

After Isaac Finished Blessing Jacob, His Brother Esau Came In

27: 30-40

DIG: Which member of the family, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau or Jacob was wrong here? Who was most culpable? What could they have done differently? How did God show mercy to Esau instead of giving him what he deserved?

REFLECT: Does the family blessing apply to us today? Or was it just during Isaac's lifetime? When did you make your life much more difficult by playing Holy Spirit? Do you have any spiritual regrets? Are there any you can address today?

It was not a long wait until the truth came to light. In fact, the bottom line of this entire episode is this: **And you may be sure that your sin will find you out (Numbers 32:23b)**. If only **Isaac** (Hebrew: **Yitz'chak**) had realized this at the beginning, perhaps **he** might have done something different. But **God's** will would still have prevailed! The suspense continued as **Esau** arrived right on the heels of **Jacob**.⁴⁴²

Although **he** must have been bursting inside, **Jacob** (Hebrew: **Ya'akov**) made no response. **After Isaac finished blessing him** (blessing occurs seventeen times in the chapter) **and Ya'akov had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting (27:30)**. **This was a close call; if Esau had come in a moment sooner, Jacob would not have received the blessing and might have been killed.**

Esau, too, prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." His father **Isaac** asked him, **"Who are you?"** He answered: **I**, using *ani* he emphasized the person, **am your son, your firstborn, Esau (27:31-32)**. The fact that **Esau had sold his birthright, the fact that he was the firstborn** had become meaningless.

Yitz'chak trembled violently. Literally, in the Hebrew it reads: *Isaac trembled and great trembling most exceedingly*. **This is the turning point of the incident, the point where, for the first time, light breaks in on this dark scene.** This was not anger; it was fear. It was the horror that was awakened in his soul as **he** now fully realized that **he** had been tampering with **God's** plan and there was nothing **he** could do to change it. **He** had tried, but

the LORD had stopped him.⁴⁴³ He blurted out: **Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him.** Finally, when Isaac said: **and indeed he will be blessed, he** recognized that the blessing he gave Ya'akov was indeed final (27:33). He knew then that ADONAI had been securing what He had declared before the sons were born. It was this, which the Ruach HaKodesh declares when He says: **By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future (Hebrews 11:20).**⁴⁴⁴ This would continue the pattern in Genesis, where the firstborn is passed over in favor of the younger brother.

Esau's response is no surprise. **When Esav heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry.** There is a play on words in the Hebrew that is difficult to bring out in English. The closest we can come is this: *And he cried a cry, a great one and a bitter one most exceedingly.* So even though Esav did not care much for the spiritual ramifications and benefits of the patriarchal blessing, he did want its material blessings and promise of military superiority. When Esau lost his blessing from his father he was devastated and said: **Bless me - me too, my father (27:34)!** You can just feel the anguish in his cry! This same painful cry and unfulfilled longing is being echoed today by many people who are searching for their family's blessing, men and women whose parents, for whatever reason, have failed to bless them with words and actions of love and acceptance.⁴⁴⁵

Hardly knowing how to explain this to Esau, Isaac momentarily reverts to his emotional feeling for Esau and blamed Jacob saying: **Your brother came deceitfully (which was true) and took your blessing (which was false because he had sold his blessing to Jacob) (27:35).**

Esav was confused and angry as he complained: **Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times.** Now Jacob's name comes from the Hebrew root *akav*, meaning *heel*; it also has the meaning in verbal form *to hold the heel, or to get before* which is its usage in **Jeremiah 9:4**. It has the meaning of *heel grabber, one who trips another by the heel, or overtakes and supplants him in the race.* The meaning here is that twice Jacob overcame Esau, tripped him and overcame him in the race. Esau just didn't get it. The reason that he was deceived two times was not in the name, it was in the divine will of God. The first time, as Esav tells it, was when Ya'akov took his birthright, but that was a lie because he had sold his birthright to his younger brother. Secondly, as described by Esau, was when Jacob took away his blessing. This was also a lie because the one with the blessing was the one who would receive the birthright. There again in the Hebrew text there is a play on the words, which sound alike. Literally it reads: *My birthright he took, he took my blessing.*

It is important to realize that the only two people who criticize Jacob in the Bible are Esau and Laban. These two are hardly honest witnesses. But most importantly, ADONAI Himself never condemns Ya'akov, and in fact Jacob is called righteous (25:27). Whenever God speaks to him, it is always a message of blessing and of promise.

Then Esau makes a request: Haven't you reserved any blessing for me? Isaac would bless him, but compared to the blessing he had given Ya'akov it was to be regarded as somewhat of a curse. Isaac prophesied: I have made him lord over you and have made all his relatives his servants, and I have sustained him with grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do for you, my son (27:36-37)? In short, **Jacob's blessing** was final.

Nonetheless, **Esau said: Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father! Then Esau wept aloud (27:38).** At this point, we do learn of a **blessing for Esau**, but it wasn't what he wanted to hear. **Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit his blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears (Hebrews 12:17).** Esau is perhaps the saddest and most godless person in the Bible outside of Judas. They both had great light. They had every possible opportunity, as much as any person in their times, of knowing and following ADONAI. They knew His word, had heard His promises, had seen His miracles and they had fellowship with His people. Yet, with determined willingness they turned their backs on Him. Here, **Esau bitterly regretted selling his birthright to Ya'akov, but he did not repent. He selfishly wanted God's blessings, but he did not want God.**⁴⁴⁶

In response to his pitiful cries, **Esau did receive a blessing of sorts from his father Yitz'chak**, but it was not the words of value and acceptance that he had longed to hear. **He was blessed in the opposite way as Jacob when Isaac said: Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above (27:39).** Esau would *not inherit the land*. Then he speaks of **Esau's nation of Edom. You will live by the sword (Numbers 20:14-21), and you will serve your brother.** The Edomites were first defeated by King Saul (**First Samuel 14:47**), and then subjugated by King David (**Second Samuel 8:14**). There was also a failed revolt under Solomon (**First Kings 11: 14-22**). Finally, they rebelled from Joram, but were re-subdued by Amaziah (**Second Kings 14:7 and Second Chronicles 25:11-19**). In the last part of **Isaac's blessing to Esau**, he said: **But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck (27:40).** This happened under Jehoram (**Second Chronicles 21:8-10**), and then secondly, under Ahaz (**Second Kings 16:6 and Second Chronicles 28:16-17**). So the words of Isaac to his two sons were fulfilled.

*What we have here, deeply hidden, is a beautiful foreshadowing of the Gospel. **Jacob** found the acceptance of **his father** and received **his blessing** because **he** sheltered behind the name of **his father's firstborn beloved son**, and was **clothed with garments**, which were **a sweet-smelling aroma** to **his father**. In like manner, we, as sinners, find acceptance before **God** and receive **His blessing** as we shelter behind the name of **His beloved firstborn**. We are **clothed with garments of salvation (Isaiah 61:10)**, which we receive from **Him**, thus coming before **the Father** on the merits of **His Son** who **has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice of God for a sweet-smelling aroma (Ephesians 5:2)**.⁴⁴⁷*

Edom's subsequent history was that when Isra'el went into the Babylonian captivity, the Edomites left their territory at Mount Seir in the Transjordan and moved into the southern part of Judah, where they became known as Edomeans. Later, these Edomeans were conquered by one of the descendants of the Maccabees, known as John Hyrcanos in 129 BC who forcibly converted them to Judaism. He then incorporated Edomea as a part of Judah. Eventually, these Edomeans produced the dynastic rule of the house of Herod.

Though ultimately **ADONAI** was faithful to **His Word** and accomplished **His purposes** through this family, **they** made **their** lives much more difficult by not exercising faith. First, **Yitz'chak** was punished by the deception **he** suffered, since **he** knew of the prophecy of **25:23**. Therefore, **his** preference for **Esau** caused **him** to go contrary to **God's** choice of **Jacob**. Second, **Rebekah** was punished because of **her** deception. **Jacob** would have to leave the land to keep from getting killed by **Esau** and **she** would never see **him** again. By the time **he** came back, **she** had died. Third, losing the patriarchal blessing, with all its material benefits as well punished **Esau**. And fourth, **Jacob** remained blessed by both **his** earthly **father** and **his** heavenly **Father** because **the older** was to serve **the younger**; but the **deception** by which **he** secured **the blessing** was never approved. **Jacob** had to pay for **his** sin by suffering a long life of hardships and struggles. **He** was not able to settle down in one place. **He** lived in Beersheba for sixty years, then in Haran for twenty years, the land of Canaan for fifty years, and then Egypt for seventeen years. And lastly, **he**, too, will be **deceived two times**, first by Laban and secondly by **his** own sons on two occasions. In this way the will of **the LORD** prevailed in spite of the actions of sinful men and women.