



## Genesis 27-28

"And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son; and he said unto him, Behold, here am I, And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death; Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die." (Gen.27:1-4).

Admittedly, from Isaac, the Spirit is not involved in this at all; it is his soul. His flesh wants some delicious food that his soul might bless Esau. At this point, Isaac was one hundred and thirty-seven years old, he was blind and because his older brother Ishmael had died at that age; he, perhaps, thought that he was dying. He didn't, he lived for another forty-three years. He was one hundred and eighty when he died, but figuring that he was dying he called Esau in that he might bestow upon him a blessing. Now, in this, Isaac is deliberately seeking to circumvent the declarations of God.

If you recall, the blessing that he gives to Jacob, disguised as Esau, is that his brother will serve him. In that, he is trying to cross what God had declared before the children were born. Remember when Rebekah was having difficulty with her pregnancy and she asked God what was going on. God answered that there were two nations in her womb and that the older would serve the younger. That was God's sovereign declaration before they were even born. Isaac favors Esau and tried to move out of the plan of God. Isaac is acting after the flesh and not innocent in this act at all.

"And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it, And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee." (Gen.27:5-8). This is a strange way to talk to your son who is forty years old.

"Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth; And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man; My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing." (Gen.27:9-12).

"And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son. (Gen.27:13-15).

There is some speculation, as to the choice clothes, that perhaps they were the clothes of honor often given to the son who was to inherit the position in the family. Remember the brothers of Joseph became extremely jealous when his father gave to him the coat of many colors. A coat of honor indicating Jacob's intention to give to Joseph the place of headship in the family, after his death. It is thought that Rebekah kept these special robes in her tent. Esau, no doubt, was living elsewhere with his two wives at the time.

"And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck; And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. And he came unto his father, and said, My father; and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me; arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me." (Gen.27:16-20).

No doubt Isaac was beginning to become a little suspicious at this point. Jacob is not honorable in

this. He is deceiving and lying to his father. Isaac is not honorable because he is trying to give the blessing to Esau, when God planned it for Jacob. Esau had already sold his birthright and Isaac knew that. Rebekah is not totally honorable as she set up the whole deception.

Here, again, we have an interesting story in which there are people who believe firmly in the purposes that God has declared, have faith in God and his purposes; but, make the mistake of believing that God can not accomplish his purposes apart from the help of man.

This is a condition that we often find ourselves in. We are convinced in the purposes of God and believe that God will do what He has said He is going to do; but, sometimes we feel God can't do it without our help. That's the same thing that Abraham and Sarah were involved in when Sarah said, "Take my handmaid, Hagar, and raise up a son by her. Yes, God wants to give you an heir Abraham, I know He does. So, take Hagar and let's help God out." This is the exact situation where Rebekah makes the suggestion that they help God out. He wants you, Jacob, to have the blessing. It is interesting that, here again, it is the woman who tries to help God out.

This deception is for no other reason than to see that the purposes of God get fulfilled. You don't have to worry about the purposes of God; they're going to stand. What God has determined is going to be.

You can not stop the purposes of God from being fulfilled. You may fail, but God will raise up someone else. God is going to get his work accomplished and He doesn't need our help. This can be very disappointing when you're wanting to help God out, but we only create problems in our endeavor to help God. Unfortunately, in this story, they felt they had to lie and deceive to help God. They are following that proverb which is not scriptural, "God helps those, who help themselves." Here is a classic example of them trying to help themselves, to help God fulfil His plan and fulfil His purpose. I don't know how God would have done it, but I'm certain He would. God had declared it, His purpose was that the blessing would be upon Jacob and that he should be the descendant from which the line of Christ should fall.

So, Jacob went in to Isaac. The end does not justify the means. That is a heresy which has been embraced many times by the church. Paul came down on that philosophy. "Let us do evil that good may come." "God forbid," Paul says. We are never justified in doing wrong to bring about that which is good.

"And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am." (Gen.27:21-24).

Isaac is still suspicious and wants Jacob to come near so he can feel him. Esau was a very hairy man and Jacob was smooth skinned, but, Rebekah had put the goat's hair on Jacob and so Isaac didn't know it was Jacob.

"And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat; and he brought him wine, and he drank, And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son, And he came near, and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed." (Gen.27:25-27).

Jacob was wearing his brother's robe and smelled of the field and Isaac's suspicions were put to rest.

"Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine; Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." (Gen.27:28-29).

In this blessing, Isaac is trying to disqualify what God had declared to be his purpose. Isaac is really at fault here and it is a direct disobedience to what God had declared in his endeavor to make Jacob

subservient to Esau.

"And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting." (Gen.27:30). Boy! that was a close call. Jacob had just left and Esau came in.

"And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed." (Gen.27:31-33).

Now, instead of recanting the blessing, Isaac realizes that God is involved in this and he affirms that the blessing shall be given to Jacob. He tried to twist it and he was foiled and he realizes now that God's purposes shall stand.

"And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father." (Gen.27:34).

Remember that Esau was the hardy rugged man of the field and that Jacob was a plain man which is translated as being a good man. Now, here is Esau, this rugged man of the field, wailing and crying out for the blessing.

"And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times..." (Gen.27:35a).

The word Jacob or "heelcatcher" came to be translated, in time, as "supplanter." The idea of catching a person by the heel, tripping him and then passing him up. Earlier in the story when Esau had come in from the field faint with hunger and had asked Jacob for the "red" pottage that he was cooking; he sold his birthright to Jacob for some stew.

The scriptures say that Esau hated his birthright, but, he did care about the blessing. A typical man after the flesh, who wants just the blessings of life. Hebrews says, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb.12:16-17). This passage has been mistranslated by many thinking that Esau sought repentance but didn't find it; when in truth, Esau never repented. What he sought with tears was the blessing but he didn't repent and that's why he wasn't blessed.

"...He took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?" (Gen.27:36b-37).

Isaac had done for Jacob what he had intended to do for Esau, which was contrary to what God had declared.

"And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me, also, O my father, And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above; And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." (Gen.27:38-40).

Esau later moved to Edom and became the father of the Edomites, who during the period of the history of Israel were subservient to Israel. The last Edomite, that we know of in history, was Herod the Great. He was the king over Israel, appointed by the Roman Government, at the time of Jesus Christ. Herod was the last known descendant of Esau.

"And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him; and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob." (Gen.27:41). He figured his father would soon die, but actually Isaac lived another forty-three years.

"And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah; and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran: And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away." (Gen.27:42-44). Rebekah thought that Esau in a few days, would no longer be angry and Jacob could come home again.

"Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him; then I will send, and fetch thee from thence; why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" (Gen.27:45-46).

Rebekah is complaining to Isaac that she doesn't want Jacob to marry any of the daughters of the land like Esau did.

This deception cost Rebekah her relationship with her son, Jacob. He had to flee from the wrath of Esau. He moved to the area of Haran, which was about five hundred miles away and was there for twenty years before he returned. By the time he returned, Rebekah was already dead. As a result of setting up this deception, Rebekah lost the son she loved because she never saw him again.

"And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham." (Gen.28:1-4).

There is that recognition, by Isaac, that the Abrahamic blessing and covenant is to pass on to Jacob. Isaac possibly realized that this might be the last time that he would have any kind of relationship with his son, Jacob; so, he places upon him this great blessing that had been passed on to him by Abraham.

"And Isaac sent away Jacob; and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother." (Gen.28:5).

"When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife." (Gen.28:6-9).

Esau knowing that his father was not pleased with his wives, went to Ishmael, his uncle, and married his daughter Mahalath. He thought this would please his father and mother.

"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set..." (Gen.28:10-11a).

Jacob was really making great time. The distance between Beer-sheba and Bethel was probably forty miles. Jacob was getting away from Beer-sheba as fast as he could, not knowing if Esau was chasing him and might catch him on the way. It's already dark as the sun had gone down.

"...And he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." (Gen.11b). Jacob dreamed. Someone said that a long journey, a guilty conscience and an uncomfortable bed are things that dreams are made of. He had a long journey, his feet were sore and aching

and the whole scene of Esau threatening to kill him is heavy on his mind and so he lies down in weariness and dreams.

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." (Gen.28:12-13).

In this area of Bethel is where Lot separated from Abraham. After this, God told Abraham to look to the North, South, East and West and all of the land that you can see; I have given to you and your descendents. So, now again, here at Bethel; God met Jacob and gave him the promise that he had given Abraham and Isaac concerning the land.

"And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen.28:14). All the earth will be blessed through the Messiah, who is to come from Jacob. Abraham was promised that through his seed all the earth would be blessed. This is "seed" singular as of one and not of many, for it is a reference to the Messiah. Now the promise is repeated to Jacob and will later be repeated to David.

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." (Gen.28:15).

No doubt Jacob had a lot of misgivings as he was running away. He might have been thinking that there were a lot of perils and uncertainties in the future. It was a long way to Haran and a lot of things could happen between Bethel and there, and he might never arrive in Padan-aram. Maybe he would never come this way again. So, God speaks to him and tells him that He will be with him and bring him back to the land.

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not." (Gen.28:16).

The night before Jacob had no consciousness of God. His heart was filled with fear and uncertainty about the future. He was tired and lonely and had no thought of God until after this dream and he realized that God was in this place. Many times we find ourselves in a place of anxiety, pressure, trouble and not knowing what the future holds for us. We know what is behind us but not what is in front of us. We can't go back, but we're afraid to go on. In that point of anxiety and concern we're not aware of God's presence. We're not aware of the Plan of God in our life. We can't see His hand on us in these circumstances. It seems that we're desolate and that God has left us. Not so! Just as the LORD revealed himself to Jacob, that He was in that place; surely, the LORD is with us. He has said that He would never leave us or forsake us.

The ladder that Jacob saw, reaching up from earth to heaven, with the angels ascending and descending is referred to in the first chapter of John.

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." (John 1:45-51).

Taking the figure of Jacob's dream, the ladder that reached to heaven where God met man, Jesus is

declaring that he was the ladder that brings man to God and bridges the gulf. Later Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the father, but by me." (John 14:6).

"And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen.28:17).

Bethel is, in reality, a very rocky, barren place and there is nothing geographically to suggest the presence of God; but, when you meet God, it is always a special place in your life and it is beautiful.

"And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. And he called the name of that place Beth-el..." (Gen.28:18-19a). "Beth" is the word for house and "el" is the word for God. Thus the house of God.

"...But the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God; And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." (Gen.28:19b-22).

Jacob is a wheeler-dealer and you will find that out in the following chapters. He is making a deal with God now. If God will feed and cloth him and bring him back to the land then he will accept Jehovah as his God and give Him a tenth of all that he possesses.

As I read the story of Jacob and Esau and I put it in the context of the New Testament, where Paul makes mention of the sovereignty of God in "election" and God declares that He has loved Jacob and hated Esau; I have a problem with that. I can understand a little why God didn't care for Esau as he was a man after the flesh, he wasn't concerned with God and hated his birthright. I have a problem with the part where God says that he loved Jacob.

It is the grace and sovereignty of God. Jacob was not the most lovable of men, but God loved him. The beauty of it is that God loves you and wants you to experience the most awesome of His presence in your life. It is interesting that it is often in the place of great trial that we come to know the presence of God. It is when we are under great strain and in that place of uncertainty that God will reveal Himself to us.