

# OLD TESTAMENT GOSPEL DOCTRINE CLASS

Green Mountain 1st Ward, Lakewood, Colorado

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## Lesson 10: Birthright Blessings, Marriage in the Covenant, Genesis 24–29

### Introduction

# WHAT IS YOUR CHOICE?



We often face choices between things we can easily have now or things we must work and wait for. Sometimes we choose what will bring immediate gratification (pleasure or satisfaction), even if the choice to work and wait would eventually provide a greater blessing.

We face some choices in life—such as decisions about whom and where to marry—where choosing immediate gratification could deny us glorious and lasting blessings. Have you ever spent money or time to obtain something, only to discover that it was not worth what you had spent on it?

The same thing can happen spiritually. By making unrighteous choices, we may trade eternal blessings for things of far less value. By living righteously, however, we can receive all the blessings that Heavenly Father has prepared for us.

### **Abraham emphasizes the importance of marriage in the covenant (eternal marriage). (Genesis 24)**

Although Abraham and his family lived in the land of the Canaanites, Abraham was insistent that Isaac chose a bride from his kindred rather than a Ca-

naanite woman. Isaac was the son of the covenant—the one through whom the birthright blessings would pass—so Abraham wanted his son to marry one of his

own faith and beliefs. Today, it remains important that we marry in the covenant (meaning eternal or temple marriage) if we want our children to enjoy

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### Lesson Highlights

- **Abraham** emphasizes the importance of marriage in the covenant (eternal marriage).
- **Esau** sells his birthright to Jacob.
- **Jacob** marries Leah and Rachel in the covenant, and through him the Abrahamic covenant continues.

**A study of this lesson will strengthen our desire to live worthy of our birthright blessings and of eternal marriage.**

### Next Week

#11: “How Can I Do This Great Wickedness?”, Genesis 34; 37–39

Our challenge is to realize the importance of marrying in the covenant and living worthily so that we may receive the birthright blessings. Wisdom dictates that we should not trade our eternal blessings for temporary pleasure or satisfaction—especially when marriage is the subject.



Esau selling his birthright  
Hendrick Tegbrugghen, 1627

### Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings discussed in this lesson.

- What qualities have you developed (whether or not you are already married) that will make you a good husband or wife?
- What are you doing to ensure that you will choose eternal blessings over temporary pleasure or satisfaction?



Jacob and Rebekah  
Abel Pann, C. 1915

the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant that we are heirs to as members of the Church.

**Genesis 24:4.** Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac. (Note: Since the people of Melchizedek were a short journey away, one might expect Isaac to obtain a worthy wife among them, but they had been translated, so the opportunity was not available.) The servant was an impressive individual, who, even after a long journey, would not eat until he had finished his errand for Abraham. We can see from

Genesis 24 that he was trustworthy, loyal, prayerful, and faithful. And rather than remain there for a ten-day celebration, the servant wished to take Rebekah and return to Abraham quickly.

**Genesis 24:15–20, 58.**

Abraham’s servant knew that his prayer for direction had been answered when he spoke with Rebekah. She was kind and willing to help others, as shown by her drawing water for Abraham’s servant and his camels. A camel can drink up to 30 gallons in one day, so Rebekah would have had to

draw a great deal of water to satisfy 10 camels. Rebekah was also willing to leave her family to marry Isaac, probably because she had great faith and knew that it was the Lord’s will that she marry Isaac.

**President Howard W. Hunter** said: *“Let us plan for and teach and plead with our children to marry in the house of the Lord. Let us reaffirm more vigorously than we ever have in the past that it does matter where you marry and by what authority you are pronounced man and wife”* (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 88).

### Esau sells his birthright to Jacob. (Genesis 25:20–34)

**Genesis 25:22–23** records that Rebekah received a revelation about her yet unborn twin sons. Concerning Rebekah’s prayer, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** said: *“May I now take our common ancestor, Rebekah, as a pattern for what her daughters in the Church today can do?... when Rebekah was troubled and needed divine guidance she herself took the matter up with the Lord, and he spoke to her in reply. The Lord gives revelation to women who pray to him in faith”* (Conference Report, Tahiti Area Conference 1976, 16).

While the birthright usually passed from father to eldest son, the Lord revealed to Rebekah that Esau would serve Jacob. The birthright included a double share of the family wealth as compensation for serving as the patriarch and assuming the re-

sponsibility for support of the father’s widow and daughters. Jacob’s reception of the birthright meant that his descendants would be the covenant people rather than Esau’s posterity.

**Genesis 25:29–34** show Esau’s feelings about his birthright. It is obvious that he placed little value on the birthright since he was willing to sell it cheaply to satisfy a temporary physical need.

As members of the Church, we are each entitled to a spiritual birthright from our heavenly parents. Birthright blessings include the priesthood, temple blessings, ordinances, revelation, and the potential for exaltation.

The spiritual birthright blessings are affected by our choice of a marriage partner. If we choose to marry

in the covenant, we receive temple ordinances that allow us to receive the blessings associated with the Abrahamic covenant. If we chose a civil marriage only, we limit our right to receive such blessings.

Our words and actions also show what value we place on our birthright. We, like Esau, can put temporary needs ahead of eternal values if we are careless or worldly.

Heirs to the covenant were chosen by the Lord. He favored Isaac over Ishmael (Gal. 4:22–23), Jacob over Esau, Joseph over Reuben (1 Chronicles 5:1–2), and Ephraim over Manasseh (Genesis 48:17–20). This suggests to us that there are qualifications that supersede birth order in the opportunity for callings and blessings in the Lord’s plan.

### Jacob marries Leah and Rachel in the covenant, and through him the Abrahamic covenant continues. (Genesis 26–29.)

**Genesis 26:34–35; 28:6–9** gives us some insight into Esau’s choice of wives.

**Genesis 28:1–5; 29:1–28** indicates that Jacob was willing to go to great lengths to marry in the covenant.

He made a long journey to find a faithful woman to marry. He then worked for Laban for seven years before marrying Rachel and he continued to work for him afterward.