

Lesson: The Twists and Turns of the Promise (Gen 27:1-28:22)

The narrative continues after skipping large portions of Isaac and Rebekah’s lives. We meet Jacob and Esau in the home of Isaac when Isaac feels he is close to death, even though he will live several years after this (Gen 35:27-29). He wanted to pass along his blessing while still aware enough to do so. He, however, called for the son of his own choosing to bless instead of the one whom God chose and drama ensued. But ultimately, the twists and turns did not derail the plans of God. Jacob received the blessing and continued the line of the promise for the salvation of the world.

Biblical Takeaways

1. ***Isaac’s plan, Rebekah’s scheme, and Jacob’s deception (Gen 27:1-27):*** Isaac, after losing most of his sight (v. 1) believed the date of his death was imminent, so he called for Esau and told him to bring him his favorite dish and he would bless him (v. 4). Rebekah (v. 5) overheard Isaac’s plan and came up with a scheme to ensure that Jacob received what God rightfully promised him through her. It appears that Isaac’s blindness was not just physical. He could not see God’s will. So, God used Rebekah to ensure his promise went to the right son. Jacob followed his mother’s scheme; she cooked the food while he was to take advantage of his father’s loss of sight wearing Esau’s clothes and animal fur to smell and feel like Esau. He lied to his father, claiming to be Esau, even though he did not sound like him (vv. 24-27). He was able to be deceived because Isaac trusted in his senses.
2. ***Jacob becomes the carrier of the promise (Gen 27:28-29):*** Isaac blessed Jacob passing on the dictates of God desire for the family of Abraham in blessing from the sky and the land, dominion over the nations and family, and a blessing for those who bless him and a curses for all who curse him.
3. ***Esau’s regret (Gen 27:30-40):*** Esau returned just after Jacob received the blessing. He wept bitterly about missing what he thought was his (v. 34). But the blessing was for Jacob and Isaac could not reverse it because somewhere, spiritually, he knew Jacob was the rightful carrier of it (v. 33). Esau’s question in v. 38 is appropriate, should not Isaac have more than one blessing? Yet, Isaac stood in the place of a prophet, like his father. He was a conduit and not the source. He spoke what God had given him the strength to speak. The blessings of God cannot be manufactured by people. Esau would be blessed to become a nation but his calling was not Jacob’s (v. 40).
4. ***Esau’s revenge and Jacob’s retreat (Gen 27:41-46):*** Esau planned to kill Jacob and somehow Rebekah discovered it. She schemed again to have Jacob sent away to her homeland to find a wife just as Isaac did. This theme of avoidance of the wives of the land continues and will be repeated in the next chapter with Esau.
5. ***God meets Jacob (Gen 28:1-17)***
 - a. Since Jacob was blessed by God, despite Isaac’s plans, he could only speak blessing over Jacob in sending him back to Abraham’s home country (vv. 3-4).
 - b. Esau finally chose a woman who might please his parents from his uncle Ishmael’s side of the family (v. 9).

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- c. Jacob along the way to Haran prepared himself a place where he might lay and he dreamed of a ladder/hill/ramp (the Heb is uncertain). In our tradition, we say ladder. This ladder reached to heaven. The angels of God ascended and descended. In this dream, Jacob finally heard from God himself the blessing that he would receive as carrier of the promise. The Lord *stood beside him* (v. 13). Though Jacob saw a ladder, God was not at the top of it, God came down and visited him where he was. God meets us at the bottom because we are unable to climb up to reach him. God promised him the land, multiplication of his family as the dust, and blessing for all the families of the earth (vv. 13-14). Further, God promised he would be with Jacob and would not leave him, that is God would protect and assure that what he promised will come to pass through him. God protects his investments. Verse 16 shows us God’s presence is much closer than we think. God was there but Jacob did not realize it and he named the place the gate of heaven. Heaven is not as far as we think when we are willing to look for it.
6. ***Jacob vows to God (Gen 28:18-22)***: Jacob named the place Bethel (Heb for house of God: Beth = “house of” and “El” = God; another example is Bethlehem: Beth = “house of” and “lehem” = bread). Jacob vowed if God would grant him peace to return to his father’s house, remember Esau wanted him dead, he would make God his God, he would set this place as a place of worship of this God, and he would give God back a tenth of all God had given him.