

Genesis 27: 34-46 and 28: 1-9

The moment Esau cried "**Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison,**" Isaac was shaken out of his spiritual lethargy.

The lights came on, and he suddenly realized that God had overruled him.

To be sure, God had never sanctioned Rebekah's little scheme, but the bottom line was, God's blessing had been bestowed upon God's man.

You might say it was a case of "**the wrath of man** (or in this instance the wrath of woman) **shall praise thee.**"

Yes, Isaac suddenly realized that God's perfect will had prevailed, and that

nothing could change it--"yea, and he shall be blessed."

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But Esau's evaluation of these circumstances was quite different.

He saw nothing but catastrophe, a devastation that had been brought about by his scheming brother.

V 34-36 "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.

35: And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36: And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: 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?"

Although Isaac had never admitted it, somewhere in the back of his mind he had always known that **"the elder shall serve the younger."**

But, of course, he had never told Esau what his mother had said many years ago. And certainly this was not the time to discuss the matter with his angry son. So even though he had assured Esau that the blessing was definitely gone, and even though he knew that Jacob was the rightful heir, he passed the buck.

"Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing."

It was a double standard.

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Of course Esau was angry. In fact, he was downright furious!

He had cared so little about his birthright that he had sold it for a bowl pottage, but the *blessing* was quite a different matter.

Yes, the blessing involved a lot of power and a lot of money, and he wanted it.

V 36 **"And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: 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?"**

However, neither his anger, nor eventually his tears, could retrieve a blessing that had never been his in the first place.

And the few seconds head start that had made him the firstborn meant nothing to God. I think by now, even Esau realized that the main blessing was gone, and he was now pleading for a substitute. **"Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?"**

Well, we all know what kind of a blessing that would be.

It could only be the leftovers.

In fact, it was to be the blessing that Isaac had intended to give to Jacob.

V 37-38 **"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?
38: 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."

When Esau had thrown away his birthright, which probably included the responsibility of being the priest for the household and the building of altars for the worship of God, it had been no big deal.

After all, Esau never had much time for spiritual things anyway.

But the loss of the blessing was a complete disaster.

To be lord of his brethren and to have abundant supplies of corn and wine was exactly what he wanted.

Yes, it was simply more than he could bear.

"And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept."

Probably this was the first time that this big tough guy had ever wept, but his tears were of no avail.

Hebrews 12:17 says, "**---when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.**"

God is merciful and God is long-suffering, but the day finally comes when those who have spurned His love time and again will find it is now too late.

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On Saturday, April 18, 1874, Great Britain honoured one of her heroes of faith.

David Livingstone was on his way to interment in Westminster Abbey.

Somewhere, lost in the vast assembly, stood a tattered, ill-kempt beggar.

Nobody spared him a second thought.

But, as the entourage went by, that wasted man, standing there in the crowd that lined the funeral route, was heard to say:

"We were lads together, Davie and I. We went to school together. We sat together, dour Davie and me, in the schoolhouse in Shuttle Row. But Davie chose Christ and I dinna. Now all the world honours him, and who cares a halfpence for me?"

He had sold his birthright for a mess of the world's pottage, and now it was too late to get it back.

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So Esau wrung his hands in vain. **"He cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me,**

even me also, O my father." But it was just too late.

He had despised his birthright, and now he was pleading for a second-rate blessing.

And that will always be the case.

Those who have no time for God must always take second-best, or often nothing at all.

V 39-40 **"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;
40: 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."**

Let's take a few minutes to look at this second-rate blessing.

At first glance, it would seem that Esau would be enjoying as much prosperity as his brother---"**thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.**"

However, I am told that this translation as it appears in the King James Version is not quite accurate.

Actually, it should read, "**thy dwelling shall be** (away from) **the fatness of the earth.**"

And this was literally fulfilled.

Esau's descendants, the Edomites, never occupied a lush area, but lived in a very rugged region of the country.

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Yes, Esau's blessing was a far cry from Jacob's.

For one thing, all political superiority was gone, while Jacob's blessing provided for that very thing.

"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."

Also, **"the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine"** was conspicuously missing in Esau's blessing.

These were the two things that Esau most wanted, but these were the very things that were missing.

And God's divine protection was also missing, and, of course, the great spiritual blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Jacob's descendants would be God's chosen people.

They would be the nation from whom God's Son would come.

And some day, Jacob's descendants will share in Christ's reign over the whole earth.

God promised David: **"His seed shall endure forever, and his throne as the sun before me.**

37: It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven. Selah."

Yes, in spite of Satan's greatest efforts, Israel will endure throughout all generations, while in time, the Edomites disappeared completely as a nation.

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Esau cried bitterly when he lost the blessing, but in his grief, there was no remorse for his careless, godless life.

Instead of reflecting upon his own shortcomings, he consoled himself with thoughts of revenge.

V 41 **"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."**

Isaac had learned his lesson, and had accepted the outcome as God's will, but in Esau's thoughts, there was no regard for God at all.

But in spite of all that he could do, or at least *plan* to do, there was no way to change the facts.

Even before his birth, God had said that

"the elder shall serve the younger."

And now it was written in stone--"**be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee.**"

For a rough and ready guy like Esau, the very idea of Jacob ruling over him was unthinkable.

He would not allow that to happen! *First, we'll bury father, and then I'll bury you, Jacob!*

His plan satisfied his own desire for revenge, and at the same time, it might even reverse God's plans.

Yes, it would be pretty hard for a dead man to have dominion over anyone.

So his mind was made up.

After his father's death, and of course after a respectable time of mourning, he would kill that deceitful brother of his, and end up being his father's sole surviving heir.

V 41 says Esau said this **"in his heart,"** but apparently he couldn't keep his clever plan to himself.

No, he just couldn't help boasting: **"And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah."**

V 42-45 **"---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.**

43: Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my

brother to Haran;

44: And tarry with him a few days,
until thy brother's fury turn away;

45: 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?"

That was the plan, but to make it work, she
must get her husband's permission.

And she couldn't be upfront about her fears,
or he might put it down to gossip, and
do nothing.

She could just hear him saying, *Oh, I don't
think Esau would do anything like that!*

No, she must find a way to deceive him.

She had done it before, so it shouldn't be
too hard to do it again.

Yes, as one sin leads to another, so one deception leads to another.

V 46 **"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?"**

Certainly Rebekah was driven by an ulterior motive, but still there was a lot of truth in what she said.

Years ago, Abraham had made sure that Isaac didn't marry a Canaanite, but for one reason or another, Esau had done just exactly that, and the result had been disastrous.

His Hittite wives had been **"a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."**

So Rebekah's complaint was legitimate, but, of course, her real reason was to get Jacob out of harm's way.

Yes, Rebekah was deceiving her husband again, and she was getting pretty good at it.

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But deception or not, Isaac could see the wisdom in her words.

So, using his parental authority, he followed in his father's footsteps.

Well, actually, he wasn't quite following in his father's footsteps.

Although he didn't realize it, his instructions were a compromise between his father's plan and his wife's hidden agenda.

Yes, there was one missing ingredient in his plan, and it was an important one.

Not only had Abraham told his servant--

**"thou shalt not take a wife unto my son
of the daughters of the Canaanites,"**

but he had also cautioned him to "--
bring not my son thither again."

However, Isaac actually *commanded* his son to
leave the Promised Land and to return
to Padan-aram.

He thought he was following his father's
plan, but actually he was following
Rebekah's plan.

However, her little scheme to deliver Jacob
from his brother only drove him into
the arms of *her* brother.

And not only was Laban a bigger schemer than
his sister, he was as carnal as his
nephew Esau.

Yes, in spite of Rebekah's good intentions,
Jacob was jumping from the frying pan
into the fire.

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But was it really such a bad plan?
After all, Laban wasn't trying to murder her
son.

But neither was Esau, at least not
immediately.

He wasn't going to carry out his plan until
his father died, and as it turned out,
Isaac lived for another 43 years.

Yes, it seems that everyone had
miscalculated the time of Isaac's
death.

Admittedly, things would have been pretty
tense for a while, but actually there
was no immediate danger at all, and
long before those 43 years were up,

Esau had abandoned his plan to kill Jacob.

On the other hand, during those same 43 years, Rebekah died without ever seeing her son again, while Jacob provided about 20 years of cheap labour for his unscrupulous uncle.

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Rebekah had launched her son on the path of deception with the words--"**Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.**"

And then, in a vain attempt to salvage the situation, she had sent him away with the words, "**Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;**

**44: And tarry with him a few days,
until thy brother's fury turn away."**

In both cases, she had resorted to deception because she had convinced herself that it was the only way.

But . . . it is *never* right to do wrong.

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However, we must ask ourselves a difficult question: Why was Rebekah so sorely tempted?

Why did she just happen to overhear her husband's words that persuaded her to meddle in God's business?

And why did someone, perhaps a servant, just happen to tell her about Esau's intentions to kill Jacob, when there was no immediate danger?

It is a question to ponder.

And there's an even bigger question than that.

Considering all the trouble that it caused, why was Esau born before Jacob?

And there's no doubt that this situation, which caused so much grief in Isaac's family, was ordained by God.

Because Esau was born first, Isaac ignored God's plan, while Jacob stole the birthright and deceived his father.

And we all know the trouble that Rebekah got herself into.

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So, wouldn't it have been a lot better if Jacob had been born first?

And that arrangement would have fitted so nicely into God's plan to bless him.

But God planned it otherwise.

In His wisdom, God decreed that Esau would be the first born, and then He proclaimed that **"the elder shall serve the younger."**

That is definitely not the way we would have done it, but it is the way the God did it.

And in doing it that way, He provided an opportunity for Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob, and even Esau, to walk by faith rather than sight.

It was a test, and God wanted them to pass that test.

It would have propelled them into the next grade in God's school of faith.

But one after the other, they chose to walk by sight.

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And we also need to ask ourselves what God's purpose was when He lets us in on all these details.

Did He open up their lives to our scrutiny so we could sit in judgment of their shortcomings?

Or did God have a higher purpose in mind? I believe He did.

In fact, one great value of the book of Genesis, indeed of all scripture, is that we can learn from other people's mistakes.

1 Corinthians 10:11 says--"**Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.**"

And one thing we can learn from Isaac's family is that the easy way is not always the best way.

Often we are tempted to say how much better it would be if God had only done this or that differently in our lives.

Like Paul, we often pray that our particular thorn in our flesh will be removed.

But actually, the adverse circumstances in our lives have been allowed, and maybe even *planned* by God for our ultimate good.

Yes, it is far better to learn that His "-- **grace is sufficient for thee:**" and that His "-- **strength is made perfect in weakness**" than it is to have everything rosy.

So will we walk by faith, or will we
complicate our lives, as Isaac's family
did, by doing it our way?

Just like Jacob and Rebekah, we will find
that it is hard to be patient.

It is hard to wait upon God, but it is so
much better.

It is the walk of faith rather than the walk
by sight.

And if we choose to wait upon God, we will
find hidden in these times of waiting
some of God's deepest lessons, and some
of the sweetest times of fellowship
that we will ever have.

♪♪ *'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
Just to take Him at His word,
Just to rest upon His promise,
Just to know "Thus saith the Lord."*

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As we begin chapter 28, Isaac has decided to take his wife's advice.

Isaac was a different man now, a repentant man, a man that wanted to follow God's will completely.

And he was 100% behind God's purpose to bless his son Jacob.

So, with no animosity towards his younger son, he calls him into his presence and gives him his instructions.

V 1-2 **"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.**
2: 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."

There is a great deal of godly wisdom in the command, *Do not marry a Canaanite.*

Considering the wonderful promises that God had given Jacob, it would have been a disaster if he had married an unbeliever.

And it also makes no sense for a Christian to marry an unbeliever.

And not only does it make no sense, it is in direct disobedience to God's command.

2 Corinthians 6: 14-16 **"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?**

15: And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16: And what agreement hath the temple

of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Just keep your finger there . . . because we will be going back to that passage.

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For the believer, the avoidance of an unequal yoke extends to more things than just marriage.

Actually, we should keep away from any partnership that involves a common bond, any alliance that yokes our aspirations, desires, and goals in a united purpose with an unbeliever.

These kinds of alliances cut across God's purpose to control our lives.

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So Isaac was right in shunning the possibility of a Canaanite wife, and by commanding his son to "-- **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.**"

Not all of Rebekah's relatives believed in the one true God, but some of them did, and Jacob, the recipient of the Abrahamic Covenant, must have a godly wife.

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And Christians, who have been so abundantly blessed and have been chosen to be the bride of Christ, must be careful of their associations or alliances.

Continuing on in 2 Corinthians 6:17-18, we read--"**Wherefore come out from among**

them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,
18: And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

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So, using his parental authority, Isaac forbade Jacob from marrying a Canaanite.

And then, fulfilling his responsibility as God's patriarch, he wholeheartedly endorsed God's promises for Jacob.

V 3-4 "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people;
4: 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."

Here Isaac positively identifies this blessing as being the Abrahamic Covenant.

V 4 **"And give thee the blessing of Abraham".**

And even though he was sending Jacob away, he reminded him that his real future, his real blessing, would always be in Canaan.

V 4 **"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."**

Yes, wherever Jacob might roam, he was to remember that Canaan was the Promised Land.

It was *his* land, the land where his blessing would always reside.

V 5 **"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."**

---"And Isaac sent away Jacob."

No, Jacob did not flee from his home as a fugitive, or steal away in the night like some common thief.

Rather, he could leave with his head held high, as a son obeying to his father's command.

And only a lady like Rebekah could have pulled that one off!

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Isaac's command *to not marry a Canaanite* had left a deep impression on Esau.

Finally, this headstrong man realized that his choice of wives had not pleased his parents.

We don't know if Isaac had been lacking in his parental duty, or if Esau had simply acted in direct rebellion.

Either way, Esau had been completely insensitive to his parents' aspirations.

No doubt he had chosen good-looking girls, and the fact that they were raw pagans only added to their attraction.

And since spiritual things were not really important to him, he never even thought what the consequences would be for Isaac and Rebekah.

It is surprising sometimes how little young people consider what is going on in their parents' lives.

But finally the light dawned.

V 6-9 "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;
7: And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram;
8: And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father;
9: 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."

Esau was now quite concerned with pleasing his parents, and especially his dad,

who had always been so proud of his accomplishments.

So when he saw the importance that his father put on marrying a relative, he thought he could fix it all up by marrying a relative also.

Perhaps he even hoped his father would give him a better blessing.

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This is the kind of thinking that the unspiritual man often comes up with. He thinks by putting on a little spiritual veneer, he can reap the benefits of religion without getting too involved, or having any real *change of heart*.

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So Esau thought he had a good idea, one that would satisfy all the necessary

requirements without cramping his style.

He wouldn't be encumbered with a godly wife, but he would have the right connections.

After all, Ishmael was Abraham's son, so his daughter was definitely part of the family.

Oh, Ishmael was Abraham's son all right, but he wasn't Sarah's son, and he wasn't the son of promise.

He was the son of the bondwoman and had no more desire for the things of God than Esau did himself.

So the plan that made good sense to Esau was actually an abomination to God.

It is a mistake that carnal man often makes, but *keeping up appearances* does not bring new life.

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In next week's lesson, Jacob leaves home for a new life.

He has left his angry brother behind, but, unfortunately, he has not left the old Jacob behind.

And although he is now the recipient of God's blessing, and nothing could change that, his dishonesty will continue to dog his steps.