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Rebekah Took the Best Clothes of Esau and Put Them on Her Younger Son Jacob

27: 5-17

Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau and put them on her younger son Jacob DIG: What was Rebekah's alternative? Did ADONAI need Rebekah's help? Would God's purposes have been thwarted if Rebekah and Jacob had kept their human hands off the situation? Why did Jacob follow his mother into this conspiracy? What were they trying to do? Who were they trying to please?

REFLECT: How far would you go if you really believed you were doing the LORD's will? When have you taken matters into your own hands with disastrous results? Does the end justify the means?

Like **her** mother-in-law **Sarah**, **listening** to the visitors from within the tent (18:10), **Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke to his** favorite **son Esau**. **When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, she** hatched **her** plan (27:5). **Rebekah**, indeed, had always been a woman of quick decision and action, as was evident from the time **she** immediately followed Abraham's chief servant to marry **Isaac**. Probably, **she** and **Jacob** had had plenty of time to discuss this problem because **he** was over sixty years old at the time, and perhaps **she** had foreseen this development and already decided what **she** must do if the time should ever present itself.⁴³⁵

Rebekah said to her favorite **son Jacob** (Hebrew: Ya'akov), **"Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, "Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of ADONAI before I die" (27:6-7). A blessing in the presence of the LORD would be irrevocable, and if given to Esav, Jacob would never receive it.**

Then **Rebekah** issued **her** order: **My son, listen carefully and do what I tell you (27:8). Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I**

can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it, then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies (27:9-10).

Many people point to this episode in **Jacob's** life and label **him** a deceiver and a liar for the rest of **his** life, when in fact **he** lived a life of honesty and **righteousness** (Hebrew: *tam*, see **25:27**). Most of us would not like a single moment of weakness to define our entire lives. The problem, of course, is that **he** did lie here, even associating **God's** name with **his** lie (**27:20**). But why did **the LORD** not rebuke **Ya'akov** and withhold **His blessing** from **him**? Or, even after **Isaac** had blessed **him**, why did **ADONAI** later confirm the blessing (**28:13-15**)? Because the rebuke was solely for **Esau**, and the repentance was **Isaac's**, not **Jacob's**.

Jacob took matters into **his** own hands here knowing that **God** had told **his** **mother** that **the older will serve the younger (25:23c)** and is generally criticized for it; and **he** also took matters into **his** own hands trying to achieve the known will of **God** when **he** separated **himself** from **Laban** and went back to **Bethel** and is generally praised for it. For **God** had told **him**, **“Return to the land of your father's and to your relatives, and I will be with you” (31:3)**. **His** motivation was the same in both instances. **He** was trying to achieve the will of **God**.

Behind the scenes, however, **ADONAI** was causing **His** sovereign will to be accomplished despite the actions of fallen human beings. **His** plan was for **Jacob** to inherit the birthright. On the human level, this was impossible because **Jacob** was not the firstborn. But since it was in **the LORD's** eternal plan for **Jacob** to receive the blessing, **He** sovereignly arranged for it to be so as we can see in the B'rit Chadashah (see the commentary on **Romans Cq - The Explanation of Isra'el's Past Paradox**). **It seems that the only way to understand this situation is to conclude that even though the way in which Jacob and Rebekah went about obtaining the blessing from Isaac was wrong, the sin of Isaac and Esau was greater.**

The LORD does not approve of lying; **Jacob** and **Rebekah** knew this. **They** were sensitive and spiritual people, but **they** had decided that, as bad as deception might be in the sight of **ADONAI**, it had become necessary in this case in order to prevent a greater sin, that of conveying the most holy of **God's** promises to a man who neither wanted it nor would honor it. This was as much of a lapse of faith as when Abraham went to Egypt in **Chapter 12**, and when Sarah suggested that they

have a child through her handmaiden Hagar in **Chapter 16**. **Rebekah** had already received the revelation from **the LORD** that **the older would serve the younger (25:23b)**. Here, then, **Rebekah** needed to trust that in **ADONAI's** timing **Ya'akov** would receive **the** patriarchal **blessing**. But because of a lack of faith **she** felt that **she** needed to take matters into **her** own hands because it seemed that nothing could stop **Isaac**. **Esau** could have come back at any moment! We can only imagine how hopeless **they** felt. This was a desperate situation, but it wasn't the first time that someone had lied to preserve **God's** people.

The **Hebrew midwives** deliberately disobeyed **Pharaoh** and lied to **him**. Why? Because **they feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do (Exodus 1:15-16 and 22)**. To do otherwise would have resulted in the deaths of countless **Hebrew boys**. Did **the LORD** punish these **midwives** for lying? No, **Elohim was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, He gave them families of their own (Exodus 1:20-21)**. **Jacob** was an upright man (Hebrew: *tam*) and **he** lived **his** entire life that way and was blessed as a result.

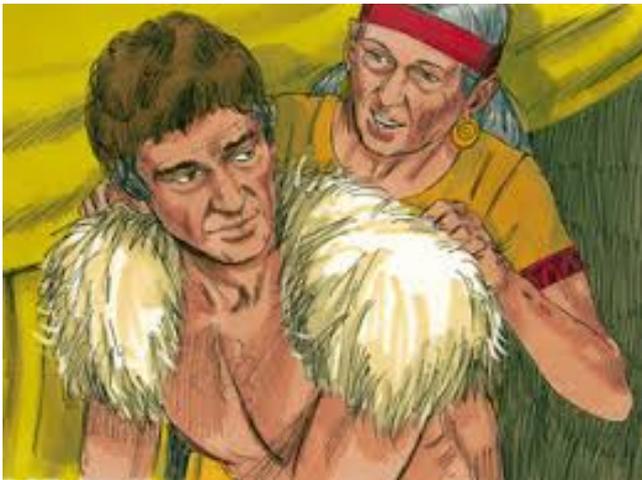
Another example of **ADONAI's** blessing on a lie was in the life of **Rahab**. **She** and **her family and all that belonged to her** were saved because **she hid** two Israelite **spies** and lied about it to the king of **Jericho (Joshua 2:4-7 and 6:25)**. There are a number of other instances in the Bible in which godly men, in order to accomplish the will of **God** and to glorify **Him**, had to break another of **His** commandments. *These are rare exceptions and can only be justified in very special and unusual circumstances as we have here with Isaac and the patriarchal blessing.* Furthermore, the people in these examples never gain any financial advantage for themselves. In fact, **Rahab** and the **Hebrew midwives** risked **their** lives because of the lies **they** told.

Similarly, **Jacob** and **Rebekah**, in order to do what **they** thought was necessary to accomplish **God's** will, were willing to risk the wrath and hatred of **their** own loved ones, and **Jacob** even to risk **his** life at the hands of **his** angry brother. Because **Jacob was righteous, he** only cared about the spiritual ramifications of **the blessing**.⁴³⁶

Nevertheless, **Ya'akov** had some doubts, and **he said to his mother, "My brother Esau is a hairy man, and I'm a man with smooth skin" (27:11)**. **Isaac** might have lost **his** eyesight, but **his** sense of touch remained intact.

Because **Jacob was a righteous man**, and **he** knew that not honoring **his father** was a sin in the sight of **God**. **He** asked: **What if my father touches me? I would appear to be** mocking **him** because of **his** blindness **and would bring down a curse upon myself rather than a blessing**. **But his mother** said to **him**, “**My son, let the curse fall upon me. I take full responsibility, just do what I say; go and get them for me**” (27:12-13). **She** was so confident that this was **the LORD’s** will that **she** believed the ends justified the means and did not fear the possibility of a **curse**. **Jacob** also believed it was **God’s** will for **him** to receive the birthright and it didn’t take much convincing for **him** to follow **his mother’s** lead. After all, hadn’t **ADONAI** told **her**, “**the older will serve the younger**”(25:23c)?

So Ya’akov went and got the two choice young goats and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. While **the food** was cooking **Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob (27:14-15)**. **It would appear that Rebekah had kept these specific clothes in her house for this very purpose**. **Esau’s wives had been a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah (26:35) and were probably living somewhere else**. These **clothes** would smell like **Esav** and the outdoors. This was clearly a very tense situation.



Rebekah also covered Jacob’s hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins to provide the feeling of hairiness, **so Esau’s clothes** would provide the proper smell, and the **goatskins** would provide the proper feel. **Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made (27:16-17)**. **The flesh of a young goat tastes like venison**, and **Isaac** would



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not know the difference. Then **she** got **Jacob** dressed up and turned **the food** over to her son **Ya'akov**. **Rebekah** really thought **she** could pull the wool over **Isaac's** eyes.⁴³⁷

So all the senses were taken care of. **Isaac** was blind, so **Rebekah** didn't have to worry about that. **Jacob** wore **Esau's** clothing to take care of the sense of smell. **She** cooked the **young goats** because they tasted like venison and used **the goatskins** to make **Jacob** appear hairy. The only sense **she** could not cover was **Isaac's** sense of hearing, and there was a point where this almost blew **their** cover (**27:21-24**).