



TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

Talk Genesis 28:1-9: Isaac Sends Jacob Away from Home to Find a Suitable Wife

Lesson 64

"Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2 Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

3 "May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of people, and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."

5 So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau. 6 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," 7 and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. 8 Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. 9 So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Background Notes

At the end of Genesis 27, we saw Rebekah persuading Isaac to send Jacob away from home so he would not marry a Hittite woman. Rebekah's real reason, of course, was to get Jacob away from Esau, who was planning to kill him. Rebekah thought that Jacob would only be gone for a short while. Little did she know that it would be more than 20 years before he returned to the land of Canaan!

So Isaac sent Jacob away to Padan Aram ("the plain of Syria"). This was the area of Haran, Rebekah's birthplace. This is the area where Turkey and Syria meet today, about 500 miles from BeerSheba. The idea was to put a lot of miles between Jacob and Esau, and also to let Jacob find a wife from his mother's family rather than the pagan inhabitants of the land. So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to the home of Laban, Rebekah's brother. So we see that the Jews and Syrians are genetically related, going all the way back to the times of the patriarchs.

Before Jacob left, Isaac blessed him once again. Isaac didn't change his mind about the patriarchal blessing of chapter 27. Isaac realized his mistake in trying to bless Esau instead of Jacob. He accepted God's will and submitted to it. *"...I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed" (Genesis 27:33)*. Isaac didn't change his mind, and in chapter 28 he repeated the blessing to Jacob. Notice in verses 3-4 that the Abrahamic Covenant is

the essence of the blessing: *"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; 4 and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham."*

So the Abrahamic Covenant, the covenant that God first made with Abraham (chapters 12 & 15), and then confirmed with his son Isaac (chapter 26), is now confirmed to Jacob in chapter 28.

Doctrinal Points

1. Parents should teach their children the biblical concept of marriage.

When Isaac advised Jacob not to find a wife among the Canaanites, he did the right thing. Spiritual purity should be maintained in all generations. The biblical concept of marriage is two believers joined together, becoming one. As you know, 2 Corinthians 6:14 says, *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"*

Of course the command of 2 Corinthians 6:14 can refer to more areas of life than marriage, but it definitely includes marriage. God really wants the best for us, and the unequal yoke of a believer with an unbeliever can never bring complete fulfillment and satisfaction in marriage. In fact, it may bring years of heartache. So the biblical concept of marriage is two believers joined in marriage, becoming one. But not just **any** two believers! I have to keep telling my students at Emmaus, "Slow down! Pray for God's choice!" God can lead you to that right person if you wait for Him to show you -- and He will.

"Arise, go to Padan Aram... and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother." Notice that Isaac's counsel to Jacob was to take a **wife** -- not **wives**. We know that Jacob didn't follow the advice of his father, but at least Isaac gave him the proper counsel. The biblical concept of marriage is "one man and one woman." Isaac was a good role model here. He had only one wife, unlike Abraham his father, who had a concubine, and certainly unlike his son, Jacob, who had four wives. So Isaac was a good role model here.

It goes without saying that the biblical concept of marriage from Genesis 2:20-24 is the union of one man and one woman -- notice, one **man** and one **woman**, not two men or two women. This doctrine must be taught to our children today. Recently the state of Hawaii took the first step in legalizing "same sex marriages." I think we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg of what is to come in our culture. So, Christian parents, it is critical that you teach your children about marriage -- what is biblical and what is not biblical. Parents should teach their children the biblical concept of marriage.

2. Parents should teach the biblical concept of God's might.

Isaac not only taught Jacob about the biblical concept of marriage, he also taught him about God's might and power. Where do we see that? In verse 3 Isaac referred to God as *El Shaddai*, or "God Almighty."

As you know, God has a number of names by which He has revealed Himself. *El Shaddai*, "God Almighty," stresses God's might and power to act on behalf of his people. God revealed Himself to Abraham by this name back in Genesis 17. Although Abraham was then 99 years old, God said that His promise to give him a son was still good. And sure enough, when Abraham was 100, and Sarah was 90 years of age, they had a son! "God Almighty" or *El Shaddai* is able to do all kinds of things that seem humanly impossible. God can do it because He is *El Shaddai*! As Jesus said in Mark 10:27: "*With men it is impossible, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.*"

Parents, as Isaac communicated the biblical concept of the mighty power of God to Jacob, we should do the same for our children. You might say, "Well, Dave, just how should we do it?" Here's a suggestion. Let your children experience answered prayer. Where there is a need in the family, for example, share that need with your children. Then pray about that need as a family. When God answers that prayer (and it may be in a most dramatic way) your children will come to know and experience the power and might of *El Shaddai*, God Almighty.

When I was about thirteen years old, I delivered newspapers. I lived in North Plainfield, New Jersey, and I delivered the Newark Star Ledger. Now there were a couple of problems about that job. First of all, it was hard work because not everybody got the Newark Star Ledger, and I had to ride my bike for miles to deliver the papers. Furthermore, I had to get up early Sunday morning to deliver Sunday papers, and as a result, I was falling asleep in Sunday school and church. The local paper, the Plainfield Courier News, didn't produce a paper on Sundays, they paid the paperboys more money, you didn't have to ride for miles to deliver these papers, and everybody got it because it was the local paper. So you could just ride along the street, throw the papers up at every house – a much better deal. I tried to get a job delivering that paper, but there were no openings. Some guys waited for years to get one of the local paper delivery routes, and some boys even sold their routes when they would move on to college! So it was impossible to get that job, as far as I was concerned.

But my father suggested, "Why don't you pray about this?" So I did! Would you believe, the very next week a guy came out of his house, a complete stranger, and said, "How would you like a Plainfield Courier News job?" I said, "You have got to be kidding! What is the deal here?" He said, "My father just got a job transfer, we have to move, and I have to get rid of this job. Do you want to take it?" Praise the Lord! God answered prayer! I was experiencing God as 'God Almighty' or *El Shaddai*. God was able to do things that I didn't think God could do!

I am so glad that my father taught me about God as *El Shaddai*, or "God Almighty." Parents, have you taught your children about the mighty power of God? Parents should teach their children the biblical concept of God's might.

Practical Application

1. Close the door before the horse is out of the barn!

We have all heard the expression, "Close the barn door before the horse is gone," and we all know what it means. Esau tried to "close the barn door" when it was too late. Look at verses 8- 9 once again: "*Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his*

father Isaac. 9 So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had."

Didn't Isaac counsel Esau the same way he counseled Jacob about marriage? If he did, Esau had deliberately and totally ignored his father's counsel, because he was already married to two pagan Hittite women (Genesis 26). Now Esau realized that these women didn't please his father and mother, so he tried to "correct the situation" by marrying Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael. Well, two wrongs don't make a right! More polygamy was not going to make it right, no matter whom Esau married. Esau should have closed the door before the horse was out of the barn.

Some Christians think that if they make a mistake by marrying the "wrong person" that they can correct it by getting a divorce and marrying the "right person." No! That is definitely **not** biblical teaching. The biblical way is to wait on God **before** the marriage is made. More prayer! More counsel! More time should be taken before the marriage, not after the mistakes are made.

This expression could be applied to many areas of life, as well as marriage. This is not a biblical text, but it does capture a biblical principle. Close the door **before** the horse is out of the barn!