

THE STOLEN BLESSING

Old Testament Lesson #19

Isaac was old and nearly blind. He called his oldest son Esau to him and told him to hunt some wild game and prepare it to eat. Then he would give Esau his blessing as the firstborn (see Points to Consider).

Rebekah overheard this. After Esau had gone, she told Jacob and instructed him to kill two goats. She prepared them the way Isaac liked, dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes and goatskins as a disguise to make Isaac think that Jacob was Esau. (Jacob had smooth skin; Esau's was hairy. The goatskins were to make Jacob seem to be Esau.)

Jacob obeyed Rebekah and lied to his father, saying, "I am Esau." Jacob told his father to eat some of the game so that he could give him the blessing. Then Isaac felt his son's hands to see if they were really Esau's. He decided they were.

Isaac then asked for the food. He ate and drank some wine. He then kissed Jacob and smelled his clothing, which further convinced Isaac that it was Esau. Isaac then granted his blessing to Jacob.

When Esau returned from hunting, he realized what had happened. Esau was very angry and wanted to kill Jacob, but Isaac said he couldn't change the blessing. Rebekah warned Jacob and suggested he flee to her brother Laban. She said she would send for him when Esau's anger subsided.

Isaac then called Jacob, commanded him to flee to Paddan Aram, the land of Rebekah's family, and marry there. He then sent him away.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

- Rebekah helped Jacob steal Esau's blessing because Jacob was her favorite (see Genesis 25:28).
- The birthright blessing, which usually fell to the firstborn son, was considered to confer actual well-being and benefit on the recipient. Once given by the father, even if to the wrong son, it was irrevocable and could not be given to another.
- Paddan Aram (PA-dan-A-ram) corresponds to the region around the city of Haran (HA-ran) where Abraham's relatives lived.
- Isaac died at the age of 180 and was buried by both his sons (Genesis 35:29). This was over 20 years after Jacob stole the blessing and fled to Paddan Aram. Though Isaac thought he was near death when he gave the blessing to Jacob, he lived a considerable time longer. He was blessed with seeing Jacob's children. Both of his sons came together to bury him.

- Jacob's name means "supplanter" or "deceiver." He fulfilled this name in his deception of Isaac.
- The blessing Isaac gave Jacob was this:
 - that God would grant Jacob the dew of heaven, earth's richness and an abundance of grain and new wine.
 - that nations would serve him, and people would bow to him.
 - that he would be lord over his brothers, and they would bow to him.
 - that everyone who cursed him would be cursed, and those who blessed him would be blessed.
- In Genesis 25:23, God had promised that the older would serve the younger.
- This was the last time Jacob saw his mother.

The Stolen Blessing

- I. Isaac told Esau he planned to give him his blessing.
 - A. Rebekah overheard him and told Jacob.
 - B. Jacob prepared food that his father liked and dressed in Esau's clothes.
- II. Jacob went to his father.
 - A. He gave his father food and said that he was Esau.
 - B. He let Isaac feel his hands.
 - C. He received the blessing that Isaac gave him.
- III. Esau returned from hunting and learned about the trick.
 - A. He wanted to kill his brother.
 - B. Isaac said he couldn't change the blessing.
 - C. Rebekah warned Jacob about Esau and told Jacob to flee to her family in Paddan Aram.
 - D. Isaac also told Jacob to leave, and he did.

ANSWER KEY:

heard, said, told, sent, kill, goats, prepared, way, liked, dressed, clothes, hid, smooth, skin, goatskins, went, food, hands, smelled, clothes, ate, food, kissed, gave, blessing

