

Introduction

1. There are two verses that frame our passage and serve as bookends:
 - a. The first bookend is 26:34-35 which is at the beginning of our passage (READ):
 - 1) Our introduction to Esau and Jacob back in 25:27 suggested Esau was the more rugged of the two, and perhaps the less peaceful and civilized (he preferred living in the open field rather than tents)
 - 2) We also saw how he was driven by impulse and his flesh, selling his birthright for a single bowl of stew
 - 3) Hebrews 12:16 refers to him as a foolish, immoral, and Godless man
 - 4) It's no surprise here then that he took not just one wife, but two, from among the pagans living in Canaan (both Hittite women)—in contrast to what Abraham demanded of Isaac when looking for a wife
 - 5) It should also come as no surprise that these two wives of Esau's weren't the most pleasant individuals (35): **"and they brought bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah"**
 - a) More lit. **"they were a bitter spirit to Isaac and Rebekah"**
 - b) The imperfect tense suggests ongoing, incomplete action: they were continually being a bitter spirit
 - b. The other book end occurs in 27:46 at the very end of the passage (READ):
 - 1) The words Rebekah used here describe a loathing or abhorring her life
 - 2) The daughters of Heth are a reference to Esau's two Hittite wives and they had made Rebekah's life unbearable
 - 3) The thought of Jacob possibly marrying Canaanite women brought her to the point of utter despair
2. I believe one of the points of these bookends is to remind us that Esau, even though he was the first born son, was unfit to receive the inheritance and blessing of Isaac and carry on the promises God made to Abraham and Isaac:
 - a. God had already announced prior to their birth, that Jacob would be the one through whom God would continue His redemptive plan
 - b. We saw it foreshadowed in their births when even though Jacob was born second, he arrived grasping the heel of Esau
 - c. We saw it when Esau despised his birthright and foolishly sold it to Jacob for a single bowl of stew
 - d. And, we'll see it in our passage today as Jacob acquires the blessing of Isaac
3. This is a difficult passage because all four of the individuals—Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau—all behave in ways that dishonor the LORD; yet, the LORD still used what happened to accomplish His purpose

A. Isaac ignored God's will by planning to give Esau the blessing (READ 27:1-4)

1. Back in Genesis 25:23 God made His will known to Rebekah regarding Esau and Jacob:
 - a. When we studied this, I suggested that this was more than God simply announcing what would happen, but rather what His will was and what He determined through His sovereignty
 - b. God's will was that Jacob rather than Esau would inherit the birthright and blessing of Isaac even though he was the younger brother
 - 1) The birthright was essentially the right to become the head of the household and granted authority over managing the family estate
 - 2) The blessing came later, often shortly before the death of the father, and was the formal pronouncement of the birthright; it also included giving to the oldest son twice the inheritance of the other children
 - 3) In the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the birthright and blessing also involved receiving the promises God made to Abraham
2. This begs the question, Why did Isaac seek to give the blessing to Esau?
 - a. One reason may simply have been because it was cultural tradition: the oldest received the birthright and blessing
 - b. However, 25:28 told us that Isaac favored Esau because Esau was a hunter and Isaac loved the taste of wild game, and we even see that here in this passage (RE-READ 3-4)
 - c. Whether it was simply because he was following tradition, or that his favoritism of Esau clouded his judgment, either way Isaac's plan to give the blessing to Esau was in direct violation of God's declared will
3. Takeaway: Do we ever set aside God's will for our own?
 - a. Some do this because they're ignorant of God's will because their understanding of His Word is limited and they're spiritually immature
 - b. Others do this because they live their lives simply doing what's acceptable to culture or society
 - c. Still others do it because what they want (their will) doesn't agree with what God wants (His will), and they do what they want anyway

B. Rebekah schemed to ensure the blessing for Jacob (READ 27:5-17)

1. This passage is all Rebekah: she overheard Isaac's conversation with Esau, she came up with the plan, and she even orders Jacob to go along with it
2. Much like Isaac, we're not really sure of her motives either:
 - a. Did she think God needed help in accomplishing what He told her?
 - b. Or, was it simply because she favored Jacob as it says in Genesis 25:28: "**Isaac loved Esau...but Rebekah loved Jacob**"?

3. Either way, she went to great lengths to concoct a deceptive scheme to ensure Jacob would receive the blessing:
 - a. She had Jacob retrieve two goats which she apparently doctored up and prepared to taste like the wild game Isaac had requested from Esau (RE-READ 9)
 - b. She then dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes so he would smell like Esau
 - c. She covered Jacob's hands and neck with the skin from the goats so he would feel like Esau
 - d. When Jacob expressed hesitancy and concern over being discovered, she orders him to do what she says (13): **"Your curse be on me, my son; only listen to my voice, and go, get them for me."**
4. Takeaway: do we ever take matters into our own hands instead of waiting on the LORD and trusting Him?
 - a. Rebekah knew that God had promised the birthright and blessing to Jacob, but rather than trusting Him to deliver on that promise, she came up with her own scheme to secure it for Jacob
 - b. The question that kept coming to mind as I studied through this passage was, Why didn't Rebekah just confront Isaac and remind him of God's promise, or why didn't she petition the LORD like she did when she was suffering under a difficult pregnancy?

<p>C. Jacob deceived his father to receive the blessing (READ 27:18-29)</p>

1. Jacob followed Rebekah's plan to a "T" and it worked:
 - a. Isaac thought Jacob was Esau and as a result gave him the family blessing
 - b. The blessing is interesting because it included elements of what might be expected of a normal familial blessing and elements from God's promises to Abraham:
 - 1) Familial: the benediction of God's blessings for abundance in v. 28 (RE-READ) and authority over the family in v. 29b (RE-READ)
 - 2) Abraham: nations bowing down to Jacob, and the cursing and blessing of people who cursed or blessed Jacob in v. 29a and 29c (RE-READ)
2. Even though Jacob received the blessing, the bulk of the passage focuses on the three-fold nature of Jacob's sin and manipulation to receive the blessing:
 - a. He DECEIVED Isaac presenting food like Esau, dressing like Esau, smelling like Esau, and even making himself feel like Esau
 - b. He LIED to Isaac by twice declaring himself to be Esau (RE-READ 18-19 & 24)
 - c. Finally, and more seriously, He BLASPHEMED God by implicating Him in the plot to deceive Isaac (RE-READ 20)
3. Takeaway: do we ever think the ends justify the means, especially if it accomplishes some righteous result or we still receive God's blessing?

- a. Think about this in the current political climate where some Christians believe we have to “win” by any means necessary, even using questionable or outright sinful tactics
- b. We often judge whether our actions are right or wrong based on the result of those actions, not the actions themselves
- c. The fact is, God sometimes blesses us in spite of our sin, and sometimes He even uses our sin to accomplish His purpose, but we can’t use such things to justify sin

D. Esau sought to kill his brother after losing the blessing (READ 27:30-45)
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1. When Isaac discovered what had happened, the text says he “**trembled exceedingly violently**” (33):
 - a. The description of his anger couldn’t be more emphatic: lit. “**and Isaac trembled with a great trembling to excess**”
 - b. In one respect, he had every right to be angry because he had been deceived/tricked by his own son (RE-READ 35)
 - c. However, in another respect, he actually brought this on himself by promising the blessing to Esau when God made it clear that the blessing was to go to Jacob
2. Esau’s reaction was no surprise:
 - a. He “**cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry**” when he learned Jacob received the blessing, and begged Isaac to bless him as well (34)
 - b. We also see his bitterness in the word play he used to describe Jacob (36): “**Is he not rightly named Jacob [which comes from the word heel], for he has supplanted me [“attach at the heal” meaning to trip up] these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, not he has taken away my blessing**”
 - c. Adding to the bitterness was now the fact that instead of serving as head of the family, Jacob would now serve in that role and Esau would be his servant (37)
 - d. Finally, even after all the begging and pleading, he received no blessing but instead something more akin to a curse (RE-READ 39-40)
 - e. All of this led to Esau bearing a grudge against Jacob and seeking to kill him (RE-READ 41)
3. Takeaway: how do we respond when wronged or we don’t get what we want or think we deserve?
 - a. Isaac didn’t get what he wanted (to bless Esau) and was so angry his body trembled
 - b. Esau didn’t get what he wanted (his father’s blessing) and was so angry that he sought to kill his brother
 - c. Proverbs 29:22 says, “An angry man stirs up strife, and a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.”
 - d. Proverbs 26:21 says, “Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife”
 - e. That’s exactly what we see here with Esau’s anger—it led to division and strife (READ 27:42-45)

Conclusion: Two Final Over-Arching Takeaways
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1. In spite of the dishonoring and sinful behavior of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau, God still accomplished His purpose:
 - a. He accomplished it in spite of Isaac trying to bless Esau instead of Jacob
 - b. He accomplished it in spite of Rebekah and Isaac thinking they needed to resort to
 - c. And, He accomplished it in spite of Esau's plan to kill Jacob
 - d. These events remind us that God is sovereign and always accomplishes His purpose and will
2. When we ignore God's will or commands like Isaac did, or use deceitful or sinful means to try to secure God's blessing or purpose like Rebekah and Jacob did, there are often consequences (e.g. it caused strife and division in their family)