

The Journey of Faith

(Genesis 24:1-67)

Kent Hughes writes, "What stands out above all else in these words (Abraham's final words in Scripture) is **Abraham's faith**. Abraham's first recorded words in Scripture had been expressive of his doubts to God when he said, 'you have given me no offspring' (15:3). But here his last recorded words declared unwavering faith in God as he said, 'he will send his angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there' (v. 7). So here, as Calvin says, we have 'simple reliance on the providence of God.' **Abraham believed that God's unseen hand would do all.**"¹

A Purposeful Journey (24:1-3)

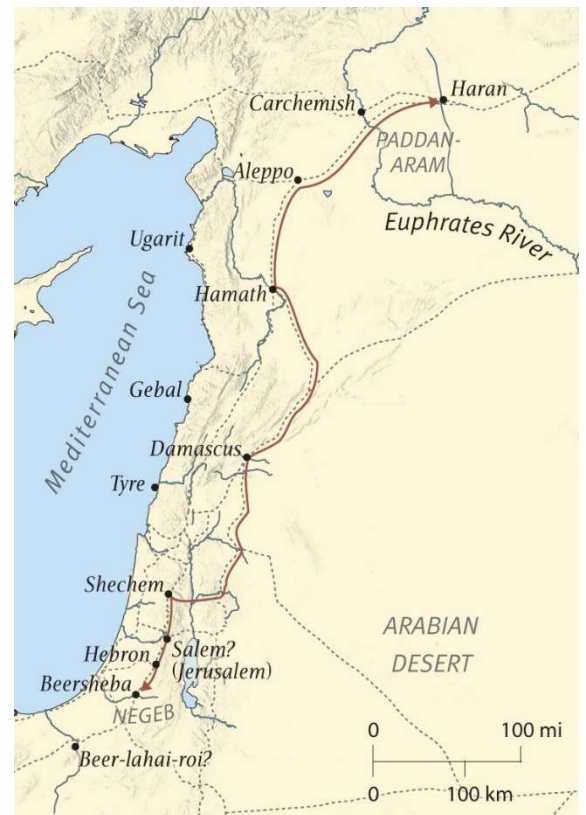
Journeys to Paddan-aram (c. 2026 b.c.) 500 miles

"When Isaac was 40 years old, Abraham sent his eldest servant back to Paddan-aram, the land of his relatives, to obtain a wife for Isaac. The servant found Rebekah, the granddaughter of Abraham's brother Nahor, and brought her back to Isaac, who was living in the Negeb. Later, Jacob would make this same journey as he fled from his brother Esau."²

V.2 - Servant's name is not given, but **Gen. 15:2** identifies his servant as "Eleazer" which means "**God is my Help**". Or under my loin. Now he's going to ask Eleazer to make an oath with his hand under his loin or under his thigh.

V.3 **Don't choose a Canaanite.** (see **2 Corinthians 6:14**). Believers should not marry unbelievers.

POINT: Set your goal and chart your course. (See **Prov. 19:21; Prov. 6:6-11; Prov. 24:27; Prov. 27:23-27; Luke 14:28-30**)



¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004), 316.

² Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 90.

I. A Providential Journey (24:14)

J. I. Packer says, believers “are never in the grip of blind forces (fortune, chance, luck, fate); all that happens to them is divinely planned, and each event comes as a new summons to trust, obey, and rejoice.”³

Eleazer says “she has been appointed of God” (v.14). He is looking for the person God has already chosen.

POINT: We should trust in the providence of God. Plan, pray and trust.

II. A Prayerful Journey (24:12-15, 52)

In v.45, he describes his prayer as one that was not vocal, but silent – “in my heart”.

Nahum Sarna observes, “Nothing is more characteristic of biblical man than a profound and pervasive conviction about the role of divine Providence in everyday human affairs. It should be noted that the servant does not ask for a miraculous divine intervention or for a revelation that would designate Isaac’s bride-to-be. He prays, rather, that the rational criteria of suitability that he himself determines might be in accordance with God’s will and be effective.”⁴

1 Thessalonians 5:17 – Pray without ceasing. Eleazer prayed and worked simultaneously. “This means that prayer is no substitute for action. This servant prayed and worked at the same time, for he knew that prayer is given not to make work unnecessary but to make it effective.”⁵

POINT: Prayer is not a substitute for work. Prayer is asking God to help you in the work.

IV. A Promised Journey (24:57-58)

Rebekah has the opportunity to express the same commitment and faith of Abraham. She takes her own journey of faith away from her family to the will of God for her life. (See Gen. 2:24)

Boice writes, “She had probably never been away from home in her entire life, but if God was sending her away, she wanted to respond to his leading immediately. So should we, when God indicates new directions for us. If we delay our obedience, little will be accomplished. Ten days will turn into ten months and then ten years, and the time for service will be gone.”⁶

This story is given to show that God will guide us to accomplish His purposes. See Proverbs 3:5-6.

POINT: When God’s will is known, say “Yes” and do not delay.

³ J. I. Packer, *Concise Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1993), 56.

⁴ Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, p. 163, as quoted in R. Kent Hughes, 317–318.

⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 718–719.

⁶ Boice, 721.