

Genesis 24

Verses 1- 9

Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. ² Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household who was in charge of all that he owned, “Please place your hand under my thigh, ³ and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live; ⁴ but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.” ⁵ The servant said to him, “Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?” ⁶ Then Abraham said to him, “Beware that you do not take my son back there! ⁷ The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land’—He will send His angel ahead of you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. ⁸ But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free of this oath of mine; only do not take my son back there.” ⁹ So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham, and swore to him concerning this matter.

Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way.

See chart 2405

Ch	Person	Event	Age	Year
18-19	Lot	Sodom and Gomorrah	99	1897
20	Abraham	She is my sister (2nd time)	99	1897
21	Abraham	Isaac born	100	1896
22	Abraham	Abraham Tested	120	1876
23	Sarah	Sarah dies	127	1859
24	Isaac	Marries Rebekah	40	1856
25	Isaac	Esau and Jacob born	60	1836
25	Abraham	Abraham dies	175	1821

Since Isaac is 40 years old in this chapter Abraham must be 140. Abraham will live for another 35 years but these are the last recorded words of Abraham.

³ and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live; ⁴ but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”

Abraham’s mission was to find a wife for his son so he sent his most trusted servant to the city of Nahor in Mesopotamia. This was a trip of 450 miles.

See map 2410



⁵ The servant said to him, “Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?” ⁶ Then Abraham said to him, “Beware that you do not take my son back there!”

The servant of Abraham was afraid that he might fail at his mission because the woman might object to leaving her country and home. So he asked his master, if that were to happen, was he permitted to take Isaac with him on a subsequent visit so the woman might be persuaded to return. But Abraham wanted nothing to do with that option. He may have feared that Isaac might decide to stay in her country and thereby miss out on the promise that God made to Abraham and his descendants.

⁷ The Lord, the God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I will give this land'—He will send His angel ahead of you, and you will take a wife for my son from there. ⁸ But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free of this oath of mine; only do not take my son back there."

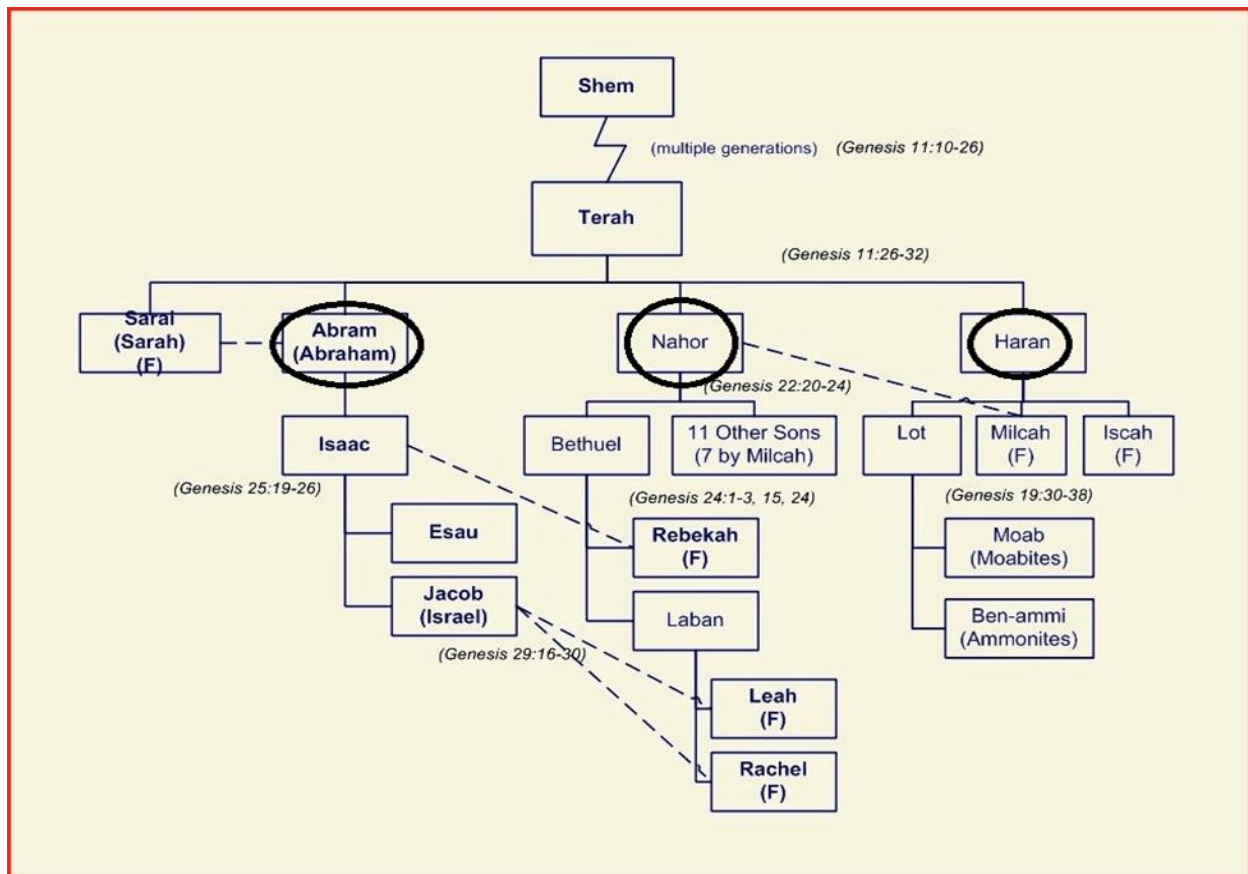
Abraham told his servant that God would direct his way in finding a wife for Isaac but it was her choice whether to stay at home or come to Canaan.

Verse 10

¹⁰ Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and went out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand; so he set out and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.

Abraham had two brothers, Nahor and Haran.

See chart 2415



We know Haran had left home before Abraham because Terah, Abraham and Lot went to the city of Haran and stayed there until Terah passed away. In this chapter we learn that Nahor also founded a city.

This kind of thing happens quite a bit in the bible. We discover new details about prior events as the story of Israel unfolds in the bible. This adds an element of surprise and interest for the reader.

Abraham's two brothers lived in Mesopotamia (the area between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers). The cities of Haran and Nahor were toward the northwestern end of Mesopotamia (the area in the red circle).

See map 2420



Verses 11 - 14

¹¹ He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water when it was evening, the time when women go out to draw water. ¹² And he said, “Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; ¹⁴ now may it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your jar so that I may drink,’ and who answers, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’—*may she be the one* whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master.”

¹² And he said, “Lord, God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show kindness to my master Abraham.

Abraham’s servant knew that by asking God to show kindness to his master, he was insured to have success in his mission.

¹⁴ now may it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your jar so that I may drink,’ and who answers, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’—*may she be the one* whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac;

The test that he devised was pretty clever because it would show the character of the woman to be chosen. It was also a demanding test because drawing water for ten camels would be difficult since one camel can drink 30 gallons of water. She would have to draw 300 gallons of water for the 10 camels.

Verses 15 - 21

¹⁵ And it came about, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶ The young woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had had relations with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar, and came up. ¹⁷ Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar.” ¹⁸ And she said, “Drink, my lord”; then she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will also draw *water* for your camels until they have finished drinking.” ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. ²¹ Meanwhile, the man was taking a close look at her in silence, to find out whether the Lord had made his journey successful or not.

¹⁵ And it came about, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham’s brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder.

God answered his prayer before he was done speaking. There are few times in life when a prayer is answered that quickly. This was a good indication that she was the woman that he was seeking for Isaac.

¹⁷ Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar.” ¹⁸ And she said, “Drink, my lord”; then she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, “I will also draw water for your camels until they have finished drinking.”

In verse 14 the servant asked God that the woman he was seeking for Isaac might answer by saying, **“Drink and I will water your camels also”**

Rebekah said, **“Drink, my lord” and “I will also draw water for your camels until they have finished drinking.”**

Rebekah showed her kindness by adding the words “my lord” and “until they have finished drinking.”

²¹ Meanwhile, the man was taking a close look at her in silence, to find out whether the Lord had made his journey successful or not.

Abraham’s servant had set up a good test, but he remained cautious until she had done exactly what she had said she would do.

Verses 22 - 27

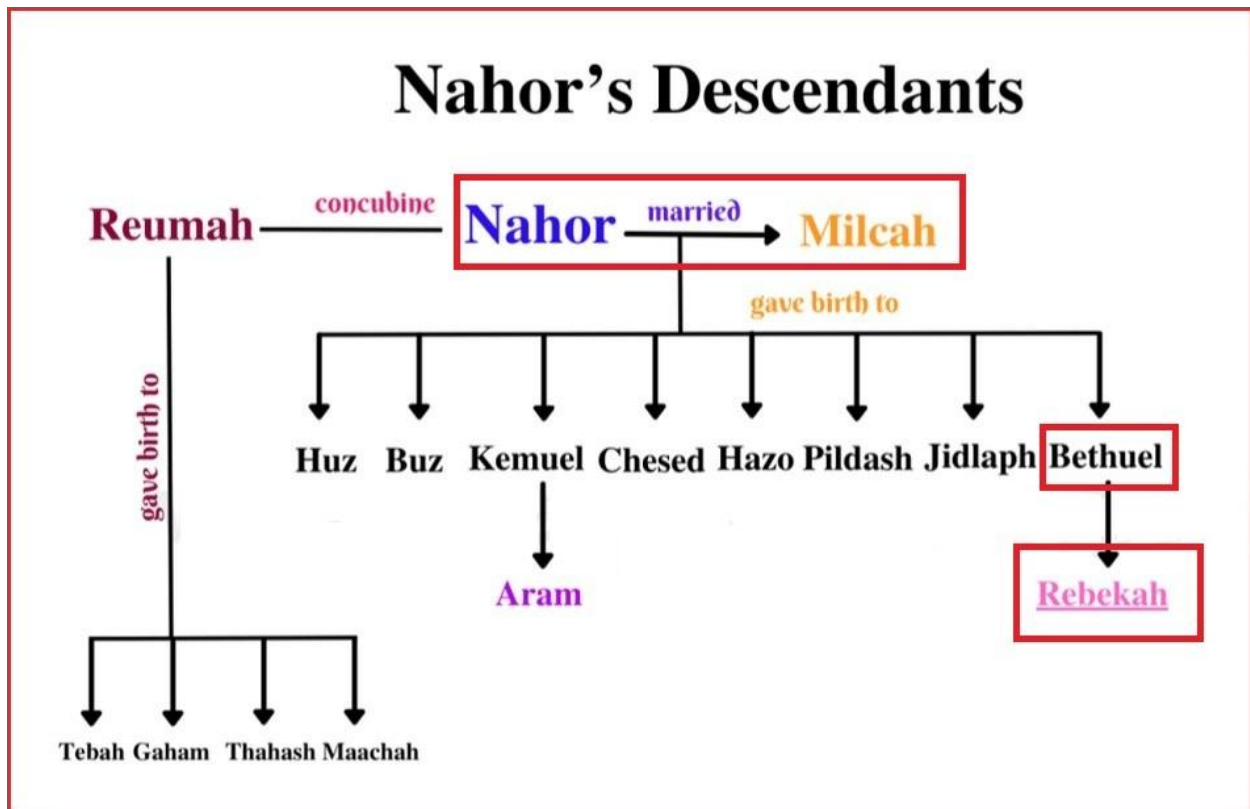
²² When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half-shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold, ²³ and he said, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to stay overnight at your father’s house?” ²⁴ She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah’s son, whom she bore to Nahor.” ²⁵ Again she said to him, “We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to stay overnight.” ²⁶ Then the man bowed low and worshiped the Lord. ²⁷ And he said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned His kindness and His trustworthiness toward my master; as for me, the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master’s brothers.”

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

It turned out that this beautiful young woman also had a servant’s heart and Abraham’s servant chose Rebekah to be the wife of Isaac at that very moment.

²³ and he said, “Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to stay overnight at your father’s house?” ²⁴ She said to him, “I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah’s son, whom she bore to Nahor.”

See chart 2425



²⁵ Again she said to him, “We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to stay overnight.”

Interesting that the servant asked her and that she invited them to stay before the head of the household was consulted. Did both of them forget that it was a male dominated society? Women were not equal to men in some ways but they had more rights than some might think.

²⁷ And he said, “Blessed be the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned His kindness and His trustworthiness toward my master; as for me, the Lord has guided me in the way to the house of my master’s brothers.”

God had blessed Abraham and his servant.

Verses 28 - 32

²⁸ Then the young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. ²⁹ Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran outside to the man at the spring. ³⁰ When he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "This is what the man said to me," he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹ And he said, "Come in, blessed of the Lord! Why do you stand outside, since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?" ³² So the man entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.

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

Since the text says that Rebekah went to her mother's household, it is likely that her father, Bethuel, had already passed away.

²⁹ Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran outside to the man at the spring.

If her father had passed away then Laban was probably the "head of the household".

³¹ And he said, "Come in, blessed of the Lord! Why do you stand outside, since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?"

When he greets the guests, the decision that they would stay the night had already been made, so he simply encourages them to do so.

From what we know about Laban, his knowledge of the Lord was deficient.

See Genesis 30:27 and 31:19

²⁷ But Laban said to him, "If it pleases you at all, *stay with me; I have determined by divination that the Lord has blessed me on your account.*"

¹⁹ Laban had gone to shear his flock, and Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's.

Verses 33 - 49

³³ But when *food* was set before him to eat, he said, “I will not eat until I have stated my business.” And he said, “Speak on.” ³⁴ So he said, “I am Abraham’s servant. ³⁵ The Lord has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and slave women, and camels and donkeys. ³⁶ Now my master’s wife Sarah bore a son to my master in her old age, and he has given him all that he has. ³⁷ 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 live; ³⁸ but you shall go to my father’s house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.’ ³⁹ Then I said to my master, ‘Suppose the woman does not follow me.’ ⁴⁰ And he said to me, ‘The Lord, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father’s house; ⁴¹ then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.’

⁴² “So I came today to the spring, and said, ‘Lord, God of my master Abraham, if now You will make my journey on which I have been going successful; ⁴³ behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the young unmarried woman who comes out to draw *water*, and to whom I say, “Please let me drink a little water from your jar”; ⁴⁴ and she says to me, “You drink, and I will draw for your camels also”—let her be the woman whom the Lord has appointed for my master’s son.’

⁴⁵ “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew *water*, and I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’ ⁴⁶ She quickly lowered her jar from her *shoulder*, and said, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’; so I drank, and she watered the camels also. ⁴⁷ Then I asked her, and said, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ And she said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor’s son, whom Milcah bore to him’; and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists. ⁴⁸ And I bowed low and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master’s brother for his son. ⁴⁹ So now if you are going to deal kindly and truthfully with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me now, so that I may turn to the right or the left.”

These verses are a summary of what has already happened and need no comment except for verses 33 and 49.

This servant of Abraham is really focused on his mission and he demanded a decision from Rebekah and the family before he could eat.

Verses 50 - 58

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The matter has come from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah 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 ground before the Lord. ⁵³ And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother. ⁵⁴ Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they got up in the morning, he said, “Send me away to my master.” ⁵⁵ But her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go.” ⁵⁶ However, he said to them, “Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away so that I may go to my master.” ⁵⁷ And they said, “We will call the young woman and ask her.” ⁵⁸ Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.”

⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel replied, “The matter has come from the Lord; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. ⁵¹ Here is Rebekah before you, take *her* and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the Lord has spoken.”

This Bethuel must be a younger brother of Laban because if her father was still alive, there would be no reason for Laban to reply.

Her brothers recognized this union was from God and gave their blessing to the marriage.

⁵³ And the servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.

Rebekah, Laban and their mother were given gifts. If her father Bethuel was still alive he would have received these gifts but in his absence it went to his wife, and eldest son.

But her brother and her mother said, “Let the young woman stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go

Laban and his mother wanted some time to say goodbye to Rebekah.

⁵⁶ However, he said to them, “Do not delay me, since the Lord has prospered my way. Send me away so that I may go to my master.”

The servant of Abraham had responsibilities at home so he didn't want to remain there for another 10 days. So he reminds them that God was directing this mission and they should not delay its completion.

⁵⁷ And they said, “We will call the young woman and ask her.” ⁵⁸ Then they called Rebekah and said to her, “Will you go with this man?” And she said, “I will go.”

Rebekah had not met or talked with Isaac so she made her decision based on very little information but she trusted that this was from God and therefore she did not need any more time to think about this decision.

However, we can all understand how her family felt and they knew that it was possible that they may never see her again because of the long trip that would be required.

Verses 59 - 67

⁵⁹ So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham's servant and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

**“May you, our sister,
Become thousands of ten thousands,
And may your descendants possess
The gate of those who hate them.”**

⁶¹ Then Rebekah got up with her female attendants, and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed. ⁶² Now Isaac had come *back* from a journey to Beer-lahai-roi; for he was living in the Negev.

⁶³ Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he raised his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming. ⁶⁴ Rebekah raised her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she dismounted from the camel. ⁶⁵ She said to the servant, “Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?” And the servant said, “He is my master.” Then she took her veil and covered herself. ⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. ⁶⁷ Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; so Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

⁵⁹ So they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham's servant and his men.

The fact that she had a nurse shows that the family had some wealth.

Her nurse was named Deborah.

See Genesis 35:8

⁸ Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; and it was named Allon-bacuth.

**⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,
"May you, our sister,
Become thousands of ten thousands,
And may your descendants possess
The gate of those who hate them."**

Rebekah's family blessed her using the same pattern that God used when He blessed Abraham at the sacrifice of Isaac.

See Genesis 22:17

¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand, which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.

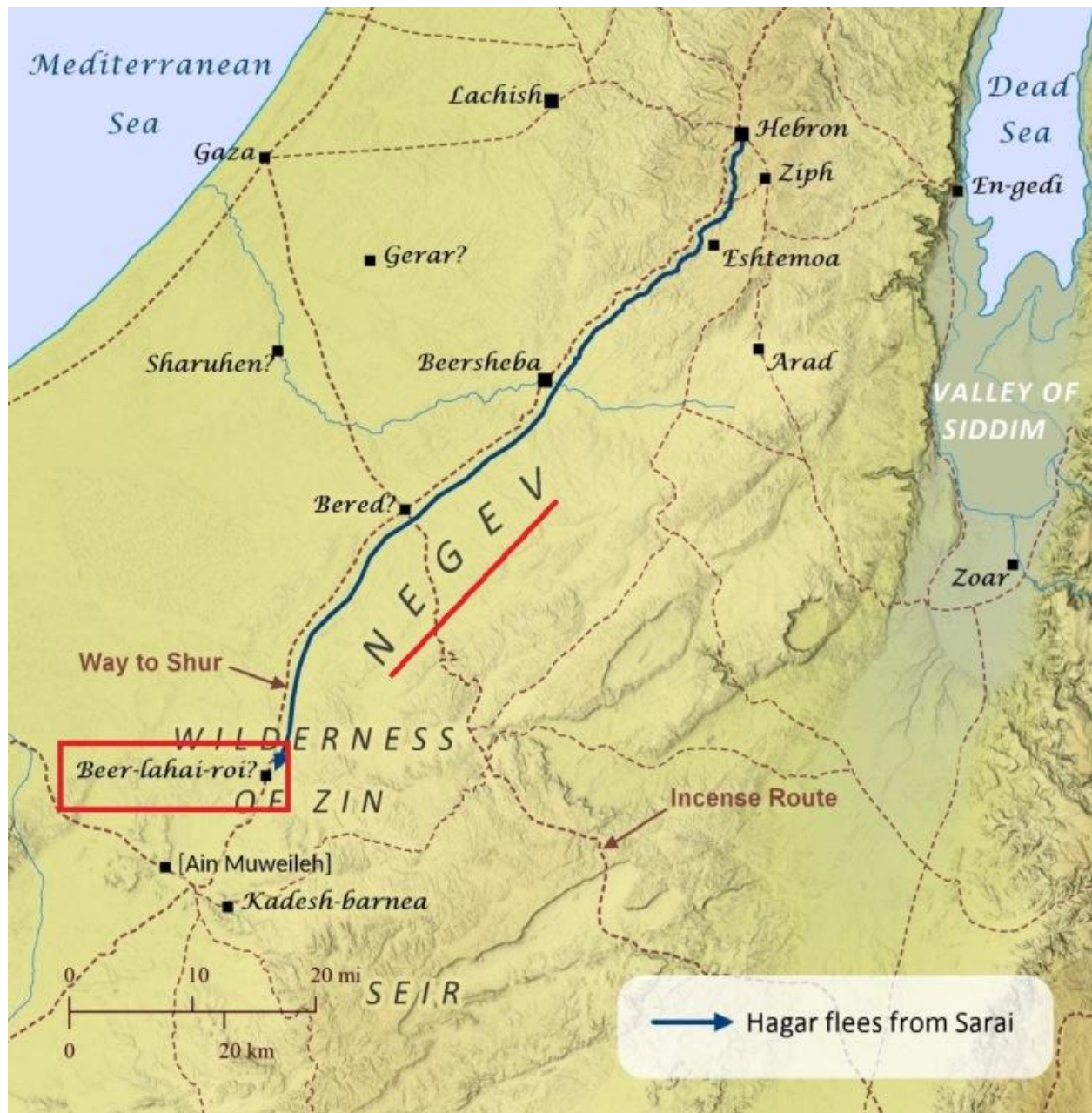
⁶¹ Then Rebekah got up with her female attendants, and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

Rebekah had all the advantages that a wealthy family had to offer.

⁶² Now Isaac had come *back* from a journey to Beer-lahai-roi; for he was living in the Negev.

The Negev was a semi-desert region in southern Israel that began at the bottom of the Dead Sea and extended to the Red Sea.

See map 2430 Beer-lahai-roi



⁶³ Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he raised his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming.

It seems Isaac was a thoughtful man.

Yes ladies, you have a fair point when you say that is an oxymoron. ☺

⁶⁶ The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done.

It was important for Isaac to know all that God had done to make this union possible.

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

Sarah had passed away, and Isaac is now in possession of her tent.

Given the crowded marriage of Abraham it was necessary for his wives to have their own tent.

Isaac is 40 years old when he marries Rebecca.

See Genesis 25:20

²⁰ and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.