

Old Testament 10  
Birthright Blessings; Marriage in the Covenant  
(Genesis 24-29)  
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(This material shows how these Old Testament scriptures prepare one for Christ's coming and thus for His covenant of Eternal Marriage).

I. There are great differences between a "contract marriage" and a "covenant marriage." What are they? (Among answers: contracts are much more easily broken; they do not extend beyond death. God is a part of a covenant marriage.)

A. When were covenant marriages first introduced? (With Adam and Eve.)

B. The challenge for Abraham was how to help his *children* obtain the blessings of a Covenant Marriage.

1. How did he try to meet that challenge? (Abraham sent a servant to find a righteous wife for Isaac (Gen. 24).

2. What qualities did Rebekah show indicating she would be a good wife and keep covenant? (She showed great kindness, and she was willing to seek the covenant by going to wed Isaac, among others).

3. What are the challenges we have for helping our children marry in the covenant? (They choose their own companions, and can make mistakes).

4. When marriages end in divorce, is it always a sign that one married the wrong person? (Not necessarily. Often people change, or do not live up to potential. )

5. What comforts are there to those who have never had opportunity to enter into a covenant of marriage or whose marriage ended in divorce in spite of their strong efforts otherwise? (The brethren promise no blessing will be withheld, if we are truly faithful).

II. Esau made wrong choices which diverted him from his covenant blessings.

A. What special blessings as firstborn did Esau have? (See "birthright blessing" in BD p. 625).

B. What caused him to lose his blessings? (He gave them up for a mess of pottage, or things of the world. Gen. 25:29-34; Gen. 27:41).

C. He also sought wives who were not righteous. (Gen. 26:34-35; 27:46).

D. Rebekah was blessed to know ahead of time that more special blessings were soon to be given. (Gen. 27:6-10).

E. While we might be tempted to judge Rebekah's actions, remember she had been blessed to see beforehand that Jacob was the one who should receive the *greater* blessings of the covenant (Genesis 25:21-26).

F. Can we be forewarned about our own possible mistakes or our children's? How can we be more sensitive to receive warnings?

III. Jacob made the right choices in his path toward the covenant.

A. What did Jacob do to show the right wife was very important to him?

(See Gen. 28:1-5; 29:1-10. He traveled a long way to find a faithful woman.)

- B. How did the Lord bless him because he made this quest?  
Not only did he find faithful wives, but because of his faithfulness, he received a vision at Bethel, “House of God,” where the concept of the temple was given to him --- the place where Eternal covenants with God are made. Note here he also made covenants to pay his tithes (See Gen 28:10-22, and “Bethel-the House of God,” BD, p. 621).
- C. We see through Jacob’s experiences how interconnected temples and marrying in the covenant are, as well as the connection between temple blessings and the paying of tithes.
- D. How did Jacob prove his faithfulness in obtaining his brides? (He served many years for them).

#### IV. Is making temple covenants enough?

- A. What can divert us today as Esau was diverted? (General authorities have said pride and selfishness are the biggest threats to marriages.)
- B. What can keep us on the right way, after temple marriage?
  1. There are evidences that continual temple attendance *of both parties* of the marriage will help keep it on the right path.
  2. Some couples say often doing sealings as a couple will help reinforce the covenants entered into and be a reminder of the great blessings promised to those faithful to the covenant.
  3. The truth is The Lord provides many, many resources to keep us moving toward our goal. One way to take greater advantage of them is to simplify our lives. Simplification leaves more time for family and couple prayer, Family Home Evening, temple attendance, reading scriptures, etc.

#### V. Temple Covenants must be based on Christ to succeed. These OT Scriptures contained many witnesses of Jesus Christ, and of His role to His covenanted people.

A. *Jacob’s Birth taught of Christ:* Jacob was a witness of the New Covenant which Christ would bring. Rebekah was told, “Two nations are in thy womb; ... and the one people (those of Christ’s covenant) shall be stronger ...” (Gen. 25:23) So Jacob grasped Esau’s heel. This taught that Christ’s covenanted people would be formed later in the history of earth, but become the more greatly blessed people.

B. *The Purchase of the Birthright:* Esau was like those who reject Christ’s covenant and think too little of it, their desires focusing mostly on material wants. Jacob witnessed of Christ who would make the true covenant, and thus the birthright, available by purchasing it with His blood. *He purchased it for his righteous followers and co-heirs.*

C. *The Greater Blessing:* When Jacob again supplanted Esau in obtaining the blessing, he also witnessed of Christ. So, like Christ, he appeared in a form which was unrecognized. He came in the skins of a goat. Christ came unrecognized as a scapegoat and a sacrificial goat foreordained to bear men’s sins. Jacob made a savory offering. *Christ’s offerings were of His own flesh, and the wine of His blood. Because of these offerings, Christ and His covenanted people will receive the greatest blessings --- exaltation.*

D. *Jacob removed the covering of the Well.* (Gen. 29:1-14)

Jacob also taught of the Messiah as the True Bridegroom. When Jacob sought a

wife (a bride is often a symbol for Christ's covenanted people), he met her by a well, where a great stone covered the water. Jacob removed the stone sealing the well so his hoped-for bride and the sheep of his kinsmen might be watered. This incident was prophetic of our Savior.

Centuries later, Jesus appeared at a well called Jacob's well. In response to a woman's question as to whether he was greater than Jacob, the Savior taught, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: ... the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14). Thus He was showing that Jacob at the well taught of Him!

After Christ's death, He was sealed in a tomb with a great stone rolled over it. Christ fulfilled Jacob's acts and His words given in Samaria when *His life poured out of that stone tomb*. The "Fountain Everlasting" burst forth, bringing waters of new life to all. No more would stones seal up the dead.

And as shown through Jacob, the *witness* of Eternal Marriage Covenants is a vital part of the event of the Resurrection. Because Christ, as Bridegroom, removed this stone, those who covenant in marriage under His laws can have their marriage eternally. Those husbands and wives who remain faithful to *their covenants with Him* can truly be "One" -- never to be separated again.

(Consider how Christ and Mary [who represents all of us as His Church] met at the tomb as did Rachel and Jacob.)

We are very greatly blessed to understand the truth of Eternal Marriage and the amazing destiny of those faithful to their covenants. It is only by and through Jesus Christ that we can reach those blessings. He has opened the way. He has restored all the necessary powers and keys to put them within our grasp. If we make Him a full partner in our marriage, He will help us to achieve them.

And it is beautifully inspiring to know that from the beginning all these truths were prophesied, through the ancient events of the prophets.