



Background

1. Rebecca's Resume

- Genesis 22 Isaac's first-cousin once removed, from the Nachor/Milkah branch of the family
- Genesis 24 Volunteers water for ten camels; decides to go marry Isaac
- Genesis 25 Approaching G-d with concerns about her violent pregnancy
- Genesis 26 Identifying as Isaac's sister among the Philistines
- Genesis 27 Engineering the switching of the blessings of Jacob and Esav

Abraham-Sarah	Nachor-Milkah	
Isaac-Rebecca	Betuel	
Esav/Jacob	Rebecca	Laban
Twelve tribes		Leah/Rachel

2. Genesis 24:10-31, 50-58

And the servant took ten of his master's camels and went, with all of his master's wealth in his hand, and he arose and went to Aram Naharayim, the city of Nachor. And he settled the camels outside the city, by the well of water, in the evening, when the women came out to draw water. And he said: G-d, Lord of my master Abraham, be before me today, and perform kindness with my master, Abraham. Behold, I will stand at the well, and the city's daughters will come out to draw water. The girl to whom I will say, "Please incline your pitcher and I will drink," and she will say, "Drink, and I will also give to your camels to drink," she will be the one You have identified for Your servant Isaac, and with her I will know that You have been generous with my master.

And before he finished speaking, and Rebecca, daughter of Betuel, son of Milkah the wife of Nachor, brother of Abraham, emerged, with her pitcher on her shoulder. The girl was very beautiful, a single girl who had not been with a man. And she descended to the well, filled her pitcher and ascended. And the servant ran to meet her, and he said, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher." And she said, "Drink, my master," and she rushed and lowered her pitcher and gave him to drink. And she finished giving him to drink, and she said, "I will also draw for your camels until they are done drinking." And she rushed and lowered her pitcher to the trough, and she ran again to the well to draw, and she drew for all of his camels.

And the man waited for her, silently waiting to know whether G-d had made his path succeed, or not. And when the camels finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a *beka*, and [he put] two bracelets weighing ten gold units on her arms. And he said, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me. Does your father's house have a place to stay?" And she said, "I am the daughter of Betuel, son of Milkah, who birthed him to Nachor." And she said to him, "We have much straw and fodder, and a place to stay." And the man stretched out and bowed to G-d. And he said, "Blessed is G-d, Lord of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned His kindness and loyalty with my master. G-d has guided me on a path to the house of my master's brother."

And the girl ran and told her mother's house of these words. And Rebecca had a brother named Laban, and Laban ran out to the man, at the well. And when he saw the ring and bracelets on his sister's arms, and when he heard his sister Rebecca, saying, "So the man said to me," and he went to the man, standing with the camels at the well. And he said, "Come, blessed one of G-d! Why do you stand outside? I have cleared the house, and a place for the camels."...

And Laban and Betuel answered [the servant] and said, "It has come from G-d! We can speak neither bad nor good. Here is Rebecca before you, take her and go, and she will be a wife for your master's son, as G-d has spoken." And when Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed to the ground to G-d. And the servant took out silver and gold implements, and clothing, and gave to Rebecca. And he gave delicacies to her brother and mother.

And they ate and drink – him and his men – and they stayed overnight. And they rose in the morning and he said, "Send me to my master." And her brother and mother said, "Let the girl stay with us for a year or ten months, and then go." And he said to them, "Don't delay me! G-d has made my path succeed. Send me, and I will go to my master." And they said, "Let us call the girl and ask her." And they called Rebecca and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go."

3. Genesis 27:1-8

And when Isaac aged, and his eyes dimmed such that he couldn't see, and he called his older son Esav and said to him, "My son," and he said, "Here I am." And he said, "Behold, I have aged, and I don't know when I will die. Take up your tools, your quiver and your bow, and go to the field and trap game for me. And make me delicacies as I like, and bring to me and I will eat, so that my spirit will bless you before I die."

And Rebecca heard when Isaac spoke to Esav his son, and Esav went to the field to trap game to bring. And Rebecca told her son Jacob, "Behold, I have heard your father speaking to your brother Esav, saying: Bring me game and prepare food for me and I will eat, and I will bless you before G-d before I die. Now, my son, listen to me, to that which I instruct you."

Midrash 1: Esav's idolatrous wives

4. Genesis 26:34-35

And Esav was forty years old, and he wedded a woman, Judith, daughter of Be'eri the Hittite, and Basmat, daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a source of bitter spirits to Isaac and to Rebecca.

5. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 65:4

Why for Isaac first?

- Rather, because Rebecca was a daughter of priests, she was not upset by the filth of idolatry. [Isaac] was a son of holy ones, and so he was upset by the filth of idolatry. Therefore "to Isaac" first.
- Or: Why for Isaac first? Because it stemmed from her, as Genesis 25:23 says, "And G-d said to her: There are two nations in your belly." Therefore "to Isaac" first...

Midrash 2: Manipulation of the blessing

6. Genesis 25:28

And Isaac loved Esav, because he put game in his mouth; and Rebecca loved Jacob.

7. Isaiah 5:23

Those who find the wicked innocent for the sake of reward, take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.

8. Proverbs 17:15

One who finds the wicked innocent and one who finds the righteous guilty, both of them are abhorrent to G-d.

9. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 65:6

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Rebecca did not do this because she loved Jacob more than Esav. Rather, she said, "May he not come up and fool the old man."

The next generation

10. Genesis 29:12

And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was the son of Rebecca. And she ran and told her father [Laban].

11. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 70:13

If for trickery, "he was her father's brother". If for righteousness, "he was the son of Rebecca."