

Jacob Deceived His Father and Received the Blessing

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn to explain that sin leads to more sin and that there are also consequences that happen when we sin. In this topic, we will see the blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob, even though he thought he was giving it to Esau.

Genesis 27:18-20 says, “So he went to his father and said, ‘My father.’ And he said, ‘Here I am. Who *are* you, my son?’ Jacob said to his father, ‘I *am* Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.’ But Isaac said to his son, ‘How *is it* that you have found *it* so quickly, my son?’ And he said, ‘Because the LORD your God brought *it* to me.’” In these verses, we see that Jacob had to start telling lies to cover up the fact that he was actually trying to deceive his father to get the blessing rather than Esau. This is a reminder again that when we sin, we will have to commit other sins to try and cover up the first sin.

Jacob began by saying, “My father.” These words were true, but they quickly led to Jacob telling a lie because his father answered, “Here I am. Who *are* you, my son?” When Isaac asked this question, suddenly Jacob was faced with a choice. In order to try to deceive his father, we see that Jacob chose to tell a lie. This would be the first of several lies that he chose to tell in his efforts to deceive his father. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament warn that we sin when we tell a lie. The ninth commandment, given in Exodus 20:16 says, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” In this case, Jacob chose to give a false witness to his father and against his brother by claiming that he was Esau, as he said, “I am Esau your firstborn.” In addition, he added another lie as he said that he had done just as his father had told him to do.

To try to stop the questions, Jacob quickly said to his father, “Please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” Here, we see that he included another lie to stop the questions. It was not even wild game that he was serving to his father. Instead, it was the meat of the goats that his mother had prepared. Another example of the fact that one lie leads to more lies. He wanted his father to eat so that his father would not ask any additional questions that would require lies to answer. However, his father chose to ask another question first, as his father said, “How *is it* that you have found *it* so quickly, my son?” Jacob had asked his father to eat the wild game that his father liked. As a result, his father wanted to know how he had found the wild game so quickly. His answer was another lie, as Jacob said, “Because the Lord your God brought *it* to me.” By this answer, Jacob said that the Lord had brought the wild game to him quickly. Each lie just led to additional lies.

Genesis 27:21-24 goes on to say, “Isaac said to Jacob, ‘Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you *are* really my son Esau or not.’ So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, ‘The voice *is* Jacob’s voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.’ And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he blessed him. Then he said, ‘*Are* you really my son Esau?’ He said, ‘I *am*.’” Although Isaac could not

longer see, that did not mean that his other senses were not working. He could still hear quite well. He recognized, because of his hearing, that something did not sound right. As a result, Isaac made another request of Jacob, as he said, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you *are* really my son Esau or not.” Jacob did not know why his father made this request, but he soon understood. He walked over close to his father and the first thing his father did was to feel his arms. His father then explained why he felt his arms. His father said that the voice sounded like Jacob. However, when he felt the hands of Jacob, Isaac was deceived by the skins because the hands felt like the hands of Esau.

Rebekah had planned to deceive her husband so Jacob would get the blessing instead of Esau. However, that plan had already caused Jacob to tell his father several lies in order for him to do his part to deceive his father. Jacob would later learn the meaning of the phrase what we sow, we will certainly reap. In Genesis 29, we will see that Jacob was deceived by his future father-in-law. He worked for Laban for seven years in order to get Rachel as his wife. Then, Laban deceived Jacob. Genesis 29:23-25 says, “Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah *as* a maid. So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it *was* Leah. And he said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?’” Suddenly, that morning, Jacob learned very quickly the impact that deception can have on others. He reaped what he had sown when he deceived his father. The deception of Jacob had a great impact both on his father and on his brother.

However, we see that the deception worked for a time for Jacob. His father did not recognize him, even though the voice sounded like Jacob, because of the deception with the animal skins on his arms. We see that Isaac was deceived and decided to bless Jacob. However, Isaac had one more question for Jacob first. Isaac asked the question, “Are you really my son Esau?” This question showed that Isaac was still uncertain who was talking to him because of the fact that the voice sounded like Jacob. Suddenly, Jacob had to decide again if he was going to tell the truth or lie to his father. Each lie makes it a little easier to tell the next lie. That is shown by the response of Jacob to the direct question. He immediately answered, “I am.” As we can see, Rebekah and Jacob both committed sins in order to deceive Isaac. We do not read about the death of Rebekah so it is possible that she died during the twenty years that Jacob was working for Laban. If that is the case, it meant that Jacob was not with his mother when she died.

Isaac was satisfied once he heard the direct answer from Jacob. Genesis 27:25-29 goes on to say, “He said, ‘Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, so that my soul may bless you.’ So he brought *it* near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, ‘Come near now and kiss me, my son.’ 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. Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. 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!’” Isaac ate the savory stew that Jacob had brought. Then, Isaac asked his son to come near to him and kiss him. In these verses, we see one final way Jacob deceived his father, as his father smelled the clothing of Esau. Then, his father was ready to bless him.

Isaac said, “Surely, the smell of my son *is* like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed.” As Isaac began the blessing, he started this blessing with the final way that he had been deceived by Jacob. He compared his son to the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed. That was due to the fact that Esau was a man of the field. Genesis 25:27 says, “So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.” This statement showed that the smell of the clothing of Esau was the final thing that convinced Isaac he was giving the blessing to Esau. The first part of the blessing was related to this smell of the field. This part of the blessing had three parts. First, Isaac asked God to bless his son with the dew of heaven because that was what watered the grass and fields and caused them to grow. Second, he asked the Lord to give him fertile ground that would produce good crops. Third, he asked God to cause his fields of grain and his vineyards to produce abundant crops.

In the blessing, Isaac said that the peoples and the nations would serve him and bow down to him. Then, Isaac gave the part of the blessing that would cause great hatred by Esau, when he said, “Be master over your brethren, and let your mother’s sons bow down to you.” The word translated “master” is only used one other time and that is in verse 37 of this chapter, where we read, “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?’” However, before Isaac made this statement, we see how he reacted when he heard that Jacob was the one who had received the blessing. Genesis 27:33 says, “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.” Isaac realized that he had sinned in not giving the blessing to Jacob and so he said that Jacob was indeed the one who would be blessed. Isaac knew what God had said, but he had wanted his favorite son to receive the blessing anyway. He realized that was not going to happen.

The final statement of the blessing Isaac gave to Jacob was the same as the final statement God gave to Abraham when God announced the covenant to Abraham. God had told Abraham, in Genesis 12:3, “I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Here, we see that Isaac finally realized that the covenant of God would carry on through the line of Jacob, not Esau. God had earlier made it clear the covenant would pass through Isaac when He said, in Genesis 17:21, “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this set time next year.” Now, God had allowed Isaac to learn that God would cause the line to go through Jacob. We want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to explain the fact that God revealed both to Abraham and to Isaac to whom the line of Christ would be passed. God wanted His plan for the future made clear. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain how God revealed His plan, in spite of the sins of Isaac and his family.