



Jacob and Esau (part 3) Genesis 27:

The Facts:

- Rebekah and Jacob plot to take the blessing from Esau
- Isaac still favored Esau in spite of his behavior
- The blessing was a binding form of a spiritual will

The Failures:

- Isaac failed to listen to God's predictive words
- Rebekah took things into her own hands
- Jacob failed in being truthful
- Esau failed in that he didn't value his heritage, his father or his God

Lessons for Us

- God needs no help to take care of His business
- Acting rashly often leads to regret
- Dishonesty always leads to broken relationships
- Faith is not dependent on our senses-
Seeing (27:1)
Taste (27:4)
Hearing (27: 5-7)
Touch (27:11-12)
Smell (27:27)

Isaac's blessing 27:1–28:5

Here we have the third round of Jacob's battle with Esau. The first was at birth (25:21–28) and the second was over the birthright (25:29–34). In all three incidents Jacob manipulated his brother.

"This chapter [27] offers one of the most singular instances of God's overruling providence controlling the affairs of sinful men and so disposing of them that the interests of God's kingdom are safeguarded. Usually the guilt of Jacob is overemphasized, and Esau is regarded as relatively or entirely the innocent party in the transaction. This traditional view requires modification and correction."⁶⁵⁷

"This chapter portrays an entire family attempting to carry out their responsibilities by their physical senses, without faith. . . .

"All the natural senses play a conspicuous part—especially the sense of taste in which Isaac prided himself, but which gave him the wrong answer, Reliance on one's senses for spiritual discernment not only proves fallible, but often fouls up life unduly.

"Most importantly, however, the story is about deception."⁶⁵⁸

An oral blessing was as legally binding as a written will in the ancient Near East.⁶⁵⁹

"As in modern society, inheritance under Nuzi law was effected by testamentary disposition, although the tablets indicate that such a testament was often made orally. One of the tablets tells of a lawsuit between brothers concerning the possession of their late father's slave girl, Sululi-Ishtar. The youngest of three brothers, Tarmiya, was defending his elder brothers' claim to Sululi-Ishtar and the tablet sets out his testimony:

'My father, Huya, was sick and lay on a couch; then my father seized my hand and spoke thus to me. "My other sons, being older, have acquired a wife; so I give herewith Sululi-Ishtar as your wife."⁶⁶⁰

"In the end result the Court found in favour of Tarmiya, upholding his father's oral testamentary disposition

"In this the infirmity of his [Isaac's] flesh is evident. At the same time, it was not merely because of his partiality for Esau, but unquestionably on account of the natural rights of the firstborn, that he wished to impart the blessing to him, just as the desire to do this before his death arose from the consciousness of his patriarchal call."⁶⁶²

". . . Isaac's sensuality is more powerful than his theology."⁶⁶³

27:5–17 It seems consistent with the character of Rebekah as presented elsewhere in Genesis to interpret her actions here as commendable. A sincere desire to make sure that Isaac's blessing went to the divinely chosen, more responsible of her sons apparently motivated her. While her motive seems to have been good, her method evidenced lack of faith in God.⁶⁶⁴ She tried to pull the wool over Isaac's eyes.

"Jacob is clearly less concerned with the rightness, the morality, of his mother's suggestion than he is with what happens to him if his disguise is discovered and his impersonation revealed."⁶⁶⁵

People used the black, silk-like hair of the camel-goat of the East (v. 16) as a substitute for human hair as late as the Roman period.⁶⁶⁶

27:18–29 The response to Isaac's blessing in verse 23 is proleptic; it refers to the blessing in verses 27–29, not another blessing that preceded this one.

Isaac uttered his blessing (vv. 27–29) in poetic language and God's Spirit doubtless inspired