

**THE ORIGINS OF IT ALL!: A STUDY OF GENESIS  
XXX.) GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE BLESSING  
GENESIS 26:34-28:9**

**Q: When God makes a future promise, whose responsibility is it to turn it into a present reality?**

**Q: As a servant of God, how important is the 'end' goal?**

**Q: How about the “means” used to achieve the 'end' goal?**

**Q: What role does/should family play in our Christian walk and fulfillment of God's will for our lives?**

**Q: In what ways might family help or hinder this?**

**A.) A BITTER BROTHER (26:34-35)**

- Esau's character continues to be revealed naturally through time; especially in the aftermath of his having forsaken his birthright.
- As always, bitterness – like a nasty weed - first takes root, then grows thick, then proceeds to spread out and infect wherever it can.
- For his own actions and weaknesses plus his inability to have everything his own way without sacrifice or consequences, Esau quickly becomes bitter at his brother Jacob. It doesn't take long, however, before that bitterness grows in his heart and extends toward his father, Isaac. From his heart, it inevitably reflects in foolish choices and behavior.
- In a clear and unmistakable affront to his father, family line, and the LORD Esau takes first one and then a second wife from the pagan Hittites.
- By the way, Esau was 40-yrs-old when he began this path – no 'youthful indiscretion.'

## B.) A FATHER'S **PREFERENCE** (27:1-5)

- In spite of the LORD's earlier pronouncements and in spite of Esau's consistent history of character flaws, Isaac is stubbornly determined to give his blessing (and, thereby pass on God's blessing) to Esau rather than Jacob. **Why?**
- For no other reason than that he personally liked and loved Esau more! **Why?**
- Because Esau was most like what Isaac wished he had been but wasn't, what he most identified as being the 'ideal man,' the one who he most understood and related to, the one who was physically strongest and imposing, the oldest, and the one who did and provided that which most personally and physically pleased him.
- What was most 'right' or wise, who was most truly qualified for the task ahead, or most importantly what was the LORD's will and instructions were not even given due thought or consideration once the human 'heart' was set.
- Fathers, be honest and careful before the LORD!

## C.) A MOTHER'S & SON'S **MANIPULATION** (27:6-17)

- While both mother and son are involved and complicit in these events, don't lose sight of three important points: (a) Rebekah initiated and devised the plans; (b) From the beginning, Rebekah bound Jacob to accept and follow her plan on the basis of familial obedience; and © as explained last lesson, Scripture never condemns Jacob, but does praise him for his overall character.
- With that in mind, let us further consider motivation. Having overheard (seemingly intentionally and craftily) Isaac's plan to quickly and secretly give the blessing to Esau, Rebekah recognizes a desperate situation.
- Most commentators interpret here a desperation borne of Rebekah's own protection for her favorite – Jacob. Thus, her deception and manipulation similar in motivation to Isaac's.
- A few defend Rebekah and apply to her the benefit of assuming that her desperation was based on concern for the thwarting of God's plan.
- It seems to me that while the latter can and should not be completely dismissed, the former clearly appears to be the stronger motivation.
- Either way, the key here is to understand that Rebekah determined for herself that the end of ensuring that Jacob receives the blessing due him (and that the LORD's plan is fulfilled) supersedes any concerns about what means may be necessary to assure this end.
- In setting this course, Rebekah makes two huge mistaken assumptions: (1) that the fulfillment of the LORD's Word is more dependent on corresponding human activity than God's independent sovereignty; (2) that as long as one is achieving God's ends, one's character, integrity and means may be expanded to personal discretion.
- **Here, then, is the irony: in pursuing the blessing, Jacob sets on a course that is deserving not of blessing but of cursing!**

## D.) THE **SUCCESS** OF MANIPULATION? (27:18-29)

- In the course of the deception, Jacob directly tells two lies. The first is about his identity (claiming to be Esau). The second is crediting God for something He didn't do (expediting the 'hunt'). This latter is, in fact, not only deception but blasphemy!

- Nevertheless, the deception seems to meet success. Jacob does indeed receive Isaac's blessing and it does indeed cover not only his material prosperity, but also the transfer of God's Promise.
- **What do you think about this? Does this mean that God's plan are ultimately at the whim of man's choices, even in deception and manipulation?**
- Notice, first, that nowhere in Scripture does God ever condone the means and circumstances by which by which the blessing was passed from Isaac to Jacob.
- Second, nowhere in Scripture is this any indication that the patriarch's blessing (here by Isaac or elsewhere by others) in any way has some 'magical' or 'guarantee' power of fulfillment nor place an obligation upon God.
- Third, *never* lose sight of the fact that throughout Scripture, God's supreme, absolute, and perfect sovereignty is emphasized and is such that *none* may thwart it by any means!!!
- I have no doubt that whether or not Isaac blessed Esau or Jacob and regardless of the means used to achieve that end, God's spoken Word about the Promise being transmitted through Jacob and his surpassing Esau would have been fulfilled.

### **E.) SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD'S DECLARATION (27:30-40)**

- Esau, however, like the others and many (perhaps if we're honest most of us today) assumed that man's words, actions and traditions are most determinative.
- Isaac, himself, upon learning what has happened is overwhelmed with rage. A most literal translation of the reference in v. 33 to his reaction is: ***“Isaac trembled most excessively with a great trembling.”***
- Esau, in turn, ***“cried with a great and exceedingly bitter cry.”***
- Surely, this dual reaction indicates that neither really believed that God's earlier pronouncement at the twins' birth was definitive. Rather, because it didn't make sense, didn't adhere to tradition ('the way it always was/is done'), and was contrary to their own personal preference and sense of what was 'right,' both Isaac & Esau presumed that either God made a mistake or they all must have heard/understood Him wrong and/or what He said then doesn't necessarily still apply now. In any case, they clearly believed all along that they could ultimately fulfill things their own way.
- They painfully discovered otherwise.
- Upon this realization, the big, strong, man's man – Esau – wept like a baby, screamed like a grieving woman, and begged for something to be done; for him to at least still receive a blessing – deserved or not, God's will or not.
- Notice, none of this changed God's mind! Grieving, begging, crying, being sorry and disappointed are not the same as repentance nor an assurance for getting one's way. **Hebrews 12:16-17**
- Ross writes: *“Esau's long life of immorality and indifference to spiritual things, in spite of being born to one of the most privileged heritages possible, had finally caught up with him, and it was too late even for regrets . . . Perhaps it is also often the case in that this carnal attitude has been unconsciously developed in the child by the overindulgent pride and adulation of his parents, as seems to have been true with Isaac and Esau”* (pg. 441).

## F.) THE **PRICE** OF MANIPULATION (27:41-45)

- In saying this, don't too narrowly define what is meant by 'manipulation.' Any action or inaction designed to influence another to achieve one's own desire can be manipulation!
- Rebekah (particularly) and Jacob (arguably) were successful in achieving/securing the ends they desired and considered rightfully Jacob's. However, they quickly learned that by doing it their way and in their time, they also incurred a heavy price.
- The first price was the increased family fracture. Esau developed in even stronger and more violent grudge toward Jacob, such that Rebekah feared Esau would kill his brother. Rebekah turned around and blamed Jacob for the mess (v. 45b). Isaac withdrew from everybody.
- The second price was individual loss. Esau lost everything he thought would be his and abandoned his family. Isaac lost face, heart and respect. Rebekah lost both of her sons (after sending Jacob away, there is no mention in Scripture of her ever seeing him away). Jacob lost his family, his security and was forced to flee his homeland.

## G.) GOD'S PROMISE **REMAINS** IN SPITE (27:46-28:5)

- For all of this, God's Word and Promise remains confirmed and continues to be fulfilled!
- Isaac, at least, despite his earlier succumbing to personal preference and emotion, seems to both understand and ultimately return to this.
- Knowing what he is doing and intentionally about how and to whom, Isaac summons Jacob and repeats God's blessing upon him in acceptance and obedience of God's will and in openness.
- Also, this time the blessing is given/repeated in words much more identical to those that God Himself used to first give the blessing to Isaac (Genesis 26:3-5).

### [2 Corinthians 4:1-2](#)

***Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not give up. Instead, we have renounced shameful secret things, not walking in deceit or distorting God's message, but in God's sight we commend ourselves to every person's conscience by an open display of the truth.***