



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Genesis (Part 2)

Lesson 2: Genesis 27:1-28:22

In our last lesson, we were introduced to Jacob and Esau. We quickly saw why Jacob had earned his name of “supplant” by his deal with Esau for his birthright. In the lesson today, we will see him continuing to supplant Esau concerning his blessing. I pray you all have had a great week in the living word of God drawing nearer to Him and that this week will be even better! If you have prayed and your heart and mind are ready, let’s get started.

Read Genesis 27:1-29

This chapter begins with Isaac aging to the point of blindness and desiring to set his affairs in order in regard to his sons. Although it will actually be several more years before Isaac will pass from this life, he feels the need to prepare for that day. If we could put this in current times, we might think of him as doing his will.

However, there was more to the blessing of a godly man during this time. He not only spoke his wishes as we do in a will, but his words were actually prophetic for the son’s future. Knowing this, Isaac calls for Esau and charges him to hunt and prepare food for him so that he can bestow a blessing on him.

Unbeknownst to Isaac and Esau, Rebekah is lurking in the shadows eavesdropping on their conversation. I’m not sure they would have cared if she did overhear them, as I would imagine they would not think her capable of what takes place next. As you know, she concocts an elaborate scheme to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob instead.

Stories like these should warn us of how easy it is for even godly people to fall into sin and deception. We are not told if Rebekah did this because she remembered what God had said and was just trying to help that along or if she just wanted more for her favorite son. Either way, deception is never from God and she obviously took a wrong turn in judgment here.

I find it interesting that Jacob, the man who will become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel (God’s people), does not really take Rebekah to task about the sin of her plan. He seems merely concerned about the punishment that he will incur if Isaac discovers his deception. This is strangely sad and encouraging to me at the same time. Sad because his heart is not pricked to avoid sinning against his own father but encouraging because he is just another example of someone who didn’t start life out in the godly way that he finishes it. I find great hope in that for my own life and in the young people around me. I’m not suggesting we accept sin, but I am glad to know God allows us to make those mistakes and yet they do not have to be the sum total of our life.

Rebekah seems to cover all of the bases by providing Jacob with the food, Esau’s clothing, and even covering his arms and neck with goat skins. This could have been the hide of what is known as the camel-goat or angora goat. They have silk-like hair that was sometimes used by Romans to replace human hair. Either way, she



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supplies all Jacob needs for the deception to be complete and even says the curse can be on her if Isaac discovers his lies and chooses to curse him instead.

The progression of Jacob's sin in this event is another good warning for us. It starts with the idea implanted by his mother. He gives in to that plan and then, as he proceeds to deceive his father, his betrayal and lies seem to deepen more and more. In verse 19, he brings Rebekah's plan to fruition with the lie that he is Esau. In the very next verse, he goes so far as to drag God's name into it. In verse 24, he continues to blatantly lie to Isaac's face and then finally in verse 27, he seals the betrayal with a kiss. Sound familiar? There were multiple times that Jacob could have turned away from this sin, but he chose to keep walking deeper into it. I think it is important to realize that even though God had chosen Jacob over Esau, it does not make Rebekah or Jacob's actions excusable.

Let's finish up this section looking a little bit into the blessing that Isaac gives Jacob. When he asks God to bless him with the "dew of heaven", "fatness of the earth", and "abundance of grain and new wine", he is asking for him to have success with crops and food. This is a blessing to never hunger and to succeed with fertility in his land. The last part of the blessing is for him to have dominion and success over those around him. He is to be the leader of his family and over the people who live near him. Success in every area is the heart of this blessing. We don't give prophetic blessings anymore, but I believe there are a lot of ways we can bless our children to help them become successful in life, especially in eternal life.

Do you think Rebekah was trying to make God's words come true or was she just looking out for Jacob's interests? What makes you think that?

Do you think Jacob believed that "God caused it to happen" to him or was he just completely lying?

Think of a time when a sinful thought entered your mind. Describe the progression of it. Did it keep asking more and more of you? Do you look back and wonder how you ever let it go that far?

List some blessings you could give (or have given) to your children to feel special and provide them with success in the future?

Read Genesis 27:30-46

No sooner than Jacob leaves Isaac's presence, Esau returns from his successful hunting to prepare food for his father. When Isaac learns of the deception, the text says he "trembled violently". The Hebrew word for violently in this passage has the idea of fear and anxiety. I imagine he was upset for several reasons.



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Remember Isaac is blind, which in and of itself would make you feel vulnerable. On top of that, he has just given away something extremely valuable to an imposter. Isaac is a blind, old man who has been deceived greatly by one of his sons and has now been rendered incapable of blessing his first-born son.

Esau is so very distraught that he “cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry”. The intensity and desperation in Esau’s cry is evident. You can almost feel the depth of his sorrow when he says, “Bless me, even me also, O my father”. Perhaps it is so devastating because he was counting on that blessing to help him in the future since he had already lost his birthright. Perhaps it was simply because blessings from our parents are so pivotal in our own self-worth and maturation. Perhaps it was a combination of both. The point is that Esau felt a keen loss and begged Isaac to provide him with a blessing too. I cannot help but think of how desperate our children are to be blessed by us. They long for our approval, acceptance, and blessings. Esau, although already a man, is no exception.

Isaac opens his mouth again in prophecy. This time it is not such a blessing, but it does end with some hope. By saying “away from the fertility of the earth” and “away from the dew of heaven”, he is saying Esau will not have good land. He will not prosper in the crop department. The statement that he will live by the sword denotes that his people will be raiders, which is exactly what his descendants, the Edomites, become. The ray of hope in Isaac’s words comes at the end of verse 40 when he says, “But it shall come about when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck”. We see

this played out by the fact that the Edomites became servants to the Israelites during David’s reign (2 Sam. 8:13-14) and they revolted during Joram’s reign (2 Kings 8:20-22).

Needless to say, this was not the blessing Esau had anticipated. In retaliation, he plans to kill Jacob when Isaac dies. Interestingly, despite the fact that Rebekah was willing to take on Jacob’s curse in the event of failure, she now tells Jacob to flee until Esau “forgets what you did to him”. It does not appear that mother dearest has confessed or shared in the blame to help take some heat off of Jacob. In fact, we are not told about any conversations between Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, or Jacob. I cannot imagine words were never exchanged, but scripture is silent here. Rebekah ends up thwarting Esau’s assassination plans by sending Jacob away. Once again, the issue of who their children marry becomes the topic of conversation.

Is there a blessing your children long for you to give them, but you have been willingly or unwillingly withholding from them?

Describe a time when you or someone you know were as devastated as Esau in not attaining something?



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What do you think Isaac and Jacob's next conversation after this deception looked like? What would it look like in your family?

In what way do you think Rebekah would have been bereaved of both of her children in one day if Esau had killed Jacob?

Read Genesis 28:1-22

The first part of chapter 28 is the sendoff of Jacob to Paddan-aram so that he can go to Laban, Rebekah's brother, and find a wife. It almost seems like Esau was unaware that his parents were not pleased that he married Canaanite women. Here is yet another lesson we can learn from this story. Never assume your children or others will just somehow figure out what God wants from them. Teaching our children right and wrong is our job and one that we need to take very seriously. In fact, the Israelites were also told to not only teach their children, but their grandchildren (Deut. 4:9). So, if you've already raised your own, you still have a job to do. Don't forget those precious second chances. Whether Isaac and Rebekah failed to teach Esau, or he just didn't care to listen until now, we are not told. However, when he realizes that his spouse choices have displeased Isaac, he decides to try and remedy it by marrying an Ishmaelite, a descendant of Ishmael who was Abraham's first-born son by Hagar.

The rest of chapter 28 is devoted to Jacob's journey from Beersheba to Bethel on his way to Haran. As he comes to the place that he will eventually name Bethel, he lays down with a stone under his head and ends up having a dream about angels of God ascending and descending up and down a ladder. This ladder was most likely more like a staircase that extended into heaven. At any rate, it seems to be significant in reflecting a connection between God and man. God gives Jacob a glimpse into something very symbolic. John 1:51 helps us understand just how significant this ladder will become. Christ Jesus Himself is the symbolic ladder in which angels will ascend and descend upon. He is the bridge between God and man. He is the one who will provide that avenue for man to reach God. It never ceases to amaze me how incredibly rich God's word is with symbolism in the old testament to the true spiritual things that are manifested later in the new testament. There is an ever-present thread running through all of it – Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!!!

Of course, Jacob does not understand all of this (and neither do we I'm sure), but he knows that he has been visited by God and promised great things. God has once again promised Abraham's descendant what he vowed so many years previously. God never forgets His promises. When Jacob awakes, he is afraid because he believes he is in the house of God or at the gate of heaven. We are a lot like Jacob here. Jacob did not deserve what God was offering him freely just as we do not deserve what God has freely offered us. Yet God reaches for us, pursues us, and provides all that we cannot provide for ourselves. God's love and desire for us is always there loudly proclaimed in the background of each story.



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Jacob names the place Bethel, which means “house of God”, and proceeds to make a vow to serve God and give Him a tenth of everything if He will take care of him on his journey. This seems like a rather fleshly response on Jacob’s part to sort of make a deal with God. God has just told him that He is going to be with him, yet Jacob feels the need to say, “If God will be with me...”. It should be our natural response to give back to God all that we can for what He has so graciously given to us, but it’s not a bargain we strike with him. The truth is Jacob, nor you and I, have anything to give God that wasn’t already His. Even our service is simply what we ought to have done (Luke 17:10). His promises are free gifts that we do not deserve and cannot ever earn.

What comfort can you draw from God’s character based on his words to Jacob in Gen. 28:15?

Are you sometimes like Jacob when it comes to having faith in God’s promises? Do you think, “if God forgives me” or “if I make it to heaven”? Why or why not?

Why do you think God gave Jacob the dream about the ladder?

What are some practical ways you can help teach your children and/or grandchildren about God’s word?

I hope you have enjoyed this look into the life of Jacob and Esau. Above all, I hope you have learned more about our gracious God and have come to appreciate Him and His word even more deeply through the ancient text. I look forward to our next lesson where we will continue to follow Jacob and his life in Paddan-aram. Until then, God bless and happy studying!