



# IN SEARCH OF A BRIDE

SERIES: *THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS*

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Genesis 24:1-67

Seventeenth Message

Brian Morgan

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A wedding that my wife Emily and I attended last weekend was a welcome interlude to the national mourning of recent weeks. Being surrounded by young love and holy vows, radiant smiles, innocent laughter, the sound of bagpipes, and a sumptuous feast, was a refreshing change of pace. The wedding was a keen reminder that the destiny of our world will be shaped by love, not hate. One day, when the battle is over, we will sit down to a worldwide banquet hosted by our God (Isa 25:6-9). On that day we will not be able to contain our joy.

The Abraham story ends on the same note. After his long and arduous journey of faith, the patriarch's story ends with a wedding. The event comes in the context of his mourning for his wife, Sarah, following his painful legal negotiations to secure a grave for her in Canaan. Our text today is the tale of a man sent on a long journey to a foreign land to secure a bride. Arriving there, he finds a young maiden by a well, a symbol of fertility. Following a brief conversation, and the drawing of water, the girl runs home to her father, and a betrothal scene follows.<sup>1</sup> The story strikes a resonant chord in every man who wants to be a prince charming, and every woman who longs to be a beauty worth fighting for. But deeper still, it speaks to the fathomless longing of the human heart to be sought by God. The fact that this text is the longest single episode in Genesis (sixty-seven verses) and that it is repeated six more times in the Bible,<sup>2</sup> heightens its significance. Here we find God's voice crying out to us that no matter how deep the pain of this evil age, there is a greater force of love that will shape history.

The story has three major characters, Abraham, his servant, and Rebekah. Each character grants a different point of view: the first, how to seek a bride, the second, how to allow God to lead us, and the third, how to be found by God.

## I. The Assignment: Abraham and the Servant In Canaan (Gen 24:1-9)

**Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way. And Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, "Please place your hand under my thigh, 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, but you shall go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac."** (Gen 24:1-4, NASB)

The story opens with the narrator's description of Abraham's blessed state. Through the painful trials of many decades God has proven faithful to Abraham, blessing him beyond his dreams. We might expect Abraham to now step off the stage and relax in retirement, but he refuses to rest until he has completed one more important task. He must provide a wife for Isaac; only then will his affairs be in order. The rabbis said that when a man got to heaven, God would ask him four questions to determine whether he had faithfully carried out his parental responsibilities toward his son. The questions are: First, did you provide your son with an inheritance? Second, did you teach him a skill? Third, did you teach him the Torah? And finally, did you provide for him a wife? These were the four gifts that every father was to grant his son.<sup>3</sup>

Abraham regards as extremely serious this final responsibility of securing a bride for Isaac. He is not going to leave the matter to happenstance. He summons the oldest and most significant servant of the household and binds him under a solemn oath, with God as his witness. He asks the man to place his hand under his thigh, a reference to the sexual organs as symbolic of procreation and fertility.

Oaths are rare in the Old Testament; thus they are highly significant. The servant is charged under God with the holy mission of selecting a bride for Isaac. Marrying a Canaanite is not an option. The servant must make the long trek back to Haran to select a bride from among Abraham's relatives.

Faith is what is driving Abraham. He wants to make sure his son will marry a woman who is a Semite; one will give up her idols to follow the God of Abraham. This is not open to debate. Normally, Canaanite women refused to forsake their idols, preferring instead to convert their spouses. This caused great grief to believing parents (Gen 26:34-35; 28:8-9). The same mandate has been handed down to the church. Parents should teach their children that faith is the supreme quality to look for in a mate. Many qualities enhance a marriage, but there is no substitute for faith (2 Cor 6:14-18). Since there was no one available close at hand who had this one necessary quality, the servant has to take the initiative and travel wherever he must to find one.

**And the servant said to him, "Suppose the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?"** (24:5)

Before the servant agrees to the oath, he thinks through the obstacles to his task. What if the girl refused come? Should he then take Isaac back with him to the land of his relatives?

**Then Abraham said to him, "Beware lest you take my son back there! 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 before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there.** (24:6-7)

Abraham responds with an uncompromising no. God had called him to leave that land for the new land of promise, and under no circumstances was the servant to take Isaac back there. He assures the servant that the God who began this process would go ahead of him with his angel and make him successful. Abraham expresses the same faith that Paul refers to in his letter to the Philippians: "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil 1:6).

**"But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; only do not take my son back there." So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.** (24:8-9)

While Abraham's faith is strong and uncompromising, it is tempered by wisdom. He leaves room for God to play the trump card. Bruce Waltke comments: "While Abraham acts on the basis of God's promises, he does not presume upon them, freeing the servant of his oath if the Lord does not prosper his mission...He can count on God, but not on people. Abraham recognizes that the woman must also make a faith choice. If she refuses, she is unworthy."<sup>4</sup>

Once the servant's question is answered to his satisfaction, he submits to the oath and departs on his divine mission.

## II. Rebekah and the Servant by the Well (Gen 24:10-28)

### A. The servant's journey and prayer (24:10-14)

**Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's in his hand; and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nabor. And he made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.** (24:10-11)

Before leaving, the servant secures generous gifts from his master. Large gifts were customary for betrothal negotiations of that day, but a dowry of ten camels was exceptional. It speaks not only Abraham's great wealth and generosity, but also of his commitment to finding the proper marriage partner for his son. So this small convoy heads off to Haran ("the city of Nahor") in northern Mesopotamia. The arduous journey of over four hundred and fifty miles is hardly mentioned. Upon arrival, however, it is evident that the camels are fatigued, so the servant has them kneel. The narrator is much more interested in what follows: how the servant will find just the right girl to make his proposal.

**And he said, "O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show loyal-love to my master Abraham. Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water; now may it be that the girl 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 shall know that you have shown loyal-love to my master." (24:12-14)**

What a perfect blend of practical wisdom and humble dependence! The wise servant knows exactly when and where to meet eligible young girls. In that society unmarried girls were responsible for watering the flocks in the early evening hours, so the servant goes to the well just outside of town. But he not only plans, he prays, too. He knows that all the planning in the world is useless without the Lord's intervention. So he asks the Lord to continue to show his faithfulness to Abraham and grant him success. He then devises a test for God to show him which of the young girls God has chosen. The one quality he singles out above all others is not beauty but hospitality, the most highly valued character trait in the ancient Orient. Meir Sternberg comments:

Of the eligible young women in the city, he will not settle for less than the best. So, appealing to God to bless his principle of choice, he improvises a shrewd character test. What touchstone could be more appropriate than the reception of a wayfarer to determine a woman's fitness to marry into the family of the paragon of hospitality? And it is a stiff test, too, since it would require far more than common civility to volunteer to water "ten" thirsty camels.<sup>5</sup>

Because camels drink so much (forty gallons, according to some estimates), men usually drew for them, while women watered the rest of the herd (Gen 29:10; Exod 2:16; 1 Sam 9:11).

#### **B. Prayer answered (24:15-25)**

**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. And the girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her; and she went down to the spring and filled her jar, and came up. (24:15-16)**

By divine providence, before the servant has even finished his prayer, Rebekah comes into view. The narrator identifies her but, raising the suspense, that information is withheld from the servant. The servant is captivated by her beauty, which the narrator seems to suggest was heightened by her purity: she was a virgin. The servant carefully observes her grace and beauty as she takes the large jug from her shoulder and stoops to fill it. Able to hold back no longer, he springs into action and runs towards her.

**Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar." And she said, "Drink, my lord"; and she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink. Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw also for your camels until they have finished drinking." So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels. Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not. (24:17-21)**

The servant must quiet his pounding heart. Alter captures the scene well: "With perfect politeness, the parched desert traveler speaks as though he wanted no more than to wet his lips."<sup>6</sup> She responds with an immediate yes, but makes no mention of the waiting camels. Then she lowers the vessel from her shoulder, pours water

into her hand, and gives the servant a refreshing drink. After quenching his thirst, the long-awaited moment arrives: the girl offers to water his camels. So swift are her actions that the servant can hardly respond. She runs back to the well to draw water for his ten thirsty camels, a near supernatural feat. As the flurry of activity continues, the servant can't keep his eyes off her. He has yet to find out whose daughter she is, so he doesn't know if her arrival is divine providence or mere coincidence.

**Then it came about, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a gold ring weighing a half-shekel and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold, and said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house?" And she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor." Again she said to him, "We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in." (24:22-25)**

Finally, when she had finished giving water to his thirsty camels, the servant brings out his gifts and asks, "Whose daughter are you?" She responds, "I am the daughter of Bethuel." But again, before the servant can reply to this wonderful news, she quickly extends another possibility of hospitality, although she stops just short of offering it, since she did not have the authority to do so. Overcome with gratitude and emotion, the servant bows and worships God.

#### **C. The servant worships (24:26-27)**

**Then the man bowed low and worshiped the LORD. And he said, "Blessed be he LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His loyal-love and His truth toward my master; as for me, he LORD has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers." (24:26-27)**

This unnamed man proves to be the ideal servant. Without hesitation he obeyed his master. Then he showed himself wise and practical, choosing the proper place and creating the right test to find the right girl. His prayers demonstrate his dependence on God. Now, in light of his success, he pauses to worship and give thanks to the one who made it all possible. We feel a sense of relief that it all went so smoothly. But the servant's work has just begun. Now he must face the difficult task of convincing the girl's family to part with their greatest treasure.

### **III. Negotiations at Rebekah's House (Gen 24:29-61)**

#### **A. The servant's entry (24:29-33)**

**Then the girl ran and told her mother's household about these things. Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran outside to the man at the spring. And it came about that when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, 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. (24:28-30)**

The servant remains standing by the well as Rebekah runs home to tell her mother's family the exciting news. Her brother, Laban, runs to the well to welcome the stranger. At first glance his haste seems to match Rebekah's generosity, but then it appears tainted. His passions were ignited "when he saw the ring and the bracelets." While Rebekah offered service, her brother detects the possibility of gold.

**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?" 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. But when food was set before him to eat, he said, "I will not eat until I have told my business." And he said, "Speak on." (24:31-33)**

Knowing Laban's underlying motives, his greeting seems insincere, his hospitality self-seeking. But the servant proves a match for the sly Laban. He refuses the gift of hospitality until he has had opportunity to speak of his mission. Waltke argues: "The servant puts his mission before his need and comfort. His prudent refusal to eat before stating his mission also allows him to control the situation and to avoid any sense of obligation to this host and hostess."<sup>7</sup> Once he has the stage, the servant retells the story to persuade the family of

God's providential leading. This is his shining moment.

#### B. The servant explains his mission (24:34-49)

**So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. "And 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 maids, and camels and donkeys. (24:34-35)**

First, he identifies himself as "Abraham's servant," to show that these costly gifts are not his but his master's. Abraham, not the servant, is the "blessed of the Lord." Perhaps, having discerned a touch of greed underlying Laban's open arms, the servant documents Abraham's wealth in great detail. Next, he introduces the prospective bridegroom.

**"Now Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age; and he has given him all that he has. And 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; but you shall go to my father's house, and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son.'" (24:36-38)**

The servant reveals three details about the potential groom. First, he was born when his mother was quite old, indicating that he was still a good marrying age. Second, now that the groom's father was close to death, all of Abraham's wealth had been transferred to his only son. And finally, if Rebekah's family wondered why the young man was not already married, the reason was that there were no eligible women in Canaan. As Sternberg notes, all this information is let out in a subtle manner, leading the family to think they were drawing their own conclusions, making it all the more effective. The listener deduces that "the parent's misfortune is the son's good fortune: to let the thought 'What a catch!' steal into the audience's mind before they find him actually offered to them on a hard condition."<sup>8</sup>

Next, the servant retells his conversation with Abraham.

**"And I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.' 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; 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.'" (24:39-41)**

Recounting his dialogue with Abraham, the servant carefully deletes "all the monotheistic references to the God of heaven and earth and the covenantal promises to give the land to the seed of Abraham. Similarly excluded is Abraham's allusion to having been taken by God from his father's house and the land of his birth—a notion this family, to whom this God has not deigned to speak, might construe as downright offensive."<sup>9</sup> Rather, what the servant chooses to emphasize is the sense of family connectedness, and that is now put in the most positive light.

If family bond, divine blessing and material wealth are not enough to persuade the girl's family, the servant plays his final bargaining chip: God's providence. He concludes his speech by retelling his providential encounter by the well. (24:42-49) The servant's encounter with Rebekah is recorded verbatim. The only detail he leaves out is the description of her beauty, and "claims to have asked Rebekah about her lineage before placing the golden ornaments on her, whereas he actually did this as soon as she had drawn water for all the camels, and only afterward did he inquire about her family." He, of course, already knows that God has answered his prayers, "but does not want to seem to have done anything so presumptuous as bestowing gifts—implicitly betrothal gifts—on a young woman without first ascertaining her pedigree."<sup>10</sup>

Now that the servant has persuasively recounted Abraham's faith, his prayers and God's providence, he presses the family for an answer to his proposal. If they will not be motivated out of family loyalty to respond to Abraham, he will resort to other relatives elsewhere.

#### C. Proposal accepted (24:50-53)

**Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The matter comes from the LORD; so we cannot speak to you bad or good. "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." And it came about when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he**

**bowed himself to the ground before the LORD. 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. (24:50-53)**

All that the male leaders of the home can say is, "The matter comes from the Lord." The servant is so masterful he has left his audience practically speechless. How does one argue with the providence of God? What else can they do but permit Rebekah to leave for a new world? Permission granted, the servant responds with another round of worship and gracious generosity. But the reader still can't breathe a sigh of relief. By morning, there will be still more obstacles threatening this venture.

#### D. Rebekah and the servant leave (24:54-61)

**Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, "Send me away to my master." But her brother and her mother said, "Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go." And he said to them, "Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master." (24:54-56)**

At break of day, the servant is ready to leave with the newly acquired bride to be. But, when he asks permission to leave, Rebekah's brother and mother appeal to him to stay longer. In Hebrew, the time suggested, literally, "days or ten," is ambiguous and open ended. "Days" in the plural sometimes means a year, in which case the ten would refer to ten months.<sup>11</sup> Translations have opted for different meanings, from a few days to a few years. (Ironically, Rebekah's later statement in Gen 27:44, that Jacob remain with Laban for a "few days," will turn out to be twenty years.) The servant, refusing to be tempted by comfort, remains resolutely focused on his holy mission. He will not be delayed. Left with no choice but to consent, the family still attempts to postpone his departure by soliciting Rebekah's help. Such action reveals Laban's unethical ways. He is not a man whose "yes is yes."

**And they said, "We will call the girl and consult her wishes." Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." Thus they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham's servant and his men. (24:57-59)**

Fortunately for the servant, Rebekah refuses to yield to family pressure. Her answer reaffirms the marriage ideal of a couple leaving mother and father to cleave to one another (Gen 2:24). In Rebekah's case, the "leaving" takes on even greater significance. She is leaving for a land she has never seen, to cleave to a husband she has never met, all in response to the divine call.

**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.'**

**Then Rebekah arose with her maids, and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed. (24:60-61)**

The servant has successfully completed his task. As reluctant as Laban is, Rebekah is still sent off with the proper permission, an escort (her wet nurse is a sign of social status), and the full blessing of the family. In an emotional moment for everyone, the entire family gathers in one of those rare times of unity. She would never forget their parting words. How prophetic they would become! The scene ends with the servant escorting Rebekah to her new home and destiny. On the long journey he could have been tempted to violate the purity of this beautiful young woman as they slept in close proximity on the desert highways but, as in all other matters to which he was charged, he proved faithful to his master.

#### IV. Isaac, Rebekah, and the Servant In Canaan (Gen 24:62-67)

**Now Isaac had come from going to Beer-lahai-roi; for he was living in the Negev. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming. (24:62-63)**

For the first time in the story, Isaac comes into view. He too is seen as coming from a very significant place, a well associated with the birth of his stepbrother, Ishmael. When God appeared to Hagar she named the well, Beer-lahai-roi, which means the "well of the living one who sees me." From that sacred place of vision, Isaac has taken an evening stroll. As providence would have it, he lifts his eyes over the horizon and is given a "vision" of a distant convoy of camels.

**And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from the camel. And 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. (24:64-65)**

Just as Isaac lifts up his eyes, so does Rebekah. He sees only the outline of camels in the distance, but she is able to see the figure of man approaching. In anticipation of the encounter, and to show respect, she immediately dismounts and inquires as to his identity. The servant, in keeping with his sense of mission, replies not with his name but with his relationship, "He is my master." From start to finish the servant never steps out of his proper place. He remains the nameless servant on a holy mission. With that, Rebekah, adopting the role of an awaiting bride, veils her face from her groom to be.

**And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. (24:66-67)**

Completing his task, the servant hands this sacred treasure over to his master, with a full report of his adventures. The story ends as a young girl who was "living in her mother's household" is brought safely into the arms of one just deprived of his mother. In that act she becomes the new matriarch, sealed in love, the one who dries Isaac's tears.

What can we make of this wonderful story?

## V. Seeking a Bride

We cannot help but be moved by this tale that speaks on so many levels. First of all, it is a statement about marriage and the faithfulness of a father who lives his entire life by faith, an ideal father who seeks the best for his son. He will not compromise the future of God's kingdom under any terms. He treats the matter of his son's marriage partner as holy as his original calling from God. Therefore he will spare no expense, time or travel to do the very best thing. This is a supreme model for parents to follow. Let us be diligent to impress upon our children the importance of marrying in the faith, since "a cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart" (Eccl 4:12). Rebekah also holds up the value of purity and hospitality as key virtues in a marriage.

But, on a higher level, from Rebekah's point of view this is also the story about God's passionate love and search for his bride. For Rebekah was not merely responding to the invitation of a man, but to the voice of God behind the man. She was leaving her family, her relatives, her land and her idols to become part of the redemption of mankind. We sense the same feeling every time the story is retold, with different characters, from Jacob to Moses to Ruth. Imagine the emotion of a Jewish audience in the first century with the seventh and final retelling of the story in the coming of the Messiah (John 4). Jesus travels to a foreign land and arrives thirsty at a well. There he finds not a young virgin whose beauty outshines the moon, but a broken woman embarked on her fifth marriage. And she was not even a Jew, but a half-breed Samaritan, a people hated by the Jews. After years of pain and alienation she wonders if such a thing as love even exists. Then a certain Jew asks her for a drink, and further surprises her by offering her living water. Like Rebekah, she runs back home and speaks to the whole town about this stranger. In the end, there is a wedding feast for this new mother in Israel and a whole city is born. This is the greatest love story ever told: God becoming flesh, seeking the lost and broken to be his beautiful bride. The good news is there are no longer any prerequisites of purity, only an admission of brokenness.

Given that this is the greatest love story ever told, the question we are left with is this: Who will be faithful and take on the role of this servant? This servant is the hero of the text. He is the key player in every scene (he is mentioned fourteen times), and becomes a model to us of what it means to seek a bride for our Master. How impressive is his absolute anonymity! He never gives his name lest that detract from his mission. He reminds us of John the Baptist, who regarded himself as the best man of the bridegroom. Speaking of Jesus, John said, "I must decrease, he must increase." Like the servant, this mission should consume us. It ought to be one in which we are willing to spare no expense, and if asked, travel to the ends of the earth. Like the servant, we are to remain so focused along the way that we refuse financial gain and material comfort. And as we journey we need to anticipate any and all obstacles, knowing that ultimately they will all be overcome in the providence of God. The journey demands all our wisdom, coupled with our absolute dependence on God. It requires initiative, hard work, and divine intervention. But in the end, can there be any greater joy than securing a new bride and leaving her in the hands of the bridegroom for the honeymoon? This, our highest calling, deepens more than anything else our ability to worship -- and that is the ultimate reward.

**"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full." (John 3:29)**

Will you take up the call today as our nation mourns by the well?

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1. Robert Alter calls this a "type scene," and has masterfully explained their use and convention in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 47-63.

2. Alter notes that this type scene is repeated with Jacob, Moses, Samson, Ruth and Saul. I would add that it finds its climax and most radical changes in the normal convention in the New Testament when Jesus encounters the Samaritan woman by the well (John 4:1-42).

3. Interestingly, these four gifts correspond to how God provides for Adam in the garden (Gen 2:5-25), the last and the best gift being his bride (2:18-25).

4. Bruce Waltke, *Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 327.

5. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 137.

6. Robert Alter, *Genesis* (New York, W. W. Norton, 1996), 115.

7. Waltke, *Genesis*, 330.

8. Sternberg, *Poetics*, 146.

9. Alter, *Genesis*, 119.

10. Alter, *Genesis*, 120.

11. Alter, *Genesis*, 121.