

**Permissible request for a sign from God**

• The sign is a very sensible one

**It is permissible to ask for an indication of God's will in the events that happen.** Abraham's servant asks God to give him a sign <sup>□1</sup>. There are occasions when we are led by the Holy Spirit to ask for something that will give us a signal that we are in the will of God and that God is blessing us. It brings great responsibility if God does give some kind of 'sign' in answer to our prayers.

□1 24:13-14

The sign is a very sensible one. The servant does not have much time. He is looking for someone who is kind and sweet and will be courteous and hospitable. He goes to the place where the unmarried girls go early in the morning to collect water. He prays that when he asks one of them for a drink, she will take her jar down from where she carries it on her head (which was the way it was done, as it is today in many parts of the world) and will give him a drink while at the same time volunteering to give water to all ten of his camels. It is a bold prayer. A woman who will do such a thing will be kindly, willing to suffer inconvenience, physically strong, hospitable and an ideal wife for Isaac.

**When we have found God's will everything will fit together**

• Working from both ends of the situation God brings the two people together in an amazing way

**When we have found God's will everything will fit together.** The servant's prayer was dramatically answered, even before he had finished praying. A girl arrived. Everything about her was right. She was beautiful <sup>□1</sup>; Isaac would be pleased about that. She was unmarried and yet ready for marriage. Without knowing it she did the very things that the servant had asked God to give him as an indication of God's will <sup>□2</sup>. She took trouble using great energy to draw from the well enough water to quench the thirst of ten camels <sup>□3</sup>. It was a time-consuming business. The servant stood by watching quietly <sup>□4</sup>. Then he discovered that she came from the same clan of families that had originally come from Ur and she would therefore know something of Abraham and Isaac's ideals and faith <sup>□5</sup>. She would be an ideal wife for Isaac. When God is at work everything fits. He works at both ends of a situation. He was working in the area of Nahor; He had been at work in Canaan. Now He brings the two people together in an amazing way. From far off Aramaic-speaking Haran He brought Rebekah to a husband she had never seen in Canaan. God can do it still. As a wall-placard has it:

□1 24:16

□2 24:17-19

□3 24:20

□4 24:21

□5 24:22-24

*Two shall be born, the whole wide world apart,  
 and speak different tongues, and take no thought,  
 each of the other's being, and no heed.  
 And these over unknown seas to unknown lands, shall cross,  
 escaping wrecks, defying death,  
 and all unconsciously shape every act,  
 and bend each wandering step unto this end.  
 That one day out of darkness, they shall meet  
 and read life's meaning in each other's eyes.*

• The servant worships God in gratitude for having led him so speedily and precisely

The family are a hospitable people and without consulting her father Rebekah offers hospitality to the servant of Abraham <sup>□1</sup>. At that point the man knows his prayer has been answered. He worships God in gratitude for having led him so speedily and precisely <sup>□2</sup>.

□1 24:25

□2 24:26-27

• Holy caution – confirmations - certainty

As we seek God's will, there should be a holy caution. The servant had been acting cautiously. As Rebekah had been drawing the water for him at the well he had stood there quietly wondering if this really was the leading of God. We are not to ask impulsively and impatiently. The servant was no doubt in a hurry to get back but he had been careful in seeking God's will. Now he is sure he has God's answer.

After God's will has been found there will be confirmations. From this point on everything confirms that the servant has found the ideal person for Isaac and that God has truly been leading him.

• *God will use the false motives of others to bring about His will for us*

God will use the false motives of others to bring about His will for us. Rebekah has a brother <sup>□1</sup>. He is a crafty and greedy man, as the rest of the story of Genesis makes clear. He is not as sweet and pleasant as Rebekah, but he sees the signs that Abraham's family is a wealthy one. When he sees the valuable gold rings and bracelets that Rebekah is wearing he says 'Come in, blessed of the **LORD!**' and speedily welcomes him <sup>□2</sup>.

<sup>□1</sup> 24:28-29

<sup>□2</sup> 24:30-32

• *God uses Laban's covetousness*

Soon the man is telling the whole story <sup>□1</sup> and his conviction that it has been God who has guided him in the right way <sup>□2</sup>. He puts his request to Laban the head of the home <sup>□3</sup>. It seems obviously to be God's will and they spend the night celebrating <sup>□4</sup>. Soon the servant wants to travel back to Canaan <sup>□5</sup>. Laban wants to delay them. He is interested in the gold! Later on in the story we shall find him delaying Jacob the future son of Rebekah, again for reasons of covetousness. But Laban's covetousness is used by God.

<sup>□1</sup> 24:33-47

<sup>□2</sup> 24:48

<sup>□3</sup> 24:49

<sup>□4</sup> 24:50-54

<sup>□5</sup> 24:55

• *The servant and Rebekah depart*

Soon the servant and Rebekah depart <sup>□1</sup>. When they arrived in Canaan they soon meet Isaac and it seems to be a case of love at first sight <sup>□2</sup>.

<sup>□1</sup> 24:56-62

<sup>□2</sup> 24:63-67

• *God – our faithful guide*

Guidance is God's work as well as our work. The servant rightly recognised God's lovingkindness and faithfulness in what had happened <sup>□1</sup>. It will be the same for us. God is faithful. He will guide. Sometimes He leads us even without our knowing it. He is faithful and true to us. If we belong to God through Jesus, God will be trustworthy to us and we shall look back over our lives and say 'The Lord led me.'

<sup>□1</sup> 24:27

• *A part for us to play also – sensible, sensitive and prayerful*

And yet there is a part for us to play also. Abraham and his servant showed concern for God's will. They were sensible, sensitive, prayerful. The servant showed loyalty, patience and steady trusting devotion to God. When we are the same God will guide us.

 <p><b>slices.org.uk</b></p>	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible (PTTB)</i> books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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