

**B. Communication for the Girl (34-52)**

Abraham's servant recounts the story of his journey in precise detail.

The trip would have been pointless without this message, much like going "into all the world" would be useless if we did not take the "gospel" (Mark 16:15)

**Priority of the Message**

The servant would not even eat before fulfilling his duty to Abraham (33)

**Person of the Message**

Everything the servant says in his message is ultimately concerning Isaac.

**-The essentialness of the emphasis on Isaac**

Isaac needed to be emphasized since the servant was tasked with finding him a mate.

Telling the story of Abraham without emphasizing Isaac here would be like trying to teach the Gospel without emphasizing Jesus.

**-The essentials in the message about Isaac**

\*His father was greatly blessed by God (35)

\*His birth was unusual

\*He is heir to all the blessings of Abraham (36)

<sup>29</sup>**Rebekah** had a brother whose name was **Laban**.

**Laban** ran out toward the man, to the spring.

<sup>30</sup>As soon as he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and heard the words of **Rebekah** his sister, "Thus the man spoke to me," he went to the man. And behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring.

<sup>31</sup>He said, "Come in, O blessed of the **LORD**. Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."

<sup>32</sup>So the man came to the house and unharnessed the camels, and gave straw and fodder to the camels, and there was water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

<sup>33</sup>Then food was set before him to eat. But he said, "I will not eat until I have said what I have to say." He said, "Speak on."

<sup>34</sup>So he said, "I am **Abraham's** servant.

<sup>35</sup>The **LORD** has **greatly blessed my master**, and he has **become great**. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, camels and donkeys.

<sup>36</sup>And **Sarah** my master's wife bore a son to my master **when she was old**, and to him he has **given all that he has**.

<sup>37</sup>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 dwell,

**Laban**

\*Nephew of Abraham

\*Father of Rachel and Leah

\*Uncle and Father-in-Law of Jacob.

\*See **Gen 28:1 to 31:55** - Laban becomes an important figure in the patriarchal stories of Isaac and Jacob.

<sup>38</sup>but you shall **go to my father's house** and to **my clan** and take a wife for my son.'

<sup>39</sup>I said to my master, '**Perhaps the woman will not follow me.**'

<sup>40</sup>But he said to me, 'The **LORD, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and prosper your way**. You shall **take a wife** for my son **from my clan** and from **my father's house**.

<sup>41</sup>Then you will be **free from my oath**, when you come to my clan. And if they will not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.'

See Gen 24:3

See Gen 24:4

See Gen 24:5

See Gen 24:7

See Gen 24:8

The Proof of the Message

**-Provisions**

"[H]e saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's arms..." (29)

"The Lord has greatly blessed my master" (35)

**-Providence**

The Lord...will send his angel with you and prosper your way (40)

\*The servant mentioned two specific circumstances that demonstrated Divine providence:

(1) His prayer that the girl he would ask for a drink at the well would also volunteer to water his camels (43,44)—which Rebekah did (45,46)

(2) He mentioned that, upon inquiry, Rebekah turned out to be from the very family from whom Abraham had instructed the servant to obtain a wife for Isaac. (47)

**\*Laban's Conclusion:**

"The thing has come from the Lord..." (50)

The Proposal in the Message

The purpose of the message was to solicit Rebekah's hand for Isaac. (49)

Appears as though Laban's household were also followers of the LORD

<sup>42</sup>"I came today to the spring and said, '**O LORD, the God of my master Abraham**, if now you are prospering the way that I go,

See Gen 24:12

<sup>43</sup>behold, I am standing by the spring of water. Let the virgin who comes out to draw water, to whom I shall say, "**Please give me a little water from your jar to drink**,"

See Gen 24:13

<sup>44</sup>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.'

See Gen 24:14

<sup>45</sup>"Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her water jar on her shoulder, and she went down to the spring and drew water. I said to her, '**Please let me drink**.'

See Gen 24:15

<sup>46</sup>She quickly let down her jar from her shoulder and said, '**Drink, and I will give your camels drink also**.' So I drank, and she gave the camels drink also.

See Gen 24:18

<sup>47</sup>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**.

See Gen 24:22,23

<sup>48</sup>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 take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.

See Gen 24:26,27

<sup>49</sup>**Now then, if you are going to show steadfast love and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.**"

<sup>50</sup>Then **Laban and Bethuel** answered and said, "**The thing has come from the LORD**; we cannot speak to you bad or good.

<sup>51</sup>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."

<sup>52</sup>When **Abraham's** servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before the **LORD**.

Why is Laban (Brother) Mentioned Before Bethuel (Father)? 3 Possibilities:

1. Bethuel is dead
2. Wording may assume a matrilineal family structure that gave Laban authority. When Rebekah goes to tell her family about the man she has met, she informs "her mother's household" rather than her father's (24:28)
3. Some historians say that in this society a woman's brother typically gave his sister in marriage.

## Laban

*See Gen 28:1 to 31:55 - Laban becomes an important figure in the patriarchal stories of Isaac and Jacob*

**LABAN, SON OF BETHUEL** (לָבָן, *lbn*; “white”), nephew of Abraham, brother of Rebekah, father of Leah and Rachel (Gen 24:15–29), and uncle and father-in-law to Jacob (Gen 27:43; 28:2). He was an Aramean from Padadan-aram, which is also identified with Haran.

### **Biblical Relevance**

**Laban and Isaac.** When Abraham desired a wife for Isaac, he sent his servant Eliezer to the city of Nahor (Haran) to seek a bride (Gen 24:1–14). Rebekah responded to Eliezer by providing water for him and his camels to drink. He gave her gold jewelry in exchange, and began the negotiations of her engagement to Isaac (Gen 24:15–28). Rebekah’s brother Laban acted as the head of her household. He acknowledged that the Lord had led Eliezer to Rebekah, allowing her to go with Eliezer to become Isaac’s wife (Gen 24:29–61).

**Laban and Jacob’s Wives.** Rebekah coached Jacob on how to deceive Isaac so that he could inherit the family blessing (Gen 27:1–17). When Esau discovered that his brother had cheated him, he threatened to murder Jacob. This forced Jacob to flee to Haran (Gen 27:41–46). Rebekah was grieved by Esau’s wives, so she convinced Isaac to send Jacob away. Isaac commanded Jacob, “Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother’s father; and from there take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother’s brother” (Gen 28:2 NASB).

Jacob met Rachel, the daughter of Laban, at a watering hole. He watered the entire flock that belonged to his uncle Laban (Gen 29:1–12). Laban embraced Jacob and brought him into his home. Laban covenanted with Jacob that if he worked for seven years, he would give Rachel to be his wife (Gen 29:13–20). After seven years of work, Jacob demanded his marriage to Rachel. Laban deceived Jacob by giving him Leah, Laban’s oldest daughter, to be his wife. When Jacob awoke in the morning and realized that he had married Leah, he demanded that Laban give him Rachel as a wife. Laban insisted that he wait one week to marry Rachel, with the guarantee that he would work seven more years (Gen 29:21–30). Jacob’s deception of others had come full circle—now he was suffering the consequences. Then, Laban gave Zilpah to Leah and Bilhah to Rachel as handmaidens (Gen 29:24–29). These women became the mothers of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen 29:31–30:24).

**Jacob’s Flight from Laban.** Laban entrapped Jacob into working for him for 14 years by exploiting Jacob’s love for Rachel. He was able to discharge his responsibilities to Leah by deceiving Jacob into taking her as a wife. Although Laban appeared to be generous with hospitality, he was only using Jacob to exploit his own interests and prosperity (Gen 30:25–30). Jacob had brought Laban great wealth through the husbandry of cattle, sheep, and goats.

Jacob made an agreement with Laban to develop separate flocks, and then he separated the spotted and speckled animals for himself. Jacob developed breeding techniques to increase exponentially his flocks (Gen 30:25–43). This led Laban’s sons to feel resentful towards Jacob. Jacob defended himself by stating, “You know that I have served your father with all my strength. Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me” (Gen 31:6–7 NASB). Jacob gathered his family and flocks and fled from Laban. Laban was furious and desired to kill Jacob, but the Lord warned him in a dream not

to harm Jacob (Gen 31:1–29). Laban could not retrieve his family or animals, but he did want the household idols returned to him. Jacob was unaware that Rachel had hidden them in her camel's saddle where Laban could not find them (Gen 31:30–42). Finally, Laban and Jacob made a covenant of peace at Mizpah (Gen 31:43–55). Laban called it *Jegar-sahadutha*, but Jacob called it *Galeed* (Gen 31:47). *Jegar-sahadutha* is Aramaic; *Galeed* is Hebrew. These words both mean “a heap of witness,” which referred to the pile of stones which remained as a memorial to their covenant.

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JOHN A. MCLEAN<sup>1</sup>

### **Communication for the Girl**

#### **Mark 16:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”

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<sup>1</sup> McLean, J. A. (2012). Laban, Son of Bethuel. In (J. D. Barry & L. Wentz, Eds.) *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

### Laban Before Bethuel

**Faithlife Study Bible** - If Bethuel was dead, how does one understand the appearance of “and Bethuel” in the text? The Hebrew “Laban and Bethuel” can be translated “Laban, with Bethuel,” or “Laban, and so, Bethuel”—meaning that Laban acted on behalf of Bethuel, and that Bethuel was in agreement with Laban.

Alternatively, the wording may assume a matrilineal family structure that gave Laban authority. When Rebekah goes to tell her family about the man she has met, she informs “her mother’s household” rather than her father’s (v. 28). This option seems more likely, and it does not require that Bethuel be dead. While “answered” in v. 50 is a singular verb form (as though there was only one person responding), the following “said” is plural. Verse 52 also describes Abraham’s servant as hearing “their” words (plural). Verse 58 also says, “they called” Rebekah. It seems Bethuel was indeed present.<sup>2</sup>

**Bible Knowledge Commentary** - Laban invited Eliezer and his men in. Eliezer then recounted to Rebekah’s family his mission and God’s providence and gained their permission and blessing to take her to Isaac. In that society a woman’s brother gave his sister in marriage, which explains why **Laban**, Rebekah’s **brother**, was the negotiator in this marriage contract.<sup>3</sup>

**Jamieson Fausset Brown** - The brothers conduct all the marriage negotiations, their father being probably dead, and without consulting their sister. Their language seems to indicate they were worshippers of the true God.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Barry, J. D., Grigoni, M. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Mangum, D., & Whitehead, M. M. (2012). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Ge 24:50). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

<sup>3</sup> Ross, A. P. (1985). Genesis. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 67). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>4</sup> Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible* (Ge 24:50). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.