

Rebekah's Plot to Get the Blessing for Jacob

Genesis 27:1-17

Genesis 27:1-17 - Now 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."

⁵ Now 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, ⁷ '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."

¹¹ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "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.

Background Notes

In Genesis 27 Isaac was 137 years old and was almost blind. He may have thought he was about to die, because his half-brother Ishmael died at this age. "*These 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*" (Genesis 25:17). But if so, Isaac was wrong. He was not about to die - he lived for another 40 years, and died at 180 years of age. "*Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.*" (Genesis 35:28).

Isaac was also wrong in trying to bless Esau instead of Jacob. In Genesis 25, when the twins were born, God had clearly communicated to Isaac and Rebekah that the covenant promises would be fulfilled through Jacob. Esau was born first,

but God said in no uncertain terms that the older would serve the younger: *“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.”* (Genesis 25:23). So Isaac knew what God’s will was, but he still wanted to give the patriarchal blessing to his favorite son, Esau. *“Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”*(25:28)

Normally the occasion of the father’s blessing on the heir called for a big family get together, a celebration and feast. But Isaac planned a private affair, just between Isaac and Esau. Isaac knew that Rebekah didn’t approve, and he knew he was going against God’s will.

Meanwhile, Rebekah was plotting how to manipulate Isaac into blessing Jacob, her favorite son. Once the patriarchal blessing was given, it was binding and had legal status just as a will does today. So while Esau was out hunting, Rebekah used her culinary skills to cook up some goat steaks to taste just like venison. She put hairy goatskins on Jacob’s hands and neck so that Jacob would feel more like Esau to Isaac, because Esau was a hairy man. I’ve often thought that Esau must have been very hairy, with leathery skin - did you even feel a goat’s hide?! Well, maybe Rebekah was able to doctor up the skins to make them feel more human. In any case, Rebekah and Jacob did all this before Esau returned from hunting.

Doctrinal Points

1. The will of God should be followed with submission.

Isaac knew that it was God’s will to give the patriarchal blessing to Jacob - not to Esau. But Isaac was unwilling to submit to the will of God because he wanted to bless his favorite son. Esau was a skillful hunter, and Isaac loved to eat the wild game that Esau brought him. To Isaac, Esau was the more “manly” son - the son who brought him the most pride and pleasure. So Isaac tried to circumvent the will of God. Maybe he thought that God had made a mistake, or that God would change his mind - but he was wrong! Isaac knew the will of God, but he didn’t like it and was unwilling to submit to it. As a result, Isaac had to learn a hard lesson.

When we know God’s will, we should submit and follow it - whether we like it or not. Of course, we don’t know the will of God in all things, but God has revealed His will to us in many areas. In marriage, for example, God has clearly revealed that believers should not marry unbelievers: *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”* (2 Corinthians 6:14). Let’s not question God’s will in this area. His will should be followed with submission.

God has also revealed His will in the area of church government. Elders of a local church are to be male. 1Timothy 3 says: *“If a man desires the position of a bishop [elder], he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the*

husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

So let's not question the will of God in this area, or try to twist the interpretation of Scripture to make it fit what we want, or what we think is most correct for today. Let's not be like Isaac and try to circumvent the will of God. The will of God should be followed with submission.

2. The will of God should be followed without scheming.

Rebekah, like Isaac, knew the will of God. She knew, right from the birth of the boys, what God had revealed: the line of blessing would go through the younger son, Jacob. All Rebekah had to do was wait on God and watch God accomplish His purpose and His will!

But Rebekah was unwilling to trust God in this matter. She was afraid that somehow the blessing would go to Esau and not to her favorite son, Jacob. So she schemed to make sure God's will and her will were carried out. She was willing to deceive her own husband. She was willing to manipulate her favorite son into lying and deception. Notice that Jacob was more than willing to go along with the plot. His only worry was that he would get caught, not that he was doing anything wrong.

Rebekah and Jacob believed that the ends justify the means - but they were wrong! They remind us of Abraham and Sarah, who knew God's will regarding the child of promise, but they were unwilling to wait on God. They thought they would help God out by having Abraham take Hagar as a concubine, to have a son through Hagar. This was wrong, and the bad fallout of that sin continues on even to this day in the friction between the Jews and Arabs. **The ends never justify wrong means.** The will of God should be followed without scheming.

Why do so many of us have a hard time learning this lesson? For example, if the Lord's will is for you to be in a position of spiritual leadership, you don't have to manipulate people to gain that position. You don't have to promote yourself, or deceive, or bad-mouth others to attain this position. You don't have to play "church politics" for God's will to be accomplished. We can be sure that God does not need our schemes to help Him out! The will of God should be followed without scheming.

Practical Applications

1. Parents, what do you really want for your children?

Many of you hearing this Talk are parents. Some of our children are making decisions about what they're going to do in life. Do you **really** want the will of God for your children? God has a plan for each one of your children. God knows your children better than you do, and he knows what is best for them - both generally and specifically. He knows the right college for your child to attend (or not). He knows just the right job and career for your child. He knows just the right spouse for your child, if he or she is to be married. He knows just the right niche in life for your child.

Now the question is, are you going to help your child find and follow the will of God? Or are you going to manipulate and connive and coerce - and maybe even deceive - to force **your** will to be carried out in your child's life? Several Christian parents whom I know are so concerned that their children be "successful" in this world, that they have prevented their children from responding to the call of the Lord in their lives. That is tragic! Parents, what do you really want for your children?

2. Don't think that mature believers can't make mistakes.

Isaac was a mature believer. He was an older believer, and he walked with the Lord. The Lord appeared to him and spoke with him (Genesis 26). But older and mature believers can make mistakes - then and today. Mature believers can be deceived in areas of their favorite people and their favorite things in life. Isaac favored Esau, and he enjoyed the food that Esau hunted and cooked for him. Just like Isaac, believers can be blinded by their set opinions and their "favorite" things.

Older Christians, even mature believers, tend to become set in their "favorite" ways, and become inflexible. They have "favorite things" and "favorite ways" of doing things! Mature believers can make mistakes, and sadly, they can even cause serious problems in church fellowships. Older believers need to stay aware of this possibility. Mature Christians need to ask the Lord to deliver them from this kind of selfish, self-centered, and worldly mindset.

Remember Isaac! Mature believers **can** make mistakes.