

Genesis 25-27 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Let's recap where we are in the Outline of Genesis –

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CHAPTER 25 • TRANSITION FROM ABRAHAM TO ISAAC

A. Vs. 1-6 / Abraham's Other Children

1Abraham again took a wife, [after the death of Sarah] and her name was Keturah. **2**And she bore him [6 sons] Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.

In vs. 3 & 4 the names of the sons of these sons of Keturah are given.

They're important because they become the patriarchs of their own clans and tribes who populated the Middle East and with whom the Jews had considerable problems.

5And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. **6**But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east.

1 Chron. 1:32 describes Keturah as Abraham's concubine.

As a wealthy noble of the ancient Middle East, Abraham would be expected to have a sizeable harem.

In his case, this harem was merely ceremonial while his wife Sarah lived.

But when she died, Abraham selected another wife from it – Keturah, whose name means, "Perfumed one."

The strength & virility God had given Abraham in his later years to produce Isaac, continued and he went on to father many more children, not only with Keturah, but with some of the other women in the harem as well.

Before he died, Abraham gathered up all his kids besides Isaac, gave them presents and then sent them off to live in the East.

He knew he needed to do this before he died and they end up banding together to try to usurp Isaac's birthright.

B. Vs. 7-11 / Abraham's Death & Burial

7This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. **8**Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. **9**And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, **10**the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. **There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife.** **11**And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at Beer Lahai Roi.

With the passing of Abraham, word was sent to Ishmael who returned to do honor alongside his brother Isaac to their father.

Together, they buried him alongside Sarah in the Cave at Machpelah.

It's interesting to see Isaac and Ishmael side by side here.

The last time we saw the two of them together, there was hostility and animosity between them. It was at the party celebrating Isaac's weaning.

Isaac was about 4 and Ishmael 17 and the older was mocking the younger, jealous of all the attention that was being paid his little brother.

When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking her son, she told Abraham and demanded that he and his mother be turned out.

If Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born, and he died at 175, then Isaac is 75 and Ishmael is 88!

It's been 70 years since the two sons of Abraham have seen one another!

70 years of unresolved hostility and bitterness.

But now, as they stand before the cave of Machpelah, they are reconciled.

It took a death to reconcile them.

Reconciliation always requires a death.

God reconciled us through the death of His Son who died in our place, taking the just penalty for our sins on Himself and paying it on the Cross.

2 Corinthians 5:18 says –

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation . . .

Just as our reconciliation to God required the death of Christ, if there's to be reconciliation between those of us who are estranged from one another, then someone has got to die – die to self, die to the right of revenge, for getting even, for proving myself right.

C. Vs. 12-18 / Ishmael and His Sons

Vs. 12-16 records the 12 sons of Ishmael.

17These were the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. **18**(They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which is east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He died in the presence of all his brethren.

Ishmael's descendants began to settle the Negev region of Southern Israel, then crossed over into Saudi Arabia and ended up becoming the Arabs.

D. Vs. 19-26 / The Beginning of Isaac's Family

19This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. **20**Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the

daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian.

We read about their marriage in ch. 24 in last week's study and saw how it is a powerful illustration of the Holy Spirit's calling out a bride for Christ.

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.

We are going to see that Isaac walked a path very similar to his father's.

Right off the bat we see that he and Rebekah struggle to have children.

In fact, as v. 26 makes clear, they went without children for 20 years!

When Isaac begged God to allow her to conceive, then she did so.

Of course, the lesson would not be lost on Isaac. He was well aware of the circumstances surrounding his own birth.

Rebekah's barrenness and then the Lord's gracious response to his prayer all brought home to Isaac the reality that he was indeed the son of promise through whom the promise made to his father would be fulfilled.

Just as he was a miracle, so his descendants would be miracles and testimonies to the goodness, power, and grace of the Living God who hears and answers prayer.

So Rebekah conceived – but her pregnancy was fraught with difficulty . . .

22 But the children struggled together within her; [she had twins!] and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the Lord.

There was something unusual about her pregnancy; there was way too much activity and it was distressing, so she sought insight from the Lord.

How she did this we aren't told, nor how God replied – and that's probably for the best, because if how she inquired of the Lord and how He replied was spelled out, you can be sure that people who manufacture some rite and ritual for seeking the Lord.

This would be turned into a formula and the whole dynamic of a relationship based on faith would be lost to some form.

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."

Rebekah was told that she was bearing twins and that they were at odds.

The contention that would mark their destinies had already begun in her womb.

In the ancient world, the firstborn son was the preferred and premier child.

He received the birthright and blessing and was the one by whom the family name and tradition was carried on.

The father, as the sole authority of the family, could assign whatever inheritance he desired to the firstborn, but it was usually the entire estate.

The firstborn then decided how much he would give to his brothers and sisters.

But God declared that in the birth of Rebekah's twins, the order would be reversed.

The younger would be the one to receive the firstborn rights and portion.

24 So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name [Hairy] Esau.

When Esau was born, he was covered with reddish hair – the original Carrot-top.

26 Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called [Heel-catcher] Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

Now, according to v. 7 – that means Abraham lived to see Esau & Jacob's 15th year.

It's not unusual in the birth of twins for their delivery to be separated by several minutes.

But in the birth of these twins, Jacob seemed to not dare let his brother Esau get the advantage on him and held fast to his heel.

Both Esau and Jacob were named from the conditions of their birth – Hairy and Heel-catcher.

It had to have given the mid-wives who attended the birth considerable pause as they saw little Esau emerge and a hand grasping his heel since the name "Heel-catcher" was actually an idiom used in that day for a scoundrel.

You called someone "Jacob" if you wanted to label them as a trickster or con-man; a rascal.

I like the way Gayle Erwin translates it – "Dirty, sneaking thief."

E. Vs. 27-34 / Esau & Jacob - Two Very Different Sons

1. Vs. 27-28 / Playing Favorites

27 So -- the boys grew.

They grew up continuing in the mode of their time in the womb and birth – in constant competition.

And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

Esau's disposition was like his appearance – He was a man's man, and outdoorsman who liked and was skilled at the hunt; a tracker who could read sign.

He was dangerous – wild at heart.

Jacob was a mama's boy who liked to hang out at home.

28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Oh, oh – we can see trouble brewing already.

Whenever mom and dad play favorites with the kids, there's going to be conflict.

It's interesting that Isaac would favor Esau while Rebekah would favor Jacob because these match ups are opposites.

Every time we see Isaac, he's presented in a passive and quiet posture.

Rebekah is energetic and outgoing.

The children they each picked as their favorite was the opposite of their own temper - Esau was outgoing and Jacob was retiring.

2. Vs. 29-34 / Esau Sells His Birthright To Jacob

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called [Red] Edom.

This is a classic scene – Esau's been out hunting and returns late, hungry and tired.

When he walks into camp he smells lentil stew and oh! it smells so good!

So he walks over to Emiril Jacob Wolfgang Puck and asks for a bowl.
From this event in his life, he's given a nickname drawn both from the color of his hair and the stew he asks for.

31But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."

Picture Jacob standing over the pot as it sits in the hot coals, stirring it with a wooden spoon.

Esau is standing over him with a hungry look in his eyes.

Jacob, ever astute to an opportunity, ventures a challenge – he'll give up a bowl of the stew, IF Esau is willing to exchange his birthright as the first born for it.

Now – this is a ludicrous offer!

Would you order off a menu in a restaurant where a bowl of soup cost you the title deed to your house?

Not likely! But that is the deal Esau made that day with Jacob -

32And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" **33**Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. **34**And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Surely Esau was exaggerating when he said he was about to die – he was simply hungry and could easily have cooked up something himself or had another of the many servants whip him up something in a few minutes.

There was also bread at hand, nuts and vegetables he could have eaten to satisfy his hunger until a more satisfying meal could be prepared.

But Esau was a carnal man whose fleshly desires demanded immediate satisfaction.

At that moment, he chose to invest greater value in a bowl of bean soup than in the promise of God.

Just a seed thought to leave with you – we'll be returning to it in our study this coming Sunday.

CHAPTER 26 • ISAAC STUMBLES

A. Vs. 1-5 / The Covenant Renewed

1There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.

The writer wants us to make a link between this and the famine that had settled over Canaan when Abraham first arrived there from Mesopotamia.

You remember what happened – Abraham went down to Egypt where he and Sarah lived the lie that she was his sister rather than wife.

When this famine settled over Canaan, Isaac moved his camp to Gerar, Philistine country.

2Then the Lord appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. **3**Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. **4**And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; **5**because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Because of the Nile, Egypt was usually exempt from the famines that periodically settled over Canaan.

So when there was a famine in Canaan, the Canaanites would pack up and move to Egypt.

God warned Isaac, he was not to go. He must remain in the land which God had given to he and his descendants.

All the promises God had made to his father Abraham, He now renews and affirms to Isaac.

B. Vs. 6-11 / Like Father, Like Son

6So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. **7**And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "Lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold." **8**Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. **9**Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'" **10**And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." **11**So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

This is a virtual repeat of what had happened with Abraham, Sarah, and Abimelech, the king of the Philistines.

Remember, the name Abimelech was the title of the ruler of the Philistines, like the title Pharaoh – so this was a different man from the Abimelech of Abraham's day. But the story plays out in a similar way.

Isaac had moved his nomadic community into the city of Gerar for a time during the famine.

Fearful that the Philistines might kill him in order to take Rebekah, he said she was his sister.

When Abraham and Sarah had used this ruse, it was technically true; she was his half sister.

But there's no truth to it with Isaac and Rebekah.

Isaac was a fool for saying his wife was his sister!

By saying this in order to save his own neck, he was in fact imperiling his wife!

If she's not married - then she's fair game for anyone who might want to take her.

It was only the grace of God that kept her from falling prey to some lecherous Philistine!

One day, Abimelech saw Isaac and Rebekah being affectionate and in a flash he realized Isaac had lied to him – this was not sister, this was his wife!

So he called for him and as the previous Abimelech had done with Isaac's father – he rebuked him!

Abimelech, a pagan, has a sounder and healthier sense of morality and propriety than Isaac, the man of God does.

As we said before – it's a sad day when the world has to question the morality and choices of those who stand as the people of God.

Abraham had stumbled in this way twice, once with Pharaoh in Egypt and once with Abimelech, showing that this was a weakness in his character, a tendency he carried.

Though Abraham was a man of faith – his faith was imperfect and that imperfection manifested itself in a tendency toward self-preservation that was willing to cut corners and bend the truth.

The weakness of the father was passed on to the son.

There's a popular form of spiritual warfare being touted in some circles today called breaking generational curses.

It's the idea that demons attach themselves to the people of a family and over several generations those people are prone toward some sin or curse.

There is no biblical basis for this idea whatsoever!
It's based on a faulty interpretation of Exodus 34:6-7,

6And the Lord passed before [Moses] and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, **7**keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

Those who hold to the idea of generational curses take the last part of v. 7 and rip it from the context to make it stand on its own.

There is no basis for the idea of some kind of a demonic attachment to a family to be found here.

On the contrary, God is saying that it's natural to expect that the sins of one generation are going to be repeated by the next because of the example and impact of a parent.

BUT – BECAUSE of God's goodness, power, and grace that cycle of sin **CAN BE BROKEN!**

God is very clear to reinforce this idea in both Ezekiel and Jeremiah where He says – [Ezekiel 18:1-9]

1The word of the Lord came to me again, saying, **2**"What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children's teeth are set on edge'? **3**"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel. **4**"Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die. **5** But if a man is just And does what is lawful and right; . . . **9**If he has walked in My statutes And kept My judgments faithfully —He is just; He shall surely live!" Says the Lord GOD.

Isaac stumbled, not because of some kind of generational curse, but because of the poor example of his father. This is simply a case of poor parenting.

And it's a solemn warning to all of us as parents, and to those young people who look forward to the day when you will have children and be charged with the solemn task of raising them.

Be realistic about your own weaknesses and diligently ask the Lord to heal you of them so that they will not be passed on to your children.

As you get older, and your children mature, it is wise to sit with them and honestly share your own struggles and the things you know you fail in – encouraging them to stand guard over those things and seek to see them rooted out of their lives.

C. Vs. 12-35 / God's Blessing & Philistine Hostility

12Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him. **13**The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; **14**for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the Philistines envied him.

Isaac inherited all of Abraham's wealth, and now, in affirmation of the promise to bless him, God pours out so much more blessing it's just silly!

Everything Isaac does prospers wildly. And the Philistines get super envious.

15Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. **16**And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

Abraham had dug several wells throughout the region of the philistines to water his extensive flocks and herds.

The Philistines didn't like the idea of nomadic shepherds wandering through their region so they'd plugged up the wells.

When they realized Isaac was growing larger and more powerful and might soon present a danger to their security, they asked him to move out of their area.

17Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. **18**And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them.

19Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. **20**But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well [contention] Esek, because they quarreled with him. **21**Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name [opposition] Sitnah. **22**And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name [roomy] Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Besides the wells Abraham had dug and Isaac re-excavated, he dug some new ones.

But the Philistine shepherds kept commandeering them.

Instead of fighting for them, Isaac just moved on to a new location and dug new wells, until the Philistines no longer hassled him.

Digging wells was a highly risky and expensive venture for that time.

The every well Isaac dug bore water was a dramatic sigh of God's favor.

And yet, while God was blessing him, the world, as represented by the Philistines, were hassling him.

Friend, be prepared for the world's hatred, hostility, and opposition when God blesses you!

It's the way of the world to envy the successful and when the world sees your love, and peace and joy, and yet you won't play the world's game and plan for how to achieve all those things, it will do its level best to discredit and defame you.

The lost lust after happiness, but see something even more real and satisfying in you & me – Joy and it drives them nuts!

They will do just about anything to knock you down so the emptiness and frustration of their own lives won't be so obvious.

23Then he went up from there to Beersheba.

This was the place Abraham had planted that grove of Tamarisk trees, which by this time would have been quite tall and provided a nice oasis amidst the dessert of that place.

24And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." **25**So he built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

This would have been the same well Abraham had dug – they merely excavated it and returned it to its former state.

26Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. **27**And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?"

While Abimelech brought these nobles with him, it was clear they weren't coming to fight, probably because there was no more than a handful of attendants with them.

So Isaac wondered why they had come, since the last exchange with Abimelech had been less than amiable.

28But they said, "We have certainly seen that the Lord is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a covenant with you, **29**that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.'"

Abimelech probably realized that while Isaac had been in the region of the Philistines, they could keep an eye on him and know if he was plotting any kind of an attack.

But now that he's moved beyond their borders, they grow concerned he might plot a campaign against them and they wouldn't be prepared.

So they suggest a treaty – just as the previous Abimelech had done with Abraham.

Isaac agreed.

30So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. **31**Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." **33**So he called it Shebah. [Oath] Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

Beersheba = Well of the Oath.

This is the same name Abraham had called this place.

Some critics of the Bible fault it at this point and say that it's impossible for two different men, separated by decades, to give the identical name to the same place.

That's a silly argument for the simple reason that Isaac was Abraham's son and knew all about this place and what his father had done here.

Besides, v. 18 tells us Isaac renewed the names of the places His father had named.

34When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. **35**And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

No comment is need on that!

CHAPTER 27 • JACOB SECURES THE BLESSING

A. Vs. 1-4 / Isaac Calls For Esau

1Now 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 it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

Isaac was 60 when the twins were born, and the last verse of the previous ch. said Esau was 40.

If this took place some years after that as v. 1 implies, then Isaac was between 120 and 140.

He lived to be 180, so that not at all unreasonable.

In v. 28 of ch. 25, we read that Isaac loved Esau because he ate the game Esau hunted.

Isaac loved BBQ and made a little bargain with Esau: "Bring me some and I'll give you the coveted patriarchal blessing."

B. Vs. 5-17 / Rebekah's Scheme to Steal the Blessing for Jacob

5Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. **6**So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, '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 it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death."

Rebekah's favoritism for Jacob is showing.

Her frustration with Esau, exacerbated by the two contentious women he's married, moves her to hatch a plot of terrible deceit.

She's planning on taking advantage of her husband's blindness and foisting on him something that can do nothing but alienate her from him.

She knows Isaac intends to give the blessing to Esau – and this was something crucially important in their minds and hearts.

She's willing to throw her whole relationship with her husband into doubt through this trickery.

Some wonder if maybe Rebekah was moving in response to the Lords' word to her during her pregnancy that the older would serve the younger.

They may have been a factor that encouraged her but it's important we realize something here –

Jacob's earlier purchasing of the birthright and then Rebekah's swindling Esau out of the blessing by conferring it on Jacob had nothing to do with God's promise!

God does not need our trickery and cunning deceit to secure His promises.

Jacob was going to be the object of God's blessing regardless of Esau's selling the birthright or who Isaac blessed!

Really, the birthright was never Esau's to sell in the first place; it already belonged to Jacob.

And Isaac's blessing could never confer on Esau what God already intended to give to Jacob.

All Rebekah and Jacob did in their fleshly attempts to help God is do what Abraham and Sarah had done with the use of Hagar as a surrogate. It brought conflict and trouble into the home.

It's easy for us to see that Rebekah is scheming, but really, Isaac is no less scheming than her.

Despite the clear word the Lord has given about His will regarding the twins, and despite the carelessness and obvious lack of concern for spiritual things in Esau's life Isaac is determined to pass on the blessing to him.

That Isaac initiates all this in secret means he knows what he's doing is wrong.

The level of distrust in this family is shocking!

11And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, . . .

"Mom, this is just plain wrong and I will not sin against My father or the Lord by going along with such an obvious lie."

"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 them for me." **14**And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. **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.

C. Vs. 18-29 / The Deception

18 So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?"

19 Jacob said to his father, "I am 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."

20 But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the Lord your God brought it to me."

"The Lord YOUR God" not "The Lord God" or "My God."

Jacob is imitating Esau, who had no concern for the things of God.

21 Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

24 Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am."

25 He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. 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. 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 be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!"

Isaac may be old, but he's not so feeble he can't tell the difference between Esau's and Jacob's voices.

He repeatedly asks – "Is that really Esau" – to which Jacob repeatedly lies – "Yes!"

Jacob even brings God into His deception, saying the reason he's back so quickly is because the Lord blessed him in his hunt for game.

It's amazing what justification people will use when they've talked themselves into believing that what they are doing is fulfilling the will of God.

The means are justified, they think, by the ends.

That was Jacob's rationalization – His mother had told him God's promise that he would be the son of promise and he had assigned some kind of magical power to the fatherly blessing.

Following the philosophy of pragmatism, he was willing to employ any means in order to secure the ends.

Pragmatism is a philosophy which dominates the minds of many of God's people today.

Pragmatism says that if it works, it's good – the ends justify the means.

Thus if the end, the object, is getting people to say the sinners prayer, then any and every means are used to manipulate people to that end.

If success is defined by attendance figures and bigger buildings, then any and all means are used to pack 'em in.

The problem is, what you win people with, is what you win them to!

And so we see some dishonest means being used today to get people to go to church and the gospel is watered down so as not to offend.

Not a single one of these 4 is without blame.

Isaac was being secretive and working contrary to what God had said.

Esau had already sold the birthright to his brother and knew that by rights, the blessing ought to go to him as well.

Rebekah was being deceitful, and Jacob was doing nothing less than lying to his father's face!

And all of it was so totally unnecessary because nothing they did was going to alter what God would do.

All it did was drive a wedge between every member of this family.

Esau became violently estranged from his mother and brother and deeply disappointed with his father.

Rebekah lost it all – Isaac would be furious at the deception, Esau would disown her, and Jacob had to flee for his life to a distant land.

D. Vs. 30-45 / Esau's Reaction

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 are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."

33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him—and indeed he shall be blessed."

In this moment, it became crystal clear to Isaac.

His physical eyes may be dim, but the vision of God's will and faithfulness are utterly clear to him.

Isaac had thought to circumvent God's promise to elevate the younger son by giving the blessing to older.

Now Isaac realizes that God's will cannot be hindered or thwarted.

Indeed – Jacob will be blessed - not because Isaac spoke some words – but because GOD DID!

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!" 35 But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."

36 And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named [Heel-catcher, supplanter] 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?"

This isn't exactly right – Jacob didn't take the birthright away – Esau willingly forfeited it.

In fact by selling it for nothing more than a bowl of bean soup, he proved he wasn't deserving of it.

While Esau despised the godly heritage of his father and grandfather, Jacob treasured it to a fault.

Jacob had no more than left the tent when Esau came in with his skewers of game-kabobs for Pops and Isaac immediately realizes he's been hoodwinked!

When Esau realizes the blessing has already been given, he curses Jacob as the dirty sneaking thief he is.

He asks if there isn't some blessing Isaac has left to confer on him.

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?"

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.

Esau's reaping the bitter fruit of despising spiritual things and being a carnally minded man, always living only for the moment.

These aren't tears of genuine repentance – these are the tears of bitter regret at not getting what one wants and thinks he /she deserves.

Esau asked if Isaac had only one blessing or if maybe there might be a backup blessing he could at least impart.

39Then 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. 40By 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."

Isaac knows that simply because Esau is the grandson of Abraham, he will experience the favor of God in terms of material prosperity.

But the spiritual wealth and treasure of the promise to Abraham will flow to Jacob alone.

Isaac can see that Esau is the kind of man who will always live in tension with others and that while he will indeed serve Jacob, the day would come when he would manage to assert his independence.

Esau became the patriarch of the Edomites.

Earlier he was given that nickname, which means "red" for his reddish hair and the color of the lentil stew he sold the birthright for.

The Edomites live in the land of Edom which lay on Israel's Southeastern border.

While independent for many years, they came under Israel domination during the time of the Kings .

The Edomites were able to secure a quasi-independence in the early days of the Roman Empire and even ended up taking control of Israel through the family of Herod, who was an Idumean (a form of the word "Edomites").

41So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

Esau went forth from the tent in great wrath, fuming to himself about what he would do to his brother as soon as Isaac passed on.

He thinks that time can't be far off. The fact is, Isaac lived about another 40 years!

But what we say over and over to ourselves will eventually find itself being said to others, and it wasn't long till Esau divulged his plans to off Jacob to someone else.

42And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you. 43Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. 44And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, 45until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what YOU have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

Rebekah says Jacob ought to go away for a few days – it turns out to be over 20 years!

And by the time he does return, Rebekah will be long in her grave.

CONCLUSION

We'll leave the last verse for next week as it really belongs with the next chapter.