-Rebekah's consent is not only allowed, but requested (vv. 57-58). The servant also anticipates that the woman would need to be willing (v. 5).

What to Look For in a Mate
(Cont)

-The Appearance Requirement

*"[A]ttractive in appearance" encompasses more than simply natural beauty.

*Even someone with natural beauty can appear haggard if they do not take care of themselves.

*Rebekah was "[A]ttractive in appearance" even when doing manual labor.

*"[A]ttractive in appearance" speaks of good habits, self discipline, maturity.

-The Moral Requirement

"[A] maiden whom no man had known."

*Maiden = הַלֹּוֹתָּהּ bethulah

Literally means virgin, pure, innocent, mature young woman still under the protection of her father.

*Moral purity is important in marriage

-The Unselfishness Requirement

"Drink, and I will water your camels"

"Drink, my lord."

"I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking."

*Rebekah immediately looked after the needs of Abraham's servant, interrupting her own work.

¹⁴Let the young woman to whom I shall say, '*Please let down your jar that I may drink,*' and who shall say, '*Drink, and I will water your camels*'—let her be the one whom you have appointed for your servant **Isaac**. By this I shall know that you have shown steadfast love to my master."

¹⁵Before he had finished speaking, behold, **Rebekah**, who was born to **Bethuel** the son of **Milcah**, the wife of **Nahor**, **Abraham's** brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. <- See Gen 22:20-24

¹⁶The young woman *was very attractive in appearance, a maiden whom no man had known*. She went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up.

¹⁷Then the servant ran to meet her and said, "*Please give me a little water to drink from your jar.*"

¹⁸She said, "*Drink, my lord.*" And she quickly let down her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink.

¹⁹When she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "*I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.*"

²⁰So she quickly *emptied her jar into the trough and ran again to the well* to draw water, and she drew for all his camels.

²¹The **man** gazed at her in silence to learn whether the **LORD** had prospered his journey or not.

²²When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a *gold ring weighing a half shekel, and two bracelets for her arms weighing ten gold shekels,*

²³and said, "Please tell me whose daughter you are. Is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

²⁴She said to him, "I am the daughter of **Bethuel** the son of **Milcah**, whom she bore to **Nahor**."

²⁵She added, "We have plenty of both straw and fodder, and room to spend the night."

²⁶The man bowed his head and *worshiped the LORD*

²⁷and said, "*Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken his steadfast love and his faithfulness toward my master. As for me, the LORD has led me in the way to the house of my master's kinsmen.*"

²⁸Then the *young woman ran and told her mother's household* about these things.

What to Look For in a Mate
(Cont)

-The Manners Requirement

*The same actions that show her unselfishness also demonstrate that she had impeccable manners when faced with a request from Abraham's servant.

-The Industriousness Requirement

*Rebekah saw that something needed to be done (i.e. taking care of the camels), and she immediately offered to do it without being asked

*This would require her to go down into the well time and time again, because there were 10 camels. (20)

*This quality is critical for a successful marriage from both husband and wife

How to Look for a Mate

-Prayerfully (12-14)

-Obediently (27)

*The servant followed in the way the Lord had led him

-Deliberately

*The actions of Abraham and the servant reflect wise deliberation

-Logically

*Travelled to Abraham's homeland

*Waited at the well

-Responsibly (22)

*Part of looking for a mate is demonstrating that you are worthy of the one you desire for a marriage partner.

*The servant gave gifts to show that the family was worthy

His Servant

Genesis 15:2 (ESV)

² But Abram said, “O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?”

Under My Thigh

Genesis 15:9–20 (ESV)

⁹ He said to him, “Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon.” ¹⁰ And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and laid each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half. ¹¹ And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

¹² As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abram. And behold, dreadful and great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then the LORD said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ¹⁵ As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. ¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

¹⁷ When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. ¹⁸ On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates, ¹⁹ the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, ²⁰ the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

Genesis 47:29 (ESV)

²⁹ And when the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, “If now I have found favor in your sight, put your hand under my thigh and promise to deal kindly and truly with me. Do not bury me in Egypt,

My Country / My Kindred

Genesis 24:29 (ESV)

²⁹ Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban. Laban ran out toward the man, to the spring.

Genesis 27:43 (ESV)

⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran

Take a Wife

Genesis 6:2 (ESV)

² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.

Genesis 12:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ Why did you say, ‘She is my sister,’ so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife; take her, and go.”

Genesis 24:57–58 (ESV)

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.”

4374 לקח (*lā-qāḥ*): v.; ≡ Str 3947; TWOT 1124—**1.** LN 18.1–18.11 (qal) **grasp**, take hold of, i.e., grasp an object with the hand (1Sa 17:51); **2.** LN 57.55–57.70 (qal) **obtain**, gain, i.e., bring an object into one’s possession, either with or without permission of the owner (Ge 42:33); (pual) **be obtained** (Ge 2:23; 3:19, 23; Jdg 17:2; Job 28:2; Isa 49:24, 25; Eze 15:3); **3.** LN 57.125–57.141 (qal) **receive**, i.e., accept an object or benefit for which the initiative resides with the giver, and a focus on the transfer to the recipient (Ex 25:2); **4.** LN 57.55–57.70 (qal) **collect**, i.e., receive what is due from a giver, usually as an obligation, which may be a proper or improper goal (Nu 3:47); **5.** LN 30.86–30.107 (qal) **select**, choose, i.e., prefer one object over another, and then grab, possess, or use for a purpose (Ge 18:7); **6.** LN 31.50–31.57 (qal) **accept**, i.e., come to believe something and so act. upon it (Pr 2:1); **7.** LN 90.56–90.84 (qal) **suffer**, i.e., experience some event or state, as an extension of receiving an object (Eze 36:30); **8.** LN 15.34–15.74 (qal) **send**, i.e., cause one to make linear movement (1Sa 17:31); **9.** LN 15.165–15.186 (qal) **lead away**, i.e., cause an object to move to another place (Jer 44:12); (qal pass.) **be led away** (Pr 24:11+); (nif) **be taken away** (1Sa 21:7[EB 6]; 2Ki 2:9; Est 2:8, 16; Eze 33:6+); (pual) **be taken away** (Ge 12:15; 18:4; 2Ki 2:10; Isa 52:5; 53:8; Jer 48:46+); **10.** LN 37.108–37.110 (nif) **capture**, i.e., seize control of an object (1Sa 4:11, 17, 19, 21, 22+); **11.** LN 41.29–41.43 (pual) **use**, formally, take, i.e., have a pattern of a speaking behavior (Jer 29:22); **12.** LN 14.15–14.16 (hitp) **flash back and forth**, i.e., the movement of lightning (Ex 9:24; Eze 1:4+); **13.** LN 34.66–34.78 unit: לקח אשה (*lā-qāḥ ’iš-šā(h)*) married, formally, take a wife, i.e., enter into a marital relation (Ge 11:29); **14.** LN 57.152–57.171 unit: לקח (לָקַח) ... בְּמַחֲרָה (*b- m^eḥîr*) 1 purchase, formally, give a price, i.e., the act. of acquiring something by money or barter exchange (1Ki 10:28; 2Ch 1:16+); **15.** LN 20.61–20.88 unit: לקח נַפְשׁוֹ (*nē-ṗēš lā-qāḥ*) kill, formally, take the soul (1Ki 19:14); **16.** LN 38.1–38.13 unit: לקח (לָקַח) ... נִקְמָה (*nē-qā-mā(h)*) take revenge, avenge, formally, take retribution, i.e., the justified act. of paying back for a wrong incurred (Jer 20:10); **17.** LN 31.58–31.81 unit: לקח נַפְשׁוֹ (*lā-qāḥ nē-ṗēš*) influence, formally, take the soul, i.e., change an opinion concerning truth (Pr 11:30), note: niv, “win souls;” note: some change the text, making the second clause in the sentence an opposite, translate “the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, but violence (2805) kills,” so changing the meaning of the idiom, see bhs ftn¹

¹ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

3947. לקח **laqach** (542c); a prim. root; *to take*:—accept(8), accepted(3), accepts(2), bring(18), brought(13), buy(1), buys(1), capture(2), captured(2), carry(3), caught(2), exact(1), find(1), flashing(1), flashing forth(1), get(25), gets(1), got(2), has(1), keep(1), married(9), married*(6), marries(1), marry(5), obtain(1), placed(2), procured(2), put(1), raise(3), receive(20), received(12), receives(3), receiving(1), seize(3), seized(2), select(1), selected(1), sent(1), supply(1), take(355), taken(74), takes(15), taking(2), took(352), took away(1), use(1), used(1), wins(1).²

Angel Before You

Genesis 16:9–16 (ESV)

⁹ The angel of the LORD said to her, “Return to your mistress and submit to her.” ¹⁰ The angel of the LORD also said to her, “I will surely multiply your offspring so that they cannot be numbered for multitude.” ¹¹ And the angel of the LORD said to her,

“Behold, you are pregnant
and shall bear a son.
You shall call his name Ishmael,
because the LORD has listened to your affliction.

¹² He shall be a wild donkey of a man,
his hand against everyone
and everyone’s hand against him,
and he shall dwell over against all his kinsmen.”

¹³ So she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, “You are a God of seeing,” for she said, “Truly here I have seen him who looks after me.” ¹⁴ Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; it lies between Kadesh and Bered.

¹⁵ And Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. ¹⁶ Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Genesis 21:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ And God heard the voice of the boy, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, “What troubles you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the boy where he is.

Nahor

Genesis 11:24–27 (ESV)

²⁴ When Nahor had lived 29 years, he fathered Terah. ²⁵ And Nahor lived after he fathered Terah 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

²⁶ When Terah had lived 70 years, he fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

²⁷ Now these are the generations of Terah. Terah fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran fathered Lot.

² Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.

Rebekah's Lineage

Genesis 22:20–24 (ESV)

²⁰ Now after these things it was told to Abraham, “Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: ²¹ Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father of Aram, ²² Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel.” ²³ (Bethuel fathered Rebekah.) These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham’s brother. ²⁴ Moreover, his concubine, whose name was Reumah, bore Tebah, Gaham, Tahash, and Maacah.

What to Look For in a Mate

The Spiritual Requirement

Genesis 9:25–27 (ESV)

²⁵ he said,

“Cursed be Canaan;
a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers.”

²⁶ He also said,

“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem;
and let Canaan be his servant.

²⁷ May God enlarge Japheth,
and let him dwell in the tents of Shem,
and let Canaan be his servant.”

Genesis 15:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.”

2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

The Role Requirement

Ephesians 5:22–33 (ESV)

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ²⁶ that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ³⁰ because we are members of his

body.³¹ “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”³² This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.³³ However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

The Moral Requirement - Maiden

1435 בְּתוּלָה (*b^etû-lā(h)*): n.fem.; ≡ Str 1330; TWOT 295a—**1.** LN 9.34–9.40 **virgin**, i.e., a mature young woman that has never had sexual intercourse, and under the authority and protection of the father (Ge 24:16; Ex 22:15[EB 16]; Est 2:2); **2.** LN 9.34–9.40 **young women**, i.e., a class of young female, though the class may be virgins, the focus is on the youth group (Dt 32:25; Ps 148:12; Jer 31:13; Am 8:13), cf. also 1436; **3.** LN 9.34–9.40 unit: בַּת בְּתוּלָה (*b^etû-lā(h) bāt*)1 dear one, one cared for, loved one, formally, virgin daughter, a young woman who is loved by the father, with the associated meaning of being pure, innocent, and under the protection and care of the father (2Ki 19:21; Isa 23:12; 37:22, 22; 47:1, 1; Jer 46:11; La 1:15; 2:10, 13+)³

1330. בְּתוּלָה **bethulah** (143d); from an unused word; *a virgin*:—maidens(1), virgin(32), virgins(17).⁴

³ Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁴ Thomas, R. L. (1998). *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek dictionaries : updated edition*. Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc.