

Esau Discovers that Jacob Received the Blessing; Isaac Submits to God's Will

Genesis 27:26-46

Genesis 27:26-40 - *"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!"*

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."

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 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?"

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.

39 Then 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. 40 By 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."

Background Notes (v26-40)

In Genesis 25 Esau foolishly sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew. In Genesis 27 Isaac tried to undo that transaction by giving the patriarchal blessing to his favorite son, after Esau returned from hunting wild game for Isaac's favorite meal. Meanwhile, Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing.

In some translations of verse 39, Isaac's words sound like Esau also received a great blessing: *"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth..."* That phrase should probably be translated, *"your dwelling shall be away from the*

fatness of the earth.” Esau’s descendants settled in the land of Edom, southeast of the Dead Sea. Edom (part of the country of Jordan today) has never been as fertile as the land of Canaan.

At the end of verse 40, Esau was told, *“when you become restless, you shall break his yoke from your neck.”* Periodically, during the times of the kings of Israel and Judah, Edomites (descendants of Esau) successfully revolted. And of course, the Herods, who were rulers in Israel at the time of Christ, were Edomites. So in these ways, this prediction came true.

Doctrinal Point (v26-40)

By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob.

Now some of you might be saying, “Wait a minute! How can you say ‘by faith’ Isaac blessed Jacob? He was tricked into blessing Jacob!” Well, I agree, it does look that way, but the Bible teaches that Isaac blessed Jacob by faith. In Hebrews 11:20 we read, *“By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.”*

But where do we see that “faith” in Genesis 27? I think there’s a glimpse of it at the end of verse 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.’”* At this point that Isaac realized God had overruled him. Right from the time that the boys were born, Isaac had known that the older son, Esau, was to serve the younger son, Jacob (Genesis 25:23). Isaac had tried to overrule God’s will and God’s plan, but now he realized and submitted to the fact that **God** was in control all along.

And it was at this point that Isaac finally realized he had been wrong to try to circumvent the will of God, and he submitted to the God’s will and God’s plan for his family. Because of this change of heart, Isaac is credited with having faith. By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob.

Practical Application (v26-40)

Beware! Tears are not necessarily a sign of repentance.

Verse 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.”* From this verse, it appears that Esau was repentant. It seemed that he had changed his negative and despising attitude about the things of God. But the book of Hebrews reveals that this was not the case. Hebrews 12:17: *“For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”*

In addition, from what follows in Genesis 27, it’s clear that Esau did not repent, because he planned to kill Jacob. So beware! Tears are not necessarily a sign of repentance.

There's a big difference between "remorse" and "repentance." Remorse includes sorrow and a sense of guilt - but not necessarily a change of heart and mind. Repentance involves a change of heart and mind and deliberate decision to turn away from the wrong behavior and sin.

Some time ago I was involved in a marriage-counseling situation. There was plenty of remorse, but there was no true repentance. The husband admitted his wrongdoing and his guilt, and he said he was sorry for the trouble and grief he had caused. However, he was not willing to turn away from his sinful behavior. He was not truly repentant. Unfortunately, the marriage ended in divorce. Tears are not necessarily a sign of repentance.

There's an application here for salvation as well. You can be sorry for your sins, you can cry about your sins, you can have a sense of deep guilt about your sins - but these emotions will not save you. There must be true repentance! Remember this lesson from Esau. Be aware that tears are not necessarily a sign of true repentance.

Genesis 27:41-46 - *"So 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.'"*

⁴² And 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. ⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. ⁴⁴ And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, ⁴⁵ until 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?' ⁴⁶ And Rebekah said to Isaac, 'I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?'"

Background Notes (v41-46)

Because of Esau's fury, Rebekah urged Jacob to get out of town quickly, before Esau vented his anger by murdering his brother. What did Rebekah mean when she said, *"Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"* (v45). She was afraid that a blood feud would start. In those days, if someone committed murder, another person (usually a blood relative of the murdered person) would assume the role of the "avenger of blood," and would kill the murderer. So Rebekah saw a very real possibility that both her sons would be taken from her.

In verse 46, Rebekah manipulated her husband once again, so Isaac would send Jacob away. The "daughters of Heth" refer to the Hittite women who were living nearby at that time. In Genesis 26:34-35, Esau married two Hittite women, and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah. So Rebekah told Isaac that she didn't want this to happen to Jacob, and thus she persuaded Isaac to send Jacob away.

Doctrinal Point (v41-46)

Bitterness led Esau to hate Jacob.

When Isaac finally realized he was wrong, he changed. He submitted to the will of God, and by faith he blessed Jacob. But not Esau! What was the bottom line in Esau's hatred of Jacob? Hebrews 12:15 gives us the answer: *"See to it that...no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many."* Esau's problems stemmed from a "root of bitterness." Jacob had tricked him into selling the birthright, and Esau was bitter about that. Jacob had taken the material benefits of the patriarchal blessing away from him, and Esau was bitter about that.

Bitterness led Esau to hate Jacob. You might say, "Well, what do you expect? His brother ripped him off - not just once, but twice!" But Esau could have admitted that he foolishly sold his birthright, and he could have submitted to the revealed will of God that the older son would serve the younger. Yes, that's pretty hard to take - but not impossible!

God may permit us to go through some very difficult experiences in life. People may take advantage of us. We may get no recognition. We may get unfair treatment. Etc., etc., etc. But bitter experiences do not have to result in a "root of bitterness growing up" within us. When we realize that God is in control of all things, even our bitter experiences do not have to result in a "root of bitterness" within us. As Hebrews 12:15 says, *"See to it that...no root of bitterness springs up to and defile many."*

I know several Christians who are bitter people. They have been through some tough experiences, and they have let those experiences grow from a root of bitterness into a full-fledged bitterness of personality and conversation. And I can assure you that their comments and attitudes have defiled many others.

I hope that a bitter attitude never becomes true of you or me! Don't let a root of bitterness get started. Remember this warning from Scripture: Bitterness led Esau to hate Jacob.

Practical Application (v41-46)

Don't expect happiness if you cheat to get it.

Rebekah and Jacob cheated to obtain what they thought would bring them happiness, but it only brought heartache and long-lasting problems. God overruled and accomplished His will through all their wheeling and dealing, but there was no happiness.

Rebekah thought Jacob would only be gone for a few weeks, but Jacob was gone for more than 20 years, and Rebekah never saw her favorite son again. In addition, Jacob had difficult relationships and trouble and unhappiness all his days. Although God blessed him materially and Jacob did grow spiritually, some of the lessons he had to learn in the school of God were very difficult and heart-wrenching lessons.

Don't expect happiness if you cheat to get it!