

Exegetical Notes – Genesis 27:1-46
“Isaac’s Blessing Stolen”

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(Genesis answers three basic theological questions. The first question is, “Whose world is it anyway?” The text answers the question by affirming that it is God’s world by right of creation. It is God’s world because God made it. The second question Genesis asks is “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way?” The answer is by trusting God and obeying Him. Family becomes the concern and Genesis begins to answer the third question, “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way particularly with the members of our own family?” In Genesis 25, we have visited the family of Abraham, and we have seen how Abraham’s family was fractured because Abraham did not trust God completely and did not follow the plan of God for marriage. We saw how the family of Isaac, Abraham’s heir, was divided by parental favoritism. So far, we have not seen a family that remained healthy and intact. This text continues by showing what happened in Isaac’s family.)

Genesis 27:1-46

Verses 1-4

¹ When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.”

“Here I am,” he answered.

² Isaac said, “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. ³ Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴ Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

- Isaac is now old, blind, and preparing to die. He does not know that Esau, his first-born son, sold his birthright as his father’s heir to his younger twin brother, Jacob (see Genesis 25:29-34). So, Isaac called Esau to him to give him the blessing due him as first-born.

- Isaac told Esau to kill some game and make him some stew and that he would give Esau the blessing.

Verses 5-10

⁵ Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, ⁶ Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, ⁷ ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the Lord before I die.’ ⁸ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: ⁹ Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. ¹⁰ Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

- Rebekah, Isaac’s wife and the mother of his sons, was eavesdropping to Isaac’s conversation with Esau. She told Jacob, her favorite son, what Isaac was planning to do and told Jacob to follow her instructions.
- Jacob was to kill goats and bring them to her. She would prepare some stew that Jacob was to take to his father and trick (remember that Jacob means “tricky”) his father into giving him the blessing of the first-born, 90% of his father’s estate.

Verses 11-13

¹¹ Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “But my brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth skin. ¹² What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing.”

¹³ His mother said to him, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me.”

- Jacob quickly points out the flaws in his mother’s plan. He is smooth-skinned, not hairy. Esau is a hairy man. If his father touched him while he was attempting to steal the birthright of the first-born, Isaac would know that he was not Esau and curse him rather than bless him.
- Rebekah tells Jacob to proceed with her plan. She tells him that she will take responsibility for what happens if her plan fails.

Verses 14-17

¹⁴ So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her

younger son Jacob. ¹⁶ *She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins.* ¹⁷ *Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made.*

- Jacob willingly follows his mother's plan. When the stew was ready, she disguised him as her elder son, Esau, and sent him to his father with the stew.

Verses 18-26

¹⁸ *He went to his father and said, "My father."*

"Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?"

¹⁹ *Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing."*

²⁰ *Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?"*

"The Lord your God gave me success," he replied.

²¹ *Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not."*

²² *Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."* ²³ *He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he proceeded to bless him.* ²⁴ *"Are you really my son Esau?" he asked.*

"I am," he replied.

²⁵ *Then he said, "My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing."*

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. ²⁶ *Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me."*

- When Jacob went to Isaac, Isaac was instantly suspicious. He suspected some deception. Isaac proceeds cautiously. However, Rebekah's plan works and Isaac proceeds with the blessing.

Verses 27-29

²⁷ *So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said,*

*"Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the Lord has blessed.*

²⁸ *May God give you heaven's dew
and earth's richness—*

an abundance of grain and new wine.

***²⁹ May nations serve you
and peoples bow down to you.***

***Be lord over your brothers,
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.***

***May those who curse you be cursed
and those who bless you be blessed.”***

- Isaac gives the blessing of the first-born to Jacob not to Esau.

Verses 30-33

³⁰ After Isaac finished blessing him, and Jacob had scarcely left his father’s presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. ³¹ He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, “My father, please sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing.”

³² His father Isaac asked him, “Who are you?”

“I am your son,” he answered, “your firstborn, Esau.”

³³ Isaac trembled violently and said, “Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him—and indeed he will be blessed!”

- Just after Jacob left Isaac, Esau came to him with the stew he had prepared. When Isaac asks Esau who he is, Isaac understands what has happened. He was tricked by Rebekah and Jacob and has given the blessing of the first-born to Jacob instead of Esau. Isaac is duly angered by this deception.
- However, the blessing is irrevocably given, and he cannot change what has happened. Jacob, not Esau, will receive it.
- There are two obvious problems here: 1. Isaac’s family is not healthy; 2. Apparently, through this dishonest act, the plan of God has been altered and the heir of promise is not to be Esau, but Jacob. But God was not surprised by any of this. He knew what would happen and despite the circumstances, this is the plan of God. Question #1: “Whose world is it?” It is God’s world and He is free to work His plan as He wishes. Question #2: “How do we get along in God’s world God’s way?” We trust and obey. We believe that God makes all things work together for our good. Is God in the deception? No! But he knew what was going to happen and was prepared to use it to bring good.

Verses 34-38

³⁴ *When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me—me too, my father!"*

³⁵ *But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing."*

³⁶ *Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" Then he asked, "Haven't you reserved any blessing for me?"*

³⁷ *Isaac answered Esau, "I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son?"*

³⁸ *Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!" Then Esau wept aloud.*

- Esau is overwhelmed with sorrow and angry at his brother. He begs his father, Isaac, to bless him, too. He recognizes that his brother has cheated him by deception.
- Isaac explains the extending of the blessing he has given to Jacob and laments that there is nothing left for him to give to Esau. But Esau pleads to Isaac for some blessing.

Verses 39-40

³⁹ *His father Isaac answered him,
"Your dwelling will be
away from the earth's richness,
away from the dew of heaven above.*

⁴⁰ *You will live by the sword
and you will serve your brother.*

*But when you grow restless,
you will throw his yoke
from off your neck."*

- Isaac gives Esau a blessing. But it is hardly a blessing. Eventually, Esau will be free of Jacob.

Verse 41

⁴¹ *Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."*

- Esau resolved that when the days of mourning for Isaac were over, he would kill Jacob for what he had done.

Verses 42-45

⁴² When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, “Your brother Esau is planning to avenge himself by killing you. ⁴³ Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Harran. ⁴⁴ Stay with him for a while until your brother’s fury subsides. ⁴⁵ When your brother is no longer angry with you and forgets what you did to him, I’ll send word for you to come back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?”

- Rebekah told Jacob what Esau was planning to do. She instructed him to go to her brother Laban and stay with him until she called him to come home.

Verse 46

⁴⁶ Then Rebekah said to Isaac, “I’m disgusted with living because of these Hittite women. If Jacob takes a wife from among the women of this land, from Hittite women like these, my life will not be worth living.

- Esau had married two women who were not from the tribes of Israel. They made Rebekah’s life miserable. She knew that it was likely that Jacob would take another wife and that this woman would most likely be from the people who lived around them.
- She laments that if this happened, things would be even worse for her.
- Everyone in this story puts themselves first and is not concerned with the good of others. This is not the nature of a healthy family.

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