

Genesis 24-27 — “Let God Prevail”

Come, Follow Me 2026 — March 2–8

CFM Lesson: “Let God Prevail” (Genesis 24–33, focus on 24–27)

Overview

Genesis 24–27 stands at a pivotal transition in the Abrahamic saga. Abraham is old and near death, Sarah has already passed, and the great promises of posterity, land, and priesthood blessing hang by a single thread — Isaac, still unmarried. What unfolds is one of the most detailed and tender narratives in all of Genesis: the divinely guided search for Rebekah, a woman whose initiative, faith, and strength would shape the covenant family for generations.

These chapters remind us that God’s covenant does not perpetuate itself automatically. Each generation must choose it anew. Abraham sends his servant on a mission of faith. Rebekah chooses to leave everything she knows. Isaac learns to love. And in the next generation, the messy, painful story of Jacob and Esau teaches us that birthright blessings are ultimately about spiritual worthiness, not birth order.

David Butler (Don’t Miss This) quotes Alfred Edersheim’s framework for the three patriarchs: “Abraham is the man of faith, Isaac is the model of patient bearing, and Jacob is the man of active working.” Each quality has “a balcony and a basement” — virtues can be lived redemptively or destructively. Butler adds that the entire narrative from Genesis 24 onward is fundamentally about “a passing on of faith... a passing on of tradition and a passing on of covenant understanding.”

Jared Halverson (Unshaken) frames Isaac’s generation as “Abraham 2.0” — the structural parallels are deliberate: barren wife, famine in the land, two sons at odds, encounter with Abimelech. But the differences matter too: Isaac stays in the covenant land during famine, where Abraham went to Egypt. The next generation must learn the same lessons, but they can also build on what came before.

Mark Holt (Gospel Talktrine, S01E10 — “Birthright Blessings: Marriage in the Covenant”) supplies this week’s unifying frame: **“the first shall be last and the last shall be first.”** For five straight generations — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim — the birthright did *not* follow the firstborn, even though in Hebrew “birthright” and “firstborn” are the same word. Holt argues the exceptions are the message: they were designed to teach observant readers to recognize a Messiah who is both *“the firstborn of the Father”* and the despised younger son with *“no form nor comeliness.”*

The Come Follow Me manual for this week invites us to consider how God prevails in our lives even when our stories feel complicated, messy, or uncertain. These are not sanitized heroes — they are real, struggling people through whom God accomplishes His purposes.

Key Concepts

1. Covenant Marriage — Choosing Within the Covenant

Abraham's urgent insistence that Isaac not marry among the Canaanites (Genesis 24:3–4) reflects far more than cultural preference. The Hebrew word for oath here is *shaba* (שָׁבַע), rooted in the word for "seven" — evoking completeness and sacred commitment. Abraham understands that the covenant cannot continue without a partner who shares the faith.

Halverson (Unshaken) makes this vivid: "Opposites can attract in so many different areas, but spiritually speaking that's seldom the case." He frames Abraham's warning to his servant — don't bring Isaac back to Mesopotamia even if the woman won't come — as a principle of maintaining standards: "Don't bring my son down to that level just to find a partner, because she wouldn't be a covenant companion then. There's something to be said for maintaining your high standards even if it takes you longer to find that blessing."

He also raises a profound insight about personal revelation in marriage: "God could tell you no and He could tell me yes... My revelation cannot be two revelations for the price of one." Rebekah's consent is required because God's will for one person doesn't override the agency of another.

2. *Chesed* (חֶסֶד) — Lovingkindness and Covenant Faithfulness

When Abraham's servant prays at the well, he asks the Lord to show *chesed* — steadfast love, covenant faithfulness, loyal kindness — to his master Abraham (Genesis 24:12–14). This Hebrew word is one of the richest in the Old Testament, appearing over 240 times. It describes God's loyal, enduring love that goes beyond obligation. The servant's entire experience at the well is a demonstration of divine *chesed* — God answering before the prayer is even finished (v. 15).

3. Rebekah as Matriarch, Prophet, and Agent

Rebekah receives direct revelation from the Lord about her unborn children (Genesis 25:22–23). She is told, "the elder shall serve the younger" — making her the custodian of divine knowledge that even Isaac does not seem to fully understand.

Camille Fronk Olsen (The Scriptures Are Real, S5 E19) emphasizes: "She's told that she's going to have twins... and that the younger one will be the leader. You don't get an answer to a prayer like that unless you've been in communication with the Father for a while." Olsen references Elder McConkie: "Oh that all women could Rebecca-like engineer things so that more of God's children could receive the blessing that he has for them." This frames Rebekah not as a schemer but as a woman fulfilling a divine responsibility within an imperfect system.

Halverson (Unshaken) captures Rebekah's complexity with a coin metaphor: "The heads side is 'I will go and do, I am an agent not an object, I will act in courage and decisiveness.' The tails side: 'She's so decisive and independent... maybe she's trying a little too hard to make sure God's promises are kept. Yes, He wants our help, but doesn't always need as much of it as we think.'"

4. *Bekorah* (בְּכוֹרָה) — The Birthright and Spiritual Inheritance

Genesis 25:29–34 introduces the famous “mess of pottage” episode. The Hebrew *bekorah* (birthright) comes from *bekor* (firstborn). In the ancient Near East, the birthright carried a double portion of the inheritance and family leadership. But Esau’s casual dismissal — “I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” (Genesis 25:32) — shows a man who despises (*bazah*, בָּזָה) sacred things.

Butler (Don’t Miss This) makes this unforgettable: “Nobody wants that... red lentil soup. Cheesecake Factory has a menu that is this thick and they don’t even sell red lentil soup. He trades his birthright for red lentil soup — the worst business move in history.”

Halverson draws the distinction between birthright and blessing: the birthright = right to lead, priesthood responsibility, covenant headship; the blessing = God’s bounty and favor. Both sons receive blessings, but only one receives the birthright. Even Esau gets “dew of heaven and fatness of earth” — just not leadership. Halverson: “In God’s generosity there’s always a blessing... it’s just infinitely less than what God had intended.”

5. Isaac — “Altar, Tent, and Well”

Isaac is often overshadowed by his father Abraham and his son Jacob. But Elder A. Theodore Tuttle’s October 1972 General Conference talk captures Isaac’s quiet greatness: Isaac built an altar, pitched his tent, and dug his well. His worship, his home, his work — these basic things of life signified his relationship to God, his family, and his fellow men.

Butler (Don’t Miss This) adds a spiritual dimension to Isaac’s well-digging (Genesis 26:18): “Isaac knew where there were wells... this is how you access faith... what did my mom teach me about how to access that? He’s having to dig a little deeper for who he is and what he knows about God.” Re-digging Abraham’s wells is not just agriculture — it’s each generation rediscovering the sources of spiritual sustenance their parents found.

6. Two Errors in Faith — Lagging Behind or Going Before God

Butler (Don’t Miss This) introduces Edersheim’s powerful framework for the central moral tension in these chapters: “In our weakness we either lag behind or in our haste we go before God.” Isaac exemplifies lagging behind — he knows Rebekah’s prophecy, but hesitates to act on it. Jacob and Rebekah exemplify going before God — they scheme to obtain the blessing rather than trusting God’s timing.

Halverson extends this into a life principle: “God brings beauty out of ashes even if we’re the ones who lit the fire.” Neither error — hesitation nor haste — disqualifies someone from God’s covenant. Both are human responses to the tension of living by faith.

Verse-by-Verse Commentary

Genesis 24:1-9: Abraham Sends His Servant

“Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: 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.” (Genesis 24:2–3)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Yarekh** (יָרֵךְ, “thigh”) — This oath-swearing gesture, placing the hand under the thigh, is associated with solemn covenant making. Some scholars connect it to the promises of posterity, as the thigh symbolizes the seat of procreative power. The JST corrects this to “hand under my hand.”
- **Shaba** (שָׁבַע, “swear”) — From the root meaning “seven,” connecting oath-making to sacred completeness.

Podcast Insights

Dr. Camille Fronk Olson (Follow Him) emphasizes that Abraham is anxious because Sarah has died, Isaac hasn’t married, and the promise of posterity — “the sands of the sea” — looks like a single grain of sand. Abraham sends his servant (possibly Eleazar of Damascus) back to Mesopotamia, a journey of up to 900 miles, with all his master’s goods.

Halverson (Unshaken) frames the servant as a type of Christ — a steward/intermediary sent to find a bride for the master’s son. The servant’s prayer demonstrates what Halverson calls “being in the way” — proactive alignment with God’s direction rather than passive waiting. He uses a football analogy: “You have to have the quarterback trust — he’s not going to throw the ball even if you are open.” The servant had to earn Abraham’s trust through a lifetime of faithful service.

Doctrinal Connections

- **D&C 131:1–4** — The new and everlasting covenant of marriage is essential to exaltation.
- **D&C 132:37** — Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob “have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones.”
- **Genesis 21:12** — God told Abraham to hearken to Sarah’s voice, establishing a pattern of matriarchal counsel.

Come Follow Me Connection

The Lord invites us to trust His timing and His methods. Abraham trusted that God would “send his angel before thee” (v. 7). When we face seemingly impossible situations involving our families and futures, we can trust that God is working ahead of us.

Genesis 24:10-27: Rebekah at the Well

“And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out... with her pitcher upon her shoulder.” (Genesis 24:15)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Betulah** (בְּתוּלָה, “virgin/young woman”) — Used in v. 16 to describe Rebekah. This term emphasizes purity and marriageable status. The text adds “neither had any man known her” for additional emphasis.
- **Chesed ve’emet** (חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת, “kindness and truth”) — In v. 27, the servant praises God for showing *chesed* and *emet* (faithfulness, truth). This word pair describes God’s dual nature of loyal love and reliability.
- **Ruts** (רָץ, “to run”) — Rebekah runs repeatedly throughout this chapter (vv. 17, 20, 28). The verbs of motion ascribed to her — she hastens, she runs, she draws water — paint a picture of energy, willingness, and strength.

Podcast Insights

Freeman (Don’t Miss This) does the math on Rebekah’s service: the servant had 10 camels, and camels drink approximately 30 gallons per day. Rebekah essentially drew approximately 300 pitchers of water — an extraordinary act of labor, not just politeness. Freeman: “Hospitality is so generous... it’s not just a drink but ‘let me just care for you and for everyone who’s with you.’”

Halverson frames Rebekah’s “above and beyond” service as a covenant character test — “service that leaves someone speechless, service with no upper limit.” He contrasts her with Lot’s wife through a salt metaphor: true “salt of the earth” people apply covenant influence “grain by grain through a lifetime of examples — drop by drop, line upon line.” Rebekah had been building this character her whole life; the well was simply where it became visible.

Olsen (The Scriptures Are Real) highlights the question the servant asks — “Whose daughter art thou?” — as fundamentally about covenant identity: “Who do you come from? What’s your family line? In the ancient world, that is huge.” Rebekah’s answer confirms her connection to Abraham’s covenant family.

Doctrinal Connections

- **1 Nephi 3:7** — The Lord prepares a way for us to accomplish His commandments, just as He prepared Rebekah’s appearance at the well.
- **Alma 37:6–7** — By small and simple things are great things brought to pass; a simple act of drawing water revealed God’s chosen matriarch.
- **Matthew 25:35–40** — “I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink” — Rebekah’s hospitality echoes the Savior’s teachings about service.

Come Follow Me Connection

Rebekah’s story teaches us that God often answers prayers through the willing service of others. When we are anxiously engaged in good works — running to serve, offering more than what’s asked — we may be the answer to someone’s prayer without knowing it.

Genesis 24:28–67: Rebekah’s Choice and the Marriage

“And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.” (Genesis 24:58)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Elekh** (אֵלֶךְ, “I will go”) — Rebekah’s response is decisive and courageous. In two words she leaves her family, her homeland, and everything familiar. This echoes Abraham’s own call in Genesis 12:1 — “Get thee out of thy country.”
- **Ahabah** (אַהֲבָה, “love”) — Genesis 24:67 says Isaac “loved her” (*ye’ehabeha*). This is one of the first explicit uses of romantic love between husband and wife in the Bible, and it comes *after* marriage, not before.

Podcast Insights

Dr. Fronk Olson highlights the remarkable agency Rebekah is given — the family asks *her* if she will go. In a patriarchal culture, this question affirms her consent and choice. Rebekah reports to “her mother’s house” (v. 28), suggesting she may have been the head of her household.

Freeman (Don’t Miss This) reads the family’s farewell blessing — “You are our sister, but you are going to become the mother of thousands of millions” (Gen 24:60) — as a model for modern families: “Don’t you want to say that every time your daughter gets married? This is your blessing... think about your grandmas and great-grandmas and the legacy that they have left.”

Butler (Don’t Miss This) observes that the Isaac-Rebekah betrothal story gets more verses than the Flood or the Creation account: “Hallmark has not made this story... but the Lord wanted us to realize this union is important enough to merit this much information.”

Olsen (The Scriptures Are Real) frames Rebekah and Isaac as a genuine partnership: “They are a partnership. They need each other, and that is one time you really see how much he needed that help meet for him.” This directly invokes Genesis 2’s “help meet” (*ezer kenegdo*) language, reframing Rebekah as essential to Isaac’s priesthood function, not supplementary to it.

Doctrinal Connections

- **Abraham 2:1–4** — Abraham also left his homeland at God’s command, establishing a pattern that Rebekah now follows.
- **Ruth 1:16** — Ruth’s “whither thou goest, I will go” echoes Rebekah’s courageous departure.
- **2 Nephi 2:27** — We are free to choose; Rebekah’s deliberate choice to go illustrates covenant agency.

Come Follow Me Connection

Rebekah’s “I will go” is a model of faith. She had never met Isaac, yet she trusted God’s guiding hand and stepped into the unknown. Sometimes covenant living requires leaving behind what’s comfortable

Genesis 25:1-18: Abraham's Death and Legacy

"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." (Genesis 25:8)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Savea** (שָׂבַע, "full/satisfied") — Abraham died *savea yamim*, "full of days" — a Hebrew idiom meaning he lived a complete, satisfied life. The word carries a sense of contentment, not just longevity.
- **Ne'esaph** (נִסְּפָה, "gathered") — "Gathered to his people" is a beautiful euphemism for death, implying reunion with ancestors in the afterlife.

Podcast Insights

Dr. Fronk Olson notes that Isaac and Ishmael come together to bury their father, suggesting some level of reconciliation. The covenant has held — fractured but not broken.

Doctrinal Connections

- **D&C 132:29** — Abraham received all things and is exalted.
- **Abraham 2:10–11** — The Abrahamic covenant continues through his seed, a promise that now rests on Isaac.
- **Hebrews 11:13** — "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off."

Genesis 25:19-34: Jacob and Esau — The Birthright

"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." (Genesis 25:23)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Ya'akov** (יַעֲקֹב, "Jacob") — Traditionally interpreted as "heel-grabber" or "supplanter," from *aqev* (אָקֵב, "heel"). Some scholars suggest a connection to *yaqov-el*, "may God protect." Jacob's name becomes a double-edged identity he will struggle with until God renames him Israel.
- **Esav** (עֵשָׂו, "Esau") — Possibly meaning "hairy" or "fully formed." His alternate name *Edom* (אֶדוֹם) means "red," connecting to both the red stew and the red, hairy appearance at birth.

- **Nazid** (נִזִּיד, “stew/pottage”) — The lentil stew Esau craved. The word emphasizes the ordinariness of what he traded his birthright for.
- **Bazah** (בָּזָח, “to despise”) — Genesis 25:34 states Esau “despised” his birthright. This is a strong verb meaning to treat something as worthless or contemptible.

Podcast Insights

Butler (Don’t Miss This) identifies the two different failures at work: “Esau’s failure is a lack of patience — he couldn’t wait or value what was spiritually significant. Jacob’s failure is a lack of trust in God’s timing.” He introduces a “circle diagram” of Jacob’s life: sometimes Jacob lets the Lord lead (higher position), sometimes he decides “I’m not sure what you’re going to do with this, so I’ll just go before you” (lower position). The narrative of Genesis oscillates between these two modes.

Kerry Muhlestein (The Scriptures Are Real, S5 E17) adds the emotional complexity: “I have sons, and I would hope my one would respond to the other with ‘Oh, I see your need, I’ll meet your need’ — not ‘What will you give me for it?’” The covenant “does not unfold in a vacuum. It unfolds in messy, complex, multifaceted circumstances... every one of us lives in this kind of a world, an Old Testament world.”

Halverson (Unshaken) resists simplification: “We tend to victimize ourselves through our sins... we are perpetrators in victimizing ourselves.” Both brothers are flawed — Esau despises what’s sacred; Jacob exploits a moment of weakness. The text refuses to give us clean heroes.

The Follow Him episode emphasizes that in all four generations under Abraham, the firstborn did not receive the birthright — Ishmael, Esau, Reuben, Manasseh — because spiritual birthright must be earned, not simply inherited.

The First Shall Be Last — The Birthright as a Type of Christ (Gospel Talktrine, S01E10)

Mark Holt builds the week’s deepest doctrinal frame from these exceptions. In Hebrew, *birthright* and *firstborn* are the same word (*bekorah/bekor* — Holt notes his mission language Portuguese renders birthright literally as “firstbornness”). By definition, then, the firstborn son *is* the birthright son — and yet for **five consecutive generations** (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim), the most exhaustively described characters in Genesis, the pattern breaks. Why?

Holt’s answer: **the exceptions teach Christ**. Jesus is “*the firstborn of the Father*” whose church is “*the church of the Firstborn*” — the rightful birthright holder. And yet at His first coming He was “*stricken and despised of men*” — resembling the younger son with no special inheritance, the one who obtains the birthright in order to take care of all his siblings. “*Christ is represented by both the firstborn sons and the other more righteous sons that took the blessings away from their older siblings.*” The patriarchal parallels compound: three (four) generations of barren mothers and miraculous births; family members seeking the heir’s life (Jacob, Joseph — and the infant Jesus fleeing to Egypt); the beloved son sold and betrayed. For

humble readers of a scripture stripped of its plain and precious things, these patterns were “*enough to help a humble follower of God in the time of Jesus actually recognize their Messiah.*”

On Jacob’s conduct, Holt offers an honest hermeneutic worth adopting: “*I’ve chosen to believe that there’s something we’re missing in all of this, and Jacob was acting honorably... I don’t believe that God would have blessed him had he deceived his brother out of selfishness.*” Some scholars read the sold birthright as specific heirloom inheritances rather than the whole estate — and Isaac’s response when the deception surfaces (“yea, and he shall be blessed”) reads as the Spirit confirming what was spoken, exactly the point Olsen makes from Hebrews 11 below.

Doctrinal Connections

- **D&C 84:33–40** — The oath and covenant of the priesthood parallels the birthright blessings.
- **Hebrews 12:16–17** — Paul calls Esau a “profane person” who sold his birthright for one morsel of food.
- **1 Nephi 17:35** — The Lord esteems all flesh alike; He favors the righteous, not necessarily the firstborn.
- **Jacob 5** — The allegory of the olive tree shows God’s persistent efforts to preserve and renew His covenant people.

Come Follow Me Connection

What do we “sell” our birthright blessings for? Butler’s red lentil soup image lingers: in a world of instant gratification, Esau’s story is a warning about trading eternal things for momentary comfort. Elder David A. Bednar has spoken about neglecting eternal relationships for digital diversions — a modern parallel to Esau’s tragic exchange.

Genesis 26:1-35: Isaac in Gerar — Altar, Tent, and Well

“*Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him.*”
(Genesis 26:12)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Me’ah she’arim** (מֵאָה שְׁעָרִים, “a hundredfold”) — Isaac’s agricultural blessing is a concrete demonstration of covenant prosperity. The phrase became so famous that a neighborhood in Jerusalem bears this name.
- **Be’er** (בְּאֵר, “well”) — Wells are central to Isaac’s story. Each well he digs has a name reflecting his experience: *Esek* (עֵשֶׂק, “contention”), *Sitnah* (שִׁטְנָה, “hostility/accusation”), and *Rehoboth* (רְחוֹבוֹת, “broad places/room”). The progression from conflict to peace reflects Isaac’s patient trust in God.
- **Shalom** (שָׁלוֹם, “peace”) — Isaac makes peace with Abimelech (26:31), reflecting his character as a man of peace.

Podcast Insights

Halverson (Unshaken) frames Isaac's chapter as "Abraham 2.0" with a critical difference: "Isaac stays in covenant land when famine comes, while Abraham went to Egypt." Each generation faces the same tests but has the chance to respond with greater faith. The recurring parallels — barren wife, famine, Abimelech encounter, the "she's my sister" episode — are literary signals that covenant testing is cyclical.

Butler (Don't Miss This) turns the well-digging into spiritual methodology: "Isaac knew where there were wells... this is how you access faith. What did my mom teach me about how to access that? He's having to dig a little deeper for who he is and what he knows about God." When the Philistines fill in Abraham's wells, Isaac doesn't despair — he re-digs. Butler's application: "What wells of spiritual sustenance have been filled in for you? Your parents' testimony? A childhood practice you've abandoned? Dig again."

Doctrinal Connections

- **Genesis 26:24** — The Lord appears to Isaac and renews the Abrahamic covenant: "I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee."
- **Mosiah 4:27** — We are not required to run faster than we have strength. Isaac's quiet, steady faithfulness is a model.
- **D&C 101:36** — "Let your hearts be comforted... for all flesh is in mine hands; be still and know that I am God."

Come Follow Me Connection

Isaac's well-digging is a powerful metaphor for covenant living. When others fill in your wells (your sources of spiritual sustenance), you can dig again. When you face contention and hostility, you can move on and trust that God will eventually give you room (*Rehoboth*). Patient faithfulness in the face of opposition is itself a form of letting God prevail.

Genesis 27:1-46: The Blessing of Jacob

"And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him." (Genesis 27:27)

Hebrew Deep Dive

- **Berakhah** (בְּרָכָה, "blessing") — The birthright blessing Isaac pronounces is irrevocable in ancient Near Eastern culture. Once spoken, a patriarchal blessing carries the force of prophecy.
- **Charadah** (חִרְדָּה, "trembling") — When Isaac discovers the deception, he "trembled very exceedingly" (27:33). This Hebrew word describes a deep, involuntary trembling — suggesting Isaac may be realizing that God's will has been accomplished despite the messy method.

Podcast Insights

Olsen (The Scriptures Are Real, S5 E19) makes a critical observation often missed: "If you ever think that somehow Isaac was snookered... I love Hebrews 11. This great roll call of the faithful: 'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau.'" Isaac is in the Hebrews 11 Hall of Fame *for this blessing* — which means the Spirit confirmed it. Olsen's reading: "He is completely dependent on the spirit, and the spirit tells him this is the son that he is to give this blessing to." Rebekah's role was creating "an environment so the spirit can be there and he's not dependent on his sight or his smell or what the sound of the voice."

Muhlestein (The Scriptures Are Real, S5 E17) holds the tension without resolving it: "What we have are two of the great patriarchs and one of the great matriarchs who are caught in an interesting triangle where the only way they get where they're supposed to be is by messing with each other in a way that isn't the most healthy... they all get in this little pressure cooker where the right thing happens in a way that is messy, not ideal, probably breaks everyone's heart a little bit."

On Isaac's paternal love, Muhlestein observes the sensory detail of 27:27: "His father Isaac said, 'Come near now and kiss me, my son'... and he smelled the smell of his raiment and blessed him... I think about when my kids were little and I just loved the smell of them. He loves the essence of who Esau is." The deception breaks a father's heart even as God's purposes are fulfilled.

Freeman (Don't Miss This) watches both blessings closely — Jacob's in 27:28–29 and Esau's in 27:39–40 — and highlights Esau's heartbreaking plea: "Do you not have a blessing for me?" She calls this "one of the most painful lines in all of Genesis."

Halverson (Unshaken) refuses to assign clean moral categories: "We're not perfectly righteous or perfectly flawed... we're all somewhere in the middle." He traces the consequences: Rebekah thought Esau's anger would blow over in "a few days." Reality: "Jacob and Esau do not reconcile until more than two decades later... it's like half their lifetime. Could things have been different if Rebekah and Jacob and Esau and Isaac had talked about this?"

Doctrinal Connections

- **2 Nephi 3:5–15** — Joseph in Egypt received promises about a latter-day seer, showing that covenant blessings follow divine foreknowledge, not human schemes.
- **Romans 9:10–13** — Paul references the Jacob/Esau narrative: "The elder shall serve the younger," emphasizing God's sovereign choice.
- **Genesis 25:23** — Rebekah's earlier revelation from God provides the divine backdrop for the events of chapter 27.
- **Hebrews 11:20** — "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come."

Come Follow Me Connection

This is one of the most challenging chapters in Genesis. Rather than trying to excuse or condemn the participants, we can recognize that God works through imperfect people and imperfect circumstances. Butler's framework holds: "Do not go in and assign somebody as a good guy or a bad guy... every single person has a struggle." Muhlestein's summary: "God has re-promised to Jacob multiple times his

intention to be faithful to the covenant... sometimes we might ask ourselves, 'Even now, given what I've done — could you still love me, fulfill this covenant, bring about these blessings?' And God says yes, yes, yes. Still, still, still. Always, always, always."

The Structure of Genesis 24-27 — Literary Analysis

These four chapters form a beautiful chiastic transition between the Abrahamic and Jacobite eras:

A — Genesis 24: The old generation seeks to secure the covenant's future (Abraham sends for a bride)

B — Genesis 25:1–18: Abraham's death and the closing of his era

C — Genesis 25:19–34: The new generation emerges — twins, prophecy, and the birthright contest

B' — Genesis 26: Isaac's solo chapter — re-digging Abraham's wells, renewing the covenant in his own right

A' — Genesis 27: The next generation's covenant future is secured (Jacob receives the blessing)

The narrative moves from Abraham's sunset to Jacob's sunrise, with Isaac as the crucial bridge.

The well motif connects the generations: Abraham dug wells (Gen 21:30), Isaac re-digs them (Gen 26:18), and Jacob will meet Rachel at a well (Gen 29:10). Wells represent covenant life, sustenance, and continuity.

The betrothal-at-the-well type scene (Genesis 24) is a recurring biblical pattern: Moses meets Zipporah at a well (Exodus 2), and Jacob meets Rachel at a well (Genesis 29). The pattern — man journeys to a foreign land, meets a woman at a well, water is drawn, the woman runs home, a marriage results — connects the patriarchal stories and points toward covenant themes of living water.

Insights from Podcasts and Sources

Follow Him Podcast — Dr. Camille Fronk Olson

Dr. Camille Fronk Olson, emeritus professor and former department chair of Ancient Scripture at BYU, brings her expertise on women in scripture to these chapters. Key insights:

- **Rebekah is the dynamic force** in these chapters — she runs, acts, decides, and receives revelation. Isaac is quieter, more passive, but no less faithful.
- **The matriarchs actively influenced** the wellbeing of their families and created environments where life could progress and achieve God's plan.
- **D&C 132:37** tells us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and their wives) have all entered into their exaltation. Exaltation is not given individually — the family unit matters.
- **The Old Testament shows the humanness** of these individuals. They make mistakes, they struggle, but the purpose of these stories is to point us to Christ and our need for a Redeemer.

Unshaken (Jared Halverson)

Halverson brings his deep-reading methodology and moral nuance. Full transcript. Key frameworks:

- **Abraham 2.0:** Isaac's story deliberately parallels Abraham's — barren wife, famine, Abimelech, two sons — to show that covenant testing is cyclical across generations.
- **The Servant as Christ-Type:** The steward sent to find a bride for the master's son, demonstrating "being in the way" — proactive alignment with God's direction.
- **The Coin Metaphor:** Every strength has a heads and tails. Rebekah's decisiveness is her greatest virtue and her greatest risk.
- **Salt of the Earth (Grain by Grain):** True covenant influence is applied "line upon line, precept upon precept, sacrifice by sacrifice through a lifetime of examples" — not in dramatic, last-minute gestures.
- **The Hose/Kink Metaphor:** Satan "kinks the hose" of God's blessings through covenant-breaking. If we're not righteous enough to flavor the earth, blessings cannot flow to the next generation.
- **Beauty from Ashes:** "God brings beauty out of ashes even if we're the ones who lit the fire."
- **The Rattlesnake Principle** (quoting Brigham Young): Chasing the rattlesnake to vent frustration only spreads venom through your body. "Localize the venom... you'll live to tell it." Applied to Esau's rage.
- **Marriage Agency:** "My revelation cannot be two revelations for the price of one." God's will for one person doesn't override the other's agency.

Don't Miss This (Emily Belle Freeman & David Butler)

Freeman and Butler focus on generational faith and the human complexity of covenant families. Full transcript. Key insights:

- **Three Patriarchal Types (Edersheim):** Abraham = faith, Isaac = patient bearing, Jacob = active working. Each has "a balcony and a basement."
- **Two Errors in Faith:** "In our weakness we either lag behind or in our haste we go before God." Isaac lags; Jacob and Rebekah rush.
- **Passing On Covenant Understanding:** The central theme — "a passing on of faith, a passing on of tradition, a passing on of covenant understanding."
- **Red Lentil Soup:** "The worst business move in history" — a vivid image for trading eternal things for momentary comfort.
- **Well-Digging as Faith Access:** "What wells of spiritual sustenance have been filled in? Dig again."
- **"Do you not have a blessing for me?":** Esau's plea as one of the most painful lines in Genesis.
- **No Good Guys / Bad Guys:** "Do not go in and assign somebody as a good guy or a bad guy."
- **God Prevails in Imperfection:** "All of the days of our life are not going to be us lighting off camels... sometimes you have twins who fight with each other."

The Scriptures Are Real (Kerry Muhlestein & Camille Fronk Olsen)

Muhlestein and guest Olsen bring scholarly rigor and emotional depth. S5 E17 transcript and S5 E19 transcript. Key insights:

- **Hebrews 11 Vindication:** “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau” — the Spirit confirmed the blessing. Isaac was not duped; he was guided.
- **The Pressure Cooker:** “Two great patriarchs and one great matriarch caught in an interesting triangle where the only way they get where they’re supposed to be is by messing with each other in a way that isn’t the most healthy.”
- **Rebekah as Covenant Administrator:** Using Paul’s Romans 9 framework — Rebekah received revelation and administered the covenant succession for the family.
- **Partnership Theology:** Isaac and Rebekah “are a partnership. They need each other.”
- **The Barrenness Theme:** All the Genesis women — Sarah, Hagar, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel — experience barrenness or exclusion: “In every case, it’s in those times of real difficulty that they find a relationship with God.”
- **God’s Persistent Faithfulness:** “God says yes, yes, yes. Still, still, still. Always, always, always.”
- **Isaac’s Paternal Love:** The sensory detail of 27:27 — “I think about when my kids were little and I just loved the smell of them.”

Gospel Talktrine — Mark Holt (S01E10: “Birthright Blessings — Marriage in the Covenant”)

Full transcript. Holt covers Genesis 24–30 with his signature Hebrew word-study and typology method:

- **The First Shall Be Last:** Five straight generations of non-firstborn birthright holders as a deliberate type of Christ — who is both “the firstborn of the Father” and the despised younger son. See the full treatment in the Genesis 25 commentary above.
- **Marriage in the covenant as the hinge:** What Ishmael (and later Esau, with his Hittite wives) gave up was not personal blessing but *the right to pass the covenant to their children*. “A lot of times when people married outside the covenant, they didn’t convert their spouses — they ended up following after them instead.”
- **Rebekah’s hundred gallons:** A camel can drink ~10 gallons after a desert journey; ten camels means Rebekah may have drawn a hundred gallons — unbidden. The sign the servant prayed for was, precisely, extravagant *chesed*.
- **Understanding Laban:** Reading Genesis 24 and 29 together, Holt suggests Laban’s punitive seven-year bride-price for Rachel traces to watching his sister Rebekah taken away *in a single day* a generation earlier — “There’s no way I’m going to let that happen to my daughter.” And Rachel stealing her father’s idols reads as another faithful woman in Laban’s life trying to turn him from idolatry.
- **The ladder is covenant:** Jacob’s ladder (Genesis 28) = the Abrahamic covenant; the rungs = the individual covenants (circumcision/baptism, priesthood, covenant marriage). “It’s not the ordinances that better us — it’s the covenants. And yet the covenants are the rungs of this ladder... like the points on a compass. The airplane is not powered by the compass... but without it, the most powerful engines in the world won’t get you where you want to go.” Holt notes Jacob’s ladder vision sits at the *chiastic center* of the five patriarchal

generations (Abraham → Isaac → **Jacob** → Joseph → Ephraim) — structurally, covenant is the centerpiece of the whole saga.

Additional Sources

- **Taylor Halverson** (Interpreter Foundation) — “Birthright Blessings; Marriage in the Covenant” provides scholarly context for Genesis 24–29.
 - **Jeffrey M. Bradshaw** (Interpreter Foundation) — “What Are We To Make Of Jacob’s Apparent Deceitfulness?” argues ancient readers understood the covenant dynamics differently.
 - **Jacob’s Ladder and the Abrahamic Covenant** (Gospel Lessons YouTube) — In all four generations, the firstborn did not receive the birthright. Spiritual birthright maps to temple covenants.
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Personal Application & Discussion Questions

1. **“I will go”**: Rebekah left everything she knew for a man she’d never met. What courageous “I will go” moments has the Lord asked of you? How did you find the faith to step into the unknown?
 2. **Answered before finishing**: Abraham’s servant prayed specifically, and God answered before he finished. Have you experienced moments when the Lord’s answer came faster than you expected?
 3. **Altar, tent, and well**: Isaac’s quiet faithfulness centered on worship, home, and work. Which of these three needs more of your attention right now?
 4. **Red lentil soup**: Butler’s image lingers. What “bowls of stew” in our modern world tempt us to trade away eternal blessings for momentary comfort?
 5. **Re-digging wells**: Isaac patiently re-dug wells his enemies had filled in. What sources of spiritual sustenance have been “filled in” for you — parents’ testimony, childhood practices, scripture habits? How can you dig again?
 6. **Lagging behind or going before**: Edersheim’s framework applies to all of us. Where in your life are you lagging behind when God is calling you forward? Where are you rushing ahead when you should wait?
 7. **Rebekah’s coin**: Halverson’s insight — every strength has a heads and tails. What is the “tails side” of your greatest spiritual gift? How do you manage it?
 8. **“Do you not have a blessing for me?”**: Esau’s plea is heartbreaking. How does God respond to those who feel they’ve missed their chance? What does Muhlestein’s “yes, yes, yes — still, still, still — always, always, always” mean for your own story?
 9. **Imperfect instruments**: How does reading about these deeply imperfect people — who scheme, deceive, and manipulate yet are still honored in Hebrews 11’s “Hall of Faith” — change how you see your own worthiness to participate in God’s work?
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Key Quotes

Elder A. Theodore Tuttle (October 1972 General Conference): Isaac “worshiped God, cared for his home, and pursued his work. He is remembered simply as a man of peace. The eloquent simplicity of his life and his unique ability to lend importance to the commonplace made him great.”

“In our weakness we either lag behind or in our haste we go before God.” — **Alfred Edersheim**, quoted in Don’t Miss This

“God brings beauty out of ashes even if we’re the ones who lit the fire.” — **Jared Halverson**, Unshaken

“What we have are two of the great patriarchs and one of the great matriarchs caught in this little pressure cooker where the right thing happens in a way that is messy, not ideal, probably breaks everyone’s heart a little bit.” — **Kerry Muhlestein**, The Scriptures Are Real

“God says yes, yes, yes. Still, still, still. Always, always, always.” — **Kerry Muhlestein**, The Scriptures Are Real

“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.” — **Hebrews 11:20**

“Oh that all women could Rebecca-like engineer things so that more of God’s children could receive the blessing that he has for them.” — **Elder Bruce R. McConkie**, quoted by Camille Fronk Olsen

Dr. Camille Fronk Olson (Follow Him Podcast): “Old Testament, he’s the focal point, always, he must be. These men and women help us to see him better.”

Marion G. Romney: Jacob “realized that the covenants he made with the Lord there were the rungs on the ladder that he himself would have to climb in order to obtain the promised blessings.”

“Christ is represented by both the firstborn sons and the other more righteous sons that took the blessings away from their older siblings.” — **Mark Holt**, Gospel Talktrine S01E10

“The covenants are kind of like the points on a compass. The airplane is not powered by the compass — it’s powered by its engines. But if you don’t nail down your course according to those points, the most powerful engines in the world won’t get you where you want to go.” — **Mark Holt**, Gospel Talktrine S01E10

Links to Existing Notes in This Vault

- Abraham Bible Connections
- Abraham
- Jacobs the patriarch
- Jacob’s Ladder and the Abrahamic Covenant

- The Entire Life of Abraham on a Map - Ear to Hear
- Five Temple Covenants
- covenants
- cutting covenants
- Oath and Covenant of Priesthood
- Consecration
- Faith
- Endowment
- temple
- Hebrew wedding ritual and temple
- Biblical body part symbolism
- Genesis 18–23 — Is Any Thing Too Hard for the Lord
- Genesis 12–17 — To Be a Greater Follower of Righteousness
- David A. Bednar
- Dallin H. Oaks
- D. Todd Christofferson
- Dieter F. Uchtdorf
- Story by Emily Belle freeman about fairness vs mercy
- Family is more important than callings
- Unshaken — Genesis 24–27
- Don't Miss This — Genesis 24–27
- The Scriptures Are Real — S5 E17
- The Scriptures Are Real — S5 E19

Source Links & Further Reading

Podcasts

- Follow Him Podcast — Episode 9: Genesis 24–27 with Dr. Camille Fronk Olson [↗](#)
- Unshaken — Genesis 24–27: Isaac & Rebekah [↗](#) — Jared Halverson on covenant marriage, the coin metaphor, beauty from ashes
- Don't Miss This — Genesis 24–27 [↗](#) — Freeman & Butler on the Edersheim framework, lagging behind vs. going before God
- The Scriptures Are Real — S5 E17 [↗](#) — Kerry Muhlestein on Jacob prevailing with God
- The Scriptures Are Real — S5 E19 [↗](#) — Camille Fronk Olsen on the women of Genesis and consecration
- Jacob's Ladder and the Abrahamic Covenant — Gospel Lessons YouTube [↗](#)

- Gospel Talktrine — S01E10: Birthright Blessings — Marriage in the Covenant [↗](#) — Mark Holt on the first-shall-be-last birthright typology

Church Resources

- Come, Follow Me 2026 — “Let God Prevail” Genesis 24–33 [↗](#)
- Come, Follow Me 2022 — Genesis 24–27: “The Covenant Is Renewed” [↗](#)
- Elder A. Theodore Tuttle, “Altar, Tent, Well” (Oct 1972 General Conference) [↗](#)

Scholarly

- Taylor Halverson, “Birthright Blessings; Marriage in the Covenant” Genesis 24–29 (Interpreter Foundation) [↗](#)
- Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, “What Are We To Make Of Jacob’s Apparent Deceitfulness?” (Interpreter Foundation) [↗](#)
- Camille Fronk Olson, “The Matriarchs: Administrators of God’s Covenantal Blessings” (BYU RSC) [↗](#)
- Michael Goodman, “Eternal Marriage and Family in the Old Testament” (BYU RSC) [↗](#)
- Hebrew Word Study: *Bekorah* (Birthright) — BibleHub [↗](#)
- Hebrew Word Study: *Chesed* (Lovingkindness) — Blue Letter Bible [↗](#)

Next Chapter

→ Genesis 28–33 — Surely the Lord Is in This Place
