

Lesson 9: Genesis 24–27, The Covenant is Renewed

Rebekah

Abraham sends his servant back to his homeland to find a wife for Issac

Gen 24:1-4

1 And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

What was of upmost importance to Abraham at this time?

(not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites
go... to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac)

Find a wife for Issac that is under the covenant

Elaine S. Dalton

“Abraham charges his servant with finding a worthy young woman to be his son Isaac’s wife. She must be one who qualifies for a covenant marriage—virtuous and pure and worthy. And so he sends his servant on a long and dangerous journey to a place called Haran. The reason he must go there is clear—holy men need holy women to stand by their sides.” (CR, April 2013)

FYI, JST verse 2 - Put forth, I pray thee, thy hand under my *hand*

Abraham's servant departed for Haran with 10 camels. It seems that he came up with a way that he could know if a woman would show kindness to his master and he prayed to the Lord help him to recognize her

Gen 24:12-20

12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.

13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.

15 ¶ And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder.

16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking.

20 And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.

How much work do you think it would be to draw enough water for satisfy the thirst of 10 camels?

Note that she provided water to the camel's of a stranger with hast, and ran to refill her picture

What does this act tell us about the character of Rebekah?

She was charitable and willing to serve

Elaine L. Jack

"In the scriptures, we find many examples of women whose daily efforts reflected charity. With their hearts filled with the pure love of Christ, they responded to needs quickly and effectively.

"Rebekah, who eventually became the wife of Isaac and the mother of Jacob and Esau, was just such a woman. In the normal pattern of her daily tasks, she was kind to Abraham's servant who was visiting her village on the dramatic mission to secure a wife for Isaac.

"The Lord knew Rebekah's heart; he knew how she would respond when she observed a need. He answered the servant's prayer that the young woman who was to become Isaac's wife would offer him water." (CR, Oct. 1996)

FYI - JST verse 16

And the damsel, being a virgin, very fair to look upon, such as the servant of Abraham had not seen, neither had any man known the like unto her, and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up

Next we read about the anxiousness of Abraham's servant to fulfill his responsibility and the faith of Rebekah to comply

Gen 24:33,55-58

33 And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on.

55 And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.

56 And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.

57 And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.

F. Burton Howard

“By exercising his faith, [the servant] met Rebekah and arrived at the home of her family and was befriended by them. They invited him to dinner. After days in the desert, and despite his hunger and thirst, this faithful servant said, ‘I will not eat, until I have told mine errand.’

“So it was. He explained the purpose of his journey and his oath to Abraham. One simple statement conveyed his faithfulness and humility. ‘I am Abraham’s servant.’ The kinsfolk wanted a 10-day celebration. The servant replied, ‘Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.’

“Many would have tarried. Others would have justified unwinding a little by saying that the journey had been long or that they were tired or hungry or thirsty. Some, not wanting to appear too zealous, would have stayed.... Yet this servant... knew how to magnify his calling and accomplish that which he had promised his master.” (CR, April 1996)

Elaine S. Dalton

“Then they asked Rebekah what she wanted to do, and her response was simply ‘I will go.’... Rebekah was prepared and worthy to make and keep sacred covenants and to become a covenant wife of Isaac. She did not have to wait and prepare herself. Prior to her departure from her family, she was given a blessing, and the words are stirring to me, for she was promised that she would become ‘the mother of thousands of millions’ (Gen 24:60.)” (CR, April 2013)

When Abraham was 175 years old he got his affairs in order and then passed away

Gen 25:5-8

5 ¶ And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.

7 And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people.

Esau and Jacob

It seems that Issac and Rebekah were also not able to have children. After they were married 20 years the Lord blessed them and Rebekah became pregnant with twins

Gen 25:20-23

20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the sister to Laban the Syrian.

21 And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.

23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

What did Lord reveal to Rebekah about the younger son that she was about to bear?

(the elder shall serve the younger)

Parley P. Pratt

“The peculiar things of the Priesthood, through which all nations should be blessed, pertained exclusively to that peculiar branch of the Hebrews which sprang from Jacob.

“Now before these two children were born, or had done any good or evil in this life, God, who was acquainted with them in the former life, and who knew the grades of intelligence or of nobility possessed by each, revealed to Rebecca, their mother, that two nations or manner of people would spring from these twins, and that one people should be stronger than the other, and that the elder should serve the younger.” (JD, 1:256)

Esau, the elder brother, gives up his birthright to Jacob

Gen 25:29-34

29 ¶ And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint:

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.

What was Esau's attitude towards the birthright?

(he sold his birthright unto Jacob
thus Esau despised his birthright)

Dallin H. Oaks

“The contrast between the spiritual and the temporal is also illustrated by the twins Esau and Jacob and their different attitudes toward their birthright. The firstborn, Esau, ‘despised his birthright.’ Jacob, the second twin, desired it. Jacob valued the spiritual, while Esau sought the things of this world. When he was hungry, Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. ‘Behold,’ he explained, ‘I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?’ Many Esaus have given up something of eternal value in order to satisfy a momentary hunger for the things of the world.” (CR, Oct. 1985)

Esau giving up his birthright for a mess of pottage is an often used metaphor

Mark E. Petersen

[Speaking of the parable of the pearl of great price]

“We have always felt that that merchant was an extremely wise man, because he was willing to give up all that he possessed in order to acquire the pearl of great price. But let me ask you, what would you have thought of that merchant had the parable been reversed and he had given up the pearl of great price in exchange for something of little or no value?

“We have some among us who are doing that very thing. In their own lives they reverse the parable of the Lord and they give up the pearl of great price for a fleeting fancy. They actually sell their birthright in the kingdom of God for less than a mess of pottage... individuals who have been excommunicated from this Church... at one time were all members of the kingdom of God, and at one time they all possessed the pearl of great price. But each one of them has reversed that parable in his own life and has given up the pearl of great price with all its values and with all its blessings. What a pity! What a tragedy!” (CR, Oct. 1945)

The Lord confirms to Isaac that the blessings of Abraham will continue thru him

Gen 26:1-5

1 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.

2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the

land which I shall tell thee of:

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father;

4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Rebekah overheard Issac's discussion with Esau about giving Esau the covenant blessing.

She spoke to Jacob about a plan to make sure that Jacob received the blessing instead

Gen 27:6-10

6 ¶ And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

How would you characterize Rebekah's plan for Jacob to receive the covenant blessing?

Maybe deceit, trickery, lying, favoritism, ...

But the Lord had revealed to her His plans for Jacob and she was making sure that this happened

Mary Pratt Parrish

"While the children were still in her womb, the Lord revealed to Rebekah that, contrary to the custom of the day, the 'elder would serve the younger.' With this knowledge, she jealously guarded Jacob's God-given right to be the heir to the covenant. When she discovered that Isaac intended to give this blessing to Esau, who had already sold his birthright to Jacob and had further discredited himself by marrying two Canaanite women, she interfered and substituted Jacob in his stead." ("Guardians of the Covenant," Ensign, May 1972)

Jacob receives the blessing from Issac

Gen 27:18-19,25-29

18 ¶ And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

25 And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

29 Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

Bruce R. McConkie

“Women are appointed, Rebekah-like, to be guides and lights in righteousness in the family unit, and to engineer and arrange so that things are done in the way that will result in the salvation of more of our Father's children. (“Our Sisters from the Beginning,” Ensign, Jan. 1979)

Isaac realizes that he we had been deceived but, it seems, that he also recognized the covenant blessing should belong to Jacob and he did not revoke it

Gen 27:30-36

30 ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

32 And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

33 And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.

34 And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.

35 And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36 And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Edward J. Brandt

“When Esau came to claim his blessing, Isaac realized that the important

rights of priesthood presidency did, in fact, belong to faithful Jacob, not to unworthy Esau: ‘Yea,’ said Isaac, ‘and he shall be blessed’. If the prophet-patriarch had acted improperly, he had the priesthood right to revoke Jacob’s blessing. But he didn’t do so, knowing that he had done the will of the Lord. Perceiving that Esau’s concern was for the loss of the temporal gain instead of spiritual blessings, Isaac promised him prosperity, but he also reaffirmed the blessing of Jacob.” (“Understanding the Old Testament: Keys to Resolving Difficult Questions,” Ensign, Sept. 1980)

Issac gives Esau a blessing but not the blessing of the covenant

Gen 27:37-40

37 And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

38 And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

39 And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above:

40 And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

What did Issac’s blessing to Esau include?

His posterity will be blessed with the bounties of the earth

They will serve Jacob’s posterity but they will fight with them and at times be free from them.

We will see this as we continue to study the house of Israel.

Rebekah’s convinces Issac to have Jacob to return the land of Haran, both for his protection and so he can find a wife in the covenant

Gen 27:41-46

41 ¶ And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

42 And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee.

43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;

44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother’s fury turn away;

45 Until thy brother’s anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of

Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?

Bruce R. McConkie

“Esau did not marry in the everlasting covenant revealed to Abraham; Esau chose to live after the manner of the world, rather than to keep the standards of righteousness which the Lord had given them....

“In the light of all this, in effect, [Rebekah said to Isaac] ‘If Jacob marries out of the Church as Esau has done, what good is there left for me in life?’ And having been encouraged and impelled to step forward and assume his responsibility, this is what Isaac did....

“Rebekah truly she is one of the most noble and glorious of women!” (“Our Sisters from the Beginning,” Ensign, Jan. 1979)