

# Aunt Hattie's Bible Studies

by

Harriet I. Fisher

1941

## Chapter 4

### ISAAC

From the story of Abraham to the story of Isaac is like passing from the rapids of Niagara into the smooth quiet waters of the river as it flows peacefully to Lake Ontario.

Abraham was not only a man of great faith but of great power - he knew how to get things done. His whole life was one of stirring activity. His son, Isaac, however, was quiet and thoughtful. Of Isaac's earlier years I have told you in the story of Abraham.

After Sarah, Isaac's mother died, he and his father continued to live in Hebron, and Isaac was very lonely and mourned for his mother. Although he was forty years old he was not married and now it was time for him to be getting settled in life.

It was the custom of those days for the parents to choose the wife for the son, and so Abraham began to make arrangements. Because a great nation was to come from his family, it was of great importance for Isaac to have the right one for his life companion. Therefore, one day Abraham called his servant Eliezer to him and said,

**“Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee to swear by the Lord, the God of Heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son, Isaac.”**

When he said, **“Put thy hand under my thigh,”** he followed the custom of the day and it meant that the servant, by doing so, would be duty bound to carry out the will of his master.

Why didn't Abraham want Isaac to marry a Canaanite? You see God had promised He would give this land to him and his family and he had accepted it by faith. If Isaac had married a Canaanite, then her father could have given her part of the land of Canaan and they might have said that Isaac received the land from his wife and not by faith in God's Word.

Another reason was that Abraham wanted Isaac to marry into his own family. Eliezer, the servant, also one who believed in prayer, answered his master and said, **“But Master, when I get up there to the land of your relatives, maybe the young woman will not be willing to come home with me. Then shall I come back and get your son Isaac, and take him up there?”**

“Oh, no!” Abraham said, “don’t ever do such a thing as that, but **the same Lord God of Heaven** who called me out of the land of my fathers and promised me this land, **shall send his angel to go before thee** and lead you to **take a wife unto my son.**” Then he told his servant that if the young woman refused to come back with him, he would have done his best and would be set free from his promise.

At last it was arranged, and Eliezer took of Abraham’s servants and camels and made them ready for the long journey. Abraham and Isaac thought it wise to send a very nice present to help the servant in coaxing the young lady to come. Hence they put in some very lovely jewels of gold and silver, and also a complete outfit of very beautiful garments, just the kind that girls like.

I suppose it took many days to make the trip, for it must have been several hundred miles and camels do not travel as fast as autos. It was near evening when they came in sight of the city of Abraham’s relatives in Mesopotamia. Eliezer stopped the camels just outside the city and made them kneel down by the well about the time the maidens would be coming to draw water for the evening meal.

And then Abraham’s faithful servant prayed to the God of his master that He would direct him to the one whom He had chosen to be the bride of his master’s son. He said, “**Let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say ‘Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink,’ and she shall say, ‘Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also.’ Let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant, Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.**”

Before he had finished his prayer, Rebekah came to the well with her pitcher on her shoulder. She was very beautiful, a rare type of Syrian loveliness, a picture indeed, midst the soft glow of the evening shadows.

Eliezer’s heart beat faster as he ran to meet her, hoping against hope that she was the one, and listening for the words of his prayer to know her. Surely his master’s God had heard, for when he said, “**Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water from thy pitcher,**” she generously said, “**Drink my Lord,**” and then, wonders of wonders, she spoke the words of his prayer - “**I will draw water for thy camels also,**” and she drew enough for them all.

The servant was deeply touched by the whole scene, and while the camels were drinking, he went to the treasure bag he had brought with him and took out golden earrings, two lovely bracelets and ten shekels of gold, and gave them to her. Questioning her, he said, “**Whose daughter art thou? Tell me, I pray thee, is there room in thy father’s house for us to lodge in?**”

She replied that she was Bethuel’s daughter and granddaughter of Nahor, and that there was plenty of room and food to care for all of them. Then the faithful servant gave thanks to God, and said, “**Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth; I being in the way the Lord led me.**”

Isn't it a great thing to be in the way of the Lord so He can lead us? So many folks are all the time going their own way and expecting God to be with them and then grumbling when things do not come out right.

Rebekah, just like girls nowadays, was greatly pleased with the gifts and ran home to tell the family. Laban, Rebekah's brother, was quite excited about the tale she had to tell and, especially so, when he saw the costly gifts she had received. He ran down to the well where the camels were waiting and gave the men a very cordial welcome to their home where things were even then being made ready for them.

When they got to the house all the friendliness of an eastern home was showered upon them and when they had made themselves ready, they were invited to sit down to dinner. But Eliezer would not allow his hunger and all of these friendly people to lead him away from his mission, so he said to Bethuel and his household, "**I will not eat until I have told my errand.**" They said, "**Speak on.**"

He began by telling them he was Abraham's servant and of the manner in which the Lord had blessed his master making him very rich and great, for, Abraham had not only flocks and herds, but silver, gold, maidservants, menservants, camels and asses. But most of all he told them about his master's son Isaac who would receive all of his father's wealth, and that Abraham wanted Isaac to take a wife of his father's house and not from among the Canaanites, and that it was for this purpose he had come. He also told them how he had prayed to his master's God for guidance and that Rebekah had been the answer to his prayer in every detail.

He ended by saying, "Now, if I have been rightly led, tell me. If not, tell me that also, that I may go my way."

Laban and Bethuel answered at once that the thing was from the Lord and they had no right to put forward their own ideas. "**Behold,**" they said, "**Rebekah is before thee. Take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken.**"

Eliezer's heart was full to overflowing and he bowed himself to the ground and worshipped God and then brought forth the gifts Abraham had sent, jewels of silver and of gold and fine clothing. He not only gave to Rebekah but to her mother and to her brother Laban.

And now Eliezer was ready for his dinner and they all ate of the delicious meal that had been prepared for them and afterwards had a good night's rest. The next morning Eliezer was up early and eager to start back to his master. All of this had come very suddenly upon the family, and, while they were willing for Rebekah to go, they realized that they would likely never see her again, and they begged Abraham's servant to wait a few days, at least ten, so that they could part with her more easily. But he was anxious to be off and said, "**Hinder me not, seeing the Lord has prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.**"

They called Rebekah and asked her if she was willing to go with this man and she said she was. I think that it where she showed her faith in God and believed that He was calling her to leave all and go.

Just imagine the excitement in that home that morning. I know her mother and sisters must have cried as they gathered her belongings together and made her ready for the journey. Rebekah's nurse, Deborah, was given to her to go with her, and indeed, she cared for her all the rest of her life.

The camels were loaded and brought to the house. The men mounted first and led the caravan, Rebekah, Deborah and some maidservants following on their camels. I think Rebekah looked back and waved her handkerchief as long as she could see her loved ones, and then after a quick turn in the road they were hidden forever from her sight.

I think her family went into the house dazed with the whole experience. Their beautiful Rebekah was gone and their hearts were filled with sorrow.

Rebekah, while realizing all of this, knew that God had called her and that she was facing her life's work. I think as she rode along those long stony trails that the same questions came to her that would come to a present-day girl under similar circumstances. What kind of a man was Abraham's son? She had heard he was very rich, but would he be stingy or generous? Would he be good looking? Would he be one whom she could love and admire?

Days passed on, some were pleasant and some were wearisome, but every one brought her nearer to the one to whom she was promised.

About this time Isaac was beginning to think it was time for the caravan to return, and the story says that he went out to take a walk one evening and to think. What was he thinking about? I think he said to himself, "I wonder what kind of a choice dad's servant will make for me? I hope she will be as good to me as mother was and as good looking. My, those camels are dreadfully slow, something must have gone wrong. It seems to me they should surely have been here today." Then Isaac lifted up his eyes and "**Behold, the camels were coming.**"

Yes, and Rebekah caught sight of Isaac about that time and she asked the servant who that man was walking through the field to meet them. When he told her it was Isaac she stopped her camel and got off that she might put a veil over her face as was the custom of those days.

By this time Isaac had come up and Eliezer told all of the story. Isaac took Rebekah home with him and I guess it was love at first sight for the Bible says he loved her and that she comforted him.

Twenty years passed by and they had no children, and yet God had promised to make of the family a great nation. Isaac, though a man of faith, couldn't understand it, so he talked to God about it. That is a good thing for anyone to do if he is a child of God. God listened to Isaac and one day twin boys, whom they name Jacob and Esau, were born to them.

When Rebekah asked the Lord about these children He told her that they would bring forth two nations and that the older would serve the younger. In the next story I'll tell you how this prophecy came true.

Famines are quite frequent even today, in Palestine. One came about this time in our story, and Isaac took his family, his flocks and his herds and went down on the border toward Egypt. God came to him and told him not to go to Egypt, but to stay in the land He had given to him. **“Sojourn in this land and I will be with thee and bless thee,”** God said. In fact, He went over all the promises He had made to his father Abraham.

Isaac saw good crops down in Gerar, just bordering Egypt, and moved down there, and as it was with his father, the nearer he got to Egypt, the more unhappy he became and a great fear came upon him. He looked at Rebekah and said to himself, “My, my, isn’t she beautiful? If King Abimelech sees her I am as good as dead.” So he told her to say she was his sister. That was the same story his father told about his mother, only Sarah was his half-sister, so I suppose it was only half a lie. But that is the way, when a father tells half a falsehood his son usually tells a whole one.

Isaac’s fears were justified, for the king had Rebekah taken to his palace after she had said she was Isaac’s sister. One day Abimelech was looking out of his window and he saw Isaac and Rebekah having a real loving time together and he said to himself, “Well, look at them! And she said she was his sister. I can’t believe it.” So he called Isaac and asked him why he had told him this lie. Isaac, very humbly said, that he was afraid they would kill him and take her if he said that she was his wife. Then Abimelech issued a command to all his men stating that Rebekah was Isaac’s wife and that whoever harmed either of them should be put to death.

Isaac lived in Gerar for some time after that and greatly increased in earthly riches, but spiritually he became very poor, for we never hear anything of an altar of worship being built while he lived there. Also he had lots of trouble with the Philistines who were very envious of his success.

When Abraham lived there, years before, he dug several wells and the Philistines had filled them up for they didn’t like to have Abraham in their country. Now Isaac digged again these wells and about as fast as he cleaned them out, the Philistines fought to get them. Instead of fighting back, Isaac passed on to another place.

Every time he moved he went farther away from the border of Egypt and finally he moved to Beer-sheba and the very night he reached there, the Lord appeared to him. Then Isaac built an altar and called upon the name of the Lord. And so Isaac found God just where he left Him, at the place of prayer. Isaac lived to be a hundred and eighty years of age. When he died, his sons, Jacob and Esau, buried him in the cave of Machpelah beside his father and mother.

So ended the life of another of God’s faithful ones.

~ end of chapter 4 ~

<http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

\*\*\*