



## STORY

Jacob Receives the Blessing - Genesis 25:19-34 and 27:1-40

(Note: this lesson and #10 are so closely connected that the teacher does well to prepare for both simultaneously; some of the Teacher's Notes are interchangeable between the two lessons.)

## TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Father, my God through the life and work of Jesus, incline Your ear to my prayer. I ask for Your Spirit to enable my mind and heart and tongue to glorify You in my life as a teacher of Your children. Empower Your Word to produce Your will in all of us gathered here below. Enliven the hearts and wills of my students to be thrilled over Your hand in their lives. Amen.

## VOCABULARY

*seethe pottage* = boil lentil soup; lentils belong to the bean (legume) family of vegetables

*venison* = savory food, broiled or baked meat of wild game such as deer, antelope, pheasant, duck

*genealogy* = a portion of the family tree showing ancestors and descendants

## OUTER AIM

The family tree of Jesus was carried forward through the branch of Jacob.

## INNER AIM

God outmaneuvered the "sting operation" of Rebekah and Jacob in order to carry forward His blueprint for the family tree of Jesus' ancestors (from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to ...).

## BACKGROUND

*(Rupprecht, Bible History References, Vol. 1, pp. 75-82)*

Since our last lesson, Isaac's mother has died, Abraham has remarried (Keturah), has sired a large number of children and grandchildren but has "sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son," and has died. Abraham showed that he was passing on the special blessings to Isaac, and to Isaac alone (even his good son Ishmael was bypassed).

### Ch. 25: 19-20

*This is the genealogy of Isaac* Isaac becomes the focus of the narrative, and we are going to see the hand of God in this chosen person's life as the bridge that will lead to Jesus.

vs. 21-22

Rebekah had been barren for nineteen years of her marriage. What did God have in mind with this tribulation? To bring their concerns to the LORD. A reminder: children are a gift from God; even in our day of "genetic engineering," conception and human life are in God's hands.

v.22

Rebekah could feel the jostling in her womb and she was concerned that something was awry in the way the blessing was arriving. "*If it be so, for what then am I destined?*" (Leupold, p.702)

v.23

There was a cause, of course: she was mothering two separate and distinct forces/futures/ destinies of nations: the *older to serve the younger* was a reversing of the cultural norm; this is important, for in God's kingdom the carnal mind should yield to the spiritual, and in His kingdom the stronger should serve the weaker so as to bring blessings (as Jesus did for us).

vs.24-26

The first twin to emerge was a red, hairy baby (we would call him "Red" or "Harry").

The second baby got a grip on the heel of his twin, and because of this he was called a usurper, a replacer, a "tripper-upper" = the name Jacob. (Isaac was by now sixty years old.)

v.27-28

*So the boys grew!* Esau, the first born, became a skilled outdoorsman, a toughened survivalist.

The younger twin, Jacob, developed social skills and a sense of the continuity between himself and Abraham and the Promise.

Each parent had a favorite: Dad bonded with tough and hearty Esau; Mom bonded with mild and sensitive Jacob. This was OK, but because Rebekah was concerned for the promised Seed, she was drawn to support God's choice of the younger of her two boys.

vs. 29-34

Esau came with the modest request that Jacob share his supper stew; Jacob took advantage of his brother's vulnerability, and instead of being generous, he was selfish.

Jacob bargained for the special place of "firstborn," which at the time was a big deal (the oldest boy got the farm when Dad died, or the resources to carry on the family tradition and become head of the tribal family). It was a miserable conversation once Jacob got greedy. (Reminder: manipulating people for self is never God-pleasing.)

Esau was cheated because he did not seem to care about carrying on the family tradition. Heb.12:16 calls him a "profane person" who had no interest in a father's special place in God's plans for the tribe and the world.

There was selfishness on both sides, since Isaac should have been willing to help his brother in his bodily need as well as encourage him to appreciate his legacy and inheritance.

(Ch. 26 is skipped, where the LORD required Isaac to stay in Canaan during a famine--with the Promise repeated. Isaac lied about Rebekah being his wife--a sin his father had done with another Abimelech, years earlier. Nonetheless, the LORD blessed Isaac as He had promised.)

**Ch. 27:1-40** Which of the twins would be selected as the bridge to the Messiah? Isaac wanted to bless Esau, but Rebekah and Jacob carried out a sting operation in an attempt to "improve on" God's plan and God's methods.

vs. 1-4

Isaac was not heeding God's will when he intended to select the first-born (Esau) for his parting (ultimate) paternal blessing.

vs. 5-10

Rebekah caught the drift that Isaac intended to transfer God's choice away from Jacob. Instead of reminding her husband of God's will, she resorted to deceit/trickery in a misguided attempt to "aid God's hand."

v. 8

She even laid it on Jacob's conscience (as a matter of the 4th commandment) to do as she said; thus she used a selfish "religious" tactic that could produce great spiritual harm.

vs. 11-18

Jacob objected to some of the mechanics and the potential harm when he should have objected to the entire deceitful project. Mother and son collaborated in this conspiracy of deceit.

vs. 19-24

Next came outright bald-faced lying (a subject on which our Lord focuses in James 1:14).

Even when cross-examined, Jacob stuck to his lies including the blasphemous lie that the LORD was behind his claim.

vs. 25-29

When Isaac's justified suspicions had been dispelled, he gave the coveted blessing to Jacob.

In substance, the blessing covered earthly prosperity, ethnic ascendancy, and superiority of his blood line over Esau's. The LORD's support was invoked on the entire blessing but what is apparently missing is any obvious Messianic prophecy.

vs. 30-32

The deception needed to last only a few minutes; Esau's arrival burst the bubble.

vs. 33-35

Here is a scene overcharged with emotion! With trembling Isaac seemed to be catching on that a) his attempt to bypass the LORD's choice of Jacob had backfired on him, and b) that all the double-dealing (with God and with one another) had not only not detoured God's plans for Jacob, but had in fact had accomplished the opposite. These actions had brought calamity to their own household.

vs. 36-40

Although Esau's pleading for a fair portion of blessing from his father (and from the LORD who stood behind Isaac) did not induce Isaac to repudiate Jacob's status (cf. Hebrews 12:17), Isaac did assure Esau of earthly well-being, albeit at the price of subservience to Jacob (until a future day of successful rebellion from Jacob's control).

## STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Father, Whom I love and wish to serve, today as I ponder how Your hand protected Jacob even when he did not deserve it, I often puzzle over how I shall survive my mistakes in life. Then I remind myself of how You outmaneuvered the sinful strategies of Isaac, Rebekah, and Jacob. I praise and honor You for Your hand in their lives--and in mine, too. Amen, in Jesus' name.

## PRESENTATION (Helps and Hints)

1. The teacher needs to be conversant with sections which were bypassed: Abraham has lost Sarah, married Keturah, and their boys (TEN of their descendants are named!) were sent away as non-participants in the special (ch.25:1-18) lineage of the Messiah; Abraham died; Ishmael's tribe is traced and by-passed, as are Isaac's dealings with Abimelech, ch.26.

2. See Notes for the next lesson also.

Since this lesson covers 55 verses, the teacher will abbreviate the text to suit the class level.

3. Maintain focus on the essentials with an outline such as this:

- I. God produced a promised heir (Jacob) to Isaac; then the other children of Isaac were bypassed from the Messianic family tree.
- II. God blessed Jacob by outmaneuvering human strategies :
  - ▶ Isaac's favoring of Esau was a selfish mistake
  - ▶ Rebekah's trick to favor Jacob was a sinful strategy
  - ▶ Jacob's selfishness made him sin against his father and twin brother III God played along and managed to outmaneuver these human strategies.

4. Combine appropriate and applicable Bible truths and passages during the presentation to emphasize and reinforce the truth that God had a loving hand in Jacob's life.

## APPLICATIONS

1. This is God's record of how He manages our affairs even in spite of the mistakes that humans make due to their selfishness. So Isaac and Jacob were hand picked by God, were raised by His hand, and were kept in His hand so that God would be recognized as the Author and Finisher of our salvation.

2. God takes Fatherly care of His erring children, lest we fall victims of our own sinful attitudes, schemes, and manipulations. Yet we receive painful consequences to bear in our interpersonal relationships when we give in to our sinful inclinations.. We become our own worst enemies when we hurt someone else, for we may lose a friend for life. That creates a double loss, for he has lost me, and I have lost him.

3. Recognize greed, selfishness, and ego in your own heart when Satan urges you to think: "But what about ME?" Answer: "Well, what about me? God cares for me, and He is not going to be so cruel as to deprive me of all I need if I just go ahead to be loving, generous, and sharing."

4. In all cases where we have a Word of God to guide and direct us (as Rebekah did), we should be bold to remind ourselves and others of God's Word on the matter. We also need to resist the temptation to resort to human (intellectual or psychological) devices to cause God's will to be done."

## **PASSAGES**

**These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.**

### **Lower**

Heb. 11:20 - *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*

James 1:14 - *...each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires....*

### **Middle any of the above and...**

I Jn. 3:15 - *Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

James 1:13b-15 - *...nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*

### **Upper any of the above and...**

II Cor. 7:10 - *For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death .*

Eph. 2:16 - *...that He might reconcile them both (Jew and Gentile) to God in one body (the Church) through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.*

(Note: Also use Rom. 9:6-16 as background for God's choosing Jacob, but explain the Calvinist error of using this passage to deduce that God hated Esau even before his birth.)

## **HYMN CHOICES**

"Take My Life And Let It Be" (TLH #400 1-6)

"Oh, That the LORD Would Guide My Ways" (TLH #416 1-4)

"My God, My Father, While I Stray" (TLH #418 1-4)