

Timeline of Truth – Jacob Secures the Blessing Promised to Him by God (Gen 27:1-40)

<p><i>[See beginning note: Morris, 427-428]</i></p> <p>¹ Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." ² Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. ³ "Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. ⁴ "And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring <i>it</i> to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."</p>	<p>1. Isaac Prompts Esau to <u>Prepare</u> to Be Blessed</p> <p>a. Isaac Calls for Esau b. Isaac Shares His Concern of Impending Death (age vs death...) c. Isaac Prompts Esau to Hunt, Cook, & Bring Him a Meal d. Isaac Promises to Bless Him Afterward ("the" blessing)</p> <p><i>But in spite of all this—in spite of God's instruction concerning Jacob before he was born, in spite of the plainly obvious superiority of Jacob's character and spiritual discernment and convictions over those of Esau, in spite of Jacob's further legalization of his claim to the patriarchal blessing through his purchase of the birthright from Esau, confirmed by Esau's solemn oath, in spite of Esau's obvious indifference to his spiritual heritage and to the will of God—in spite of all this, Isaac nevertheless determined that he was going to give the blessing to Esau. (Morris, Genesis Record, p. 429)</i></p>
<p>⁵ Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring <i>it</i>. ⁶ So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, ⁷ 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' ⁸ "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. ⁹ "Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. ¹⁰ "Then you shall take <i>it</i> to your father, that he may eat <i>it</i>, and that he may bless you before his death."</p> <p><i>Gen 25:21-23</i> ²¹ Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. ²² But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If [all is] well, why [am I like] this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. ²³ And the LORD said to her: "Two nations [are] in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; [One] people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."</p>	<p>2. Rebekah Prompts Jacob to <u>Secure</u> the Blessing</p> <p><i>It is significant that Isaac was not doing this with Rebekah's knowledge. She only happened to overhear the conversation. This secretive nature of Isaac's plans can only be explained on the assumption that he was ashamed of what he was doing, knowing that Rebekah would not approve but hoping that he would get it accomplished before she could interfere.</i></p> <p><i>Rebekah, as soon as she learned of Isaac's plans, acted immediately to prevent his carrying them out. Though she must have been very hesitant, as a good and faithful wife, to do anything but follow her husband's wishes, she evidently felt that, in this case, God's will must override her husband's will. She may have failed to understand, and perhaps had inadequate faith, to realize that God's will would be accomplished whether or not men cooperated in its accomplishment. Isaac's blessing of Esau could not possibly overrule what God had long ago decreed, but Rebekah seems to have been afraid that it might, and so she resolved to see that Jacob would receive what was rightfully his regardless of any consequence. (Morris, Genesis Record, pp. 430-431)</i></p>
<p>¹¹ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. ¹² "Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." ¹³ But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get <i>them</i> for me."</p>	<p>3. Jacob Is Worried About Being <u>Discovered</u></p> <p><i>Jacob's fear that his father would think him a "deceiver" needs a little clarification. The word actually means "mocker," and seems to suggest that discovery of the plan by his father would make him seem to be mocking his father's blindness. This was Jacob's concern, rather than that his father would think him a liar. (Morris, Genesis Record, p. 433)</i></p>
<p>¹⁴ And he went and got <i>them</i> and brought <i>them</i> to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved.</p>	<p>4. Rebekah Prepares the <u>Meal</u></p>
<p>¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶ And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷ Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.</p>	<p>5. Rebekah Prepares <u>Jacob</u></p>
<p><i>Rebekah appears to have had a most naive faith in the magical power of the words themselves in order to believe that God's true blessing was dependent to this degree on their actually being pronounced by Isaac.</i></p> <p><i>There is, however, one other possible explanation of her adoption of such a strategy, an explanation which should at least be considered. Perhaps she intended to use this means to call Isaac's attention to his presumptuous determination to thwart God's will. He had not heeded her previous pleadings on Jacob's (and God's) behalf. Perhaps he could be brought to see the enormity of his error if he were forced to bless Jacob in spite of himself. Rebekah knew she was taking a terrible risk of permanently alienating both Isaac and Esau by this scheme, since it would only be a matter of a few hours at most before it would be discovered, and she knew that Jacob also would realize this. Isaac knew that Rebekah loved him, and he loved her. If he could be made to realize that God's will was so important that Rebekah (and Jacob, as well) was willing to sacrifice even his own love for it, then perhaps the shock would be the means of bringing him back to his senses and get him to realize his error. Perhaps also it would spare Isaac the almost certain wrathful retribution of God if he were to carry out his own plan.</i></p> <p><i>Since all this turned out to be the actual result of Rebekah's strategy, as we will see, can we not at least give Rebekah (as well as Jacob) the benefit of the doubt, and assume that this was really her purpose? Once again, we should remember that God did not rebuke either Rebekah or Jacob for this plan, but instead seemed to honor it, at least in its results. (Morris, Genesis Record, pp. 431-432)</i></p>	

<p>¹⁸ So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who <i>are</i> you, my son?"</p> <p>¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I <i>am</i> Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."</p> <p>²⁰ But Isaac <u>said</u> to his son, "How <i>is it</i> that you have found <i>it</i> so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought <i>it</i> to me."</p> <p>²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you <i>are</i> really my son Esau or not." ²² So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he <u>felt him</u> and said, "The voice <i>is</i> Jacob's voice, but the hands <i>are</i> the hands of Esau."</p> <p>²³ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.</p> <p>²⁴ Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I <i>am</i>."</p> <p>²⁵ He said, "Bring <i>it</i> near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought <i>it</i> near to him, and <u>he ate</u>; and he brought him wine, and he drank.</p> <p>²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." ²⁷ And he came near and kissed him; and <u>he smelled</u> the smell of his clothing,</p>	<p>6. Jacob <u>Poses</u> as Esau Before Isaac</p>
<p>and <u>blessed him</u> and said: "Surely, the smell of my son <i>is</i> like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed. ²⁸ Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. ²⁹ Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed <i>be</i> everyone who curses you, And blessed <i>be</i> those who bless you!"</p>	<p>7. Isaac <u>Blesses</u> Jacob</p>
<p>³⁰ Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. ³¹ He also had made savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me." ³² And his father Isaac said to him, "Who <i>are</i> you?" So he said, "I <i>am</i> your son, your firstborn, Esau."</p>	<p>8. Esau <u>Returns</u> with Isaac's Meal</p>
<p>³³ Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where <i>is</i> the one who hunted game and brought <i>it</i> to me? I ate all <i>of it</i> before you came, and I have blessed him-- <i>and</i> indeed he shall be blessed."</p> <p>³⁴ When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me-- me also, O my father!"</p> <p>³⁵ But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."</p> <p>³⁶ And <i>Esau</i> said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"</p> <p>³⁷ Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"</p>	<p>9. Isaac <u>Tells</u> Esau What Has Happened</p> <p><i>As the impact of these thoughts came over him, "Isaac trembled very exceedingly." Hebrew scholars tell us the original language is extremely graphic, something like "Isaac trembled most excessively with a great trembling." Emotions of all sorts overwhelmed him. Anger with Jacob, concern over Esau, grief over Rebekah's act, resentment at having his own plans thwarted—all these contributed to his trembling. But far more than any of these, he quickly came to see that God Himself had spoken to him in judgment, and that he had incurred great peril to himself in so ignoring the will of God. He had betrayed the trust of his father Abraham and had practically destroyed his own home, all because of a carnal appetite and adulation of his son's physical exploits. These thoughts (and who knows what others) flooded upon him. Indeed, it was enough to make a man exceedingly quake and shake. (Morris, Genesis Record, pp. 439)</i></p>
<p>³⁸ And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me-- me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. ³⁹ Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, And of the dew of heaven from above. ⁴⁰ By your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck." [see last note, Morris, pp. 440-441]</p>	<p>10. Isaac <u>Blesses</u> Esau as He Is Able</p> <p><i>Heb 12:14-17¹⁴ Pursue peace with all [people], and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there [be] any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷ For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.</i></p>

How Could God Love Jacob?

One of the most intriguing questions associated with Genesis and with the establishment of God's chosen people, the children of Israel, is how God could bless and use such a person as Jacob for the accomplishment of His divine purposes for mankind. Jacob seems so obviously to be a sly schemer, a liar and deceiver, a "supplanter," a man intent only on acquiring money by whatever means he can devise. He is shrewd, crafty, covetous, with no ethical scruples except those dictated by his own self-interest. Even granting His covenant obligations to Abraham and Isaac, why would God choose Jacob instead of Esau? Esau seems a much more admirable character—a strong, virile, outdoor man, surely much more suited to be the founding father and head of a new nation than a man like Jacob.

Sad to say, it is just such caricatures of Jacob and Esau, and the Jews in general, as sketched in the above paragraph, that have caused tremendous waves of anti-Semitism and persecution to be visited against the Jews down through the centuries. Somehow even Christians have been caught up in the fever of anti-Semitic feeling on many occasions for reasons like this. Many pastors and Bible teachers who outwardly would deny strongly that they are anti-Jewish, nevertheless seem to let their hidden feelings on the subject come out when dealing with Jacob.

It should not be thought that, when we defend Jacob, we thereby are condoning lying and deception. However, one paramount consideration must be kept in mind in trying to understand and apply these passages in the Book of Genesis. There is never a single instance *in the Bible* of criticism of Jacob (except on the lips of Esau and Laban, both of whom are unworthy witnesses). Every time God spoke to Jacob, it was in a message of blessing and promise, never one of rebuke or chastisement. If we would be faithful Bible expositors, therefore, we must be guided by what God has actually said, not what we think He should have said. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 55:8).

We suggest, therefore, that such an attitude as commonly expressed by Bible expositors relative to Jacob is entirely out of line. When, for example, Dr. Scofield, in his reference Bible, heads certain passages in Genesis by titles such as "The stolen blessing" and "Jacob reaps the harvest of his evil years," he is pronouncing moral judgments of his own which are not at all founded on the actual Biblical statements concerning Jacob.

God's judgment concerning Jacob is given in Genesis 32:28: "As a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob and I hated Esau" (Malachi 1:2, 3).

We have already discussed at some length, in chapter 15, God's decision to establish the Messianic line and promises through Jacob, rather than Esau, even before the two boys were born. This decision was clearly conveyed to Rebekah and Isaac; but the latter nevertheless favored Esau, resolving to give him both the birthright benefits and the patriarchal responsibilities and blessings associated with God's promise to Abraham. As the boys grew, their characters soon proved that God's decision had been eminently wise. "Jacob was a plain [literally 'perfect,' or 'complete'] man" (Genesis 25:27). Esau, on the other hand, "despised his birthright" (Genesis 25:34). Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record: A scientific and devotional commentary on the book of beginnings* (427–428).

Isaac did finally, no doubt as God led him, make a prophecy concerning Esau. Esau (meaning his descendants) would, in contrast to Jacob, dwell in a region away from the fertile and well-watered places of the earth. The King James translation is apparently not quite correct at this point: the words "away from" should be inserted ("thy dwelling shall be away from the fatness of the earth"). This was fulfilled by the very nature of the rugged region that came to be known as the land of Edom. The Edomites would generally live in violence and in subjection to Israel. However, whenever he would "shake himself" (not "have dominion," as in the King James Version), he would be able to loosen the yoke. The Edomites remained essentially independent, however, until David's time. They were subjugated permanently after that, in spite of frequent rebellions and temporary partial freedom. Finally, Edom disappeared completely as a nation. 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.

The unhappy story of Esau has been repeated time without number throughout Christian history. How often do we hear of a young man (or young woman), brought up in a Christian home and in a Bible-teaching church, who rebels against the instruction and discipline there received in order to participate in the pleasures of worldly acquaintances, selling his birthright, as it were, for a mess of pottage! Perhaps it is also often the case 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. The Christian parent is commanded to "bring them up in the nurture [that is, 'discipline'] and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Henry Morris, *The Genesis Record: A scientific and devotional commentary on the book of beginnings* (440–441).

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²⁶ Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son."

²⁷ And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son *is* like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed.

²⁸ Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine.

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⁴⁰ By your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck." (Gen 27:1-40 NKJ)