

NOON BIBLE STUDY: GENESIS 27

GENESIS 27:1-4 - ISAAC PREPARES TO DIE

ISAAC, PREPARING TO DIE, CALLS ESAU (HIS FIRST BORN SON) TO "BLESS" HIM. IN BIBLICAL CULTURE, THE FIRST BORN SON IS THE HEIR OF THE FAMILY ESTATE. IN THE CASE OF THE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM, THE FIRST BORN SON WILL ALSO INHERIT THE ABRAHAMIC BLESSING AND THE PROMISES OF GOD. ISAAC IS DESCRIBED AS "OLD" AND LOSING HIS SIGHT, HE BELIEVES HE IS NEARING DEATH, AND SO THE TIME OF BLESSING IS HERE.

THESE BLESSINGS WERE PRONOUNCEMENTS AND PRAYERS. THEY WERE REQUESTS TO THE LORD FOR CERTAIN EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES TO BE DONE FOR THE ONE RECEIVING THE BLESSING AND THEY WERE ALSO PROPHETIC IN THE SENSE THAT WHAT WAS SPOKEN OVER THE LIFE OF THE PERSON TYPICALLY HAPPENS. GOD USES HIS PATRIARCHAL FIGURES (ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND EVENTUALLY JACOB) TO SPEAK THINGS OVER THEIR SONS AS A PROPHETIC WORD ABOUT THEIR FUTURES.

BLESSING WAS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT TO THE ABRAHAMIC FAMILY. GOD SAID HE WOULD "BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU" AND THAT ABRAHAM AND HIS FAMILY WERE TO BE A "BLESSING" TO THE EARTH. AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED, THIS IS A THROWBACK TO THE GARDEN OF EDEN WHEN THE EARTH WAS CURSED BECAUSE OF HUMANITY'S SIN. THROUGH ABRAHAM AND HIS FAMILY, GOD IS BRINGING THE BLESSING BACK. SO ISAAC'S DESIRE TO BLESS HIS SON IS IMPORTANT ON MANY LEVELS.

AND WITH THAT, ESAU HEADS OUT TO THE FIELD TO MAKE HIS FATHER HIS FAVORITE MEAL.

GENESIS 27:5-17 - REBEKAH'S PLAN TO DECEIVE ISAAC

WE ALREADY KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT ESAU AND JACOB FROM GENESIS 25. WE KNOW THAT EVEN IN THE WOMB, THE LORD HAD SPOKE TO REBEKAH THAT "TWO NATIONS ARE IN YOUR WOMB, AND THE OLDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER" (25:23). WE KNOW ESAU WAS BORN FIRST, BUT JACOB WAS NOT FAR BEHIND, HOLDING THE HEEL OF HIS TWIN BROTHER AS THEY WERE BORN. ESAU, A HUNTER IS LOVED (MORE) BY HIS FATHER AND JACOB, A PEACEFUL MAN, WAS FAVORED BY HIS MOTHER (25:27-28). AND WE ALSO KNOW THAT ESAU, THE FIRST BORN, DESPISED HIS BIRTHRIGHT HAD ALREADY SOLD IT TO JACOB FOR A BOWL OF STEW (GEN 25).

IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER OR NOT REBEKAH AND ISAAC KNOW OF THIS BASED ON THEIR ACTIONS IN THIS CHAPTER. BUT THEIR ACTIONS FULFILL THE WORD OF THE LORD TO REBEKAH ABOUT THE TRAJECTORY OF THESE TWO SONS.

REBEKAH LEADS QUITE THE CLANDESTINE OPERATION HERE. IT WAS REBEKAH WHO HEARS ISAAC'S PLAN AND QUICKLY ACTS TO GET JACOB TO TRICK ISAAC INTO THINKING HE IS ESAU. THEIR PLAN IS TO MAKE SOME OF THE FAVORITE MEAL, WEAR Hairy SLEEVES, AND TRICK ISAAC INTO THINKING JACOB IS REALLY ESAU SO THAT ISAAC WILL GIVE THE FIRST BORN BLESSING TO JACOB! WOW - AND YOU THOUGHT YOUR FAMILY HAD ISSUES!

JACOB IS HESITANT AT FIRST (*I'M NOT Hairy*, HE SAYS) BUT REBEKAH IS DETERMINED FOR THIS TO HAPPEN. SHE EVEN CALLS UPON A CURSE UPON HERSELF IF THIS PLAN DOESN'T WORK OUT!

GENESIS 27:18-26 - JACOB DECEIVES ISAAC

OLD AND BLIND ISAAC THINKS SOMETHING MIGHT BE FISHY - THE MEAL IS MADE TOO QUICK AND "ESAU'S" VOICE SOUNDS LIKE JACOB'S VOICE! NEVERTHELESS, THROUGH JACOB LIES TO HIS FATHER, AIDED BY REBEKAH'S CUISINE AND HER ESAU COSTUME, THE PLAN WORKS. ISAAC FEELS HIS HAIR ARMS, SMELLS THE HUNTER SMELL, AND THE MEAL TASTES JUST RIGHT. SO ISAAC BELIEVES THAT INDEED ESAU IS STANDING BEFORE HIM AND INVITES HIM TO BE BLESSED.

SOMEHOW, THROUGH DECEITFUL MEANS, REBEKAH ENSURES HER YOUNGER SON, HER BELOVED SON, HER HEEL-HOLDING SON, RECEIVES THE BLESSING. BE SURE, THIS RECORD SHOULD NOT VALIDATE LYING OR DECEPTION AS LONG AS IT BRINGS ABOUT GOOD RESULTS. THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES THAT COME AS A RESULT OF THIS TRICKERY. IN FACT, THIS IS YET ANOTHER INSTANCE OF GENERATIONAL SINS COMING OUT IN THE ABRAHAMIC FAMILY. IT IS ANOTHER STORY OF THE FATHERS AND MOTHERS OF FAITH HAVING VERY SIGNIFICANT FLAWS. YET IS ALSO SHOWS THAT EVEN THROUGH, AND IN SPITE OF, THEIR FLAWS, AND SINS, GOD'S WILL IS DONE.

GENESIS 27:27-29 - ISAAC BLESSES JACOB

JACOB RECEIVES THE BLESSING OF THE FIRST BORN. HE HAD ALREADY RECEIVED THE LEGAL RIGHTS OF THE FIRST BORN FROM ESAU AFTER THE BOWL OF STEW EXCHANGE, BUT NOW HE RECEIVES THE SPIRITUAL RIGHTS OF THE FIRST BORN TRANSFERRED BY THE FATHER HIMSELF.

THIS BLESSING IS RIGHT OUT OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT. BLESSINGS UPON THE EARTH (FATNESS AND ABUNDANCE, V. 28) AND AUTHORITY OVER THE NATIONS (PEOPLE SERVING, NATIONS BOWING DOWN). ALSO THERE IS A CONFIRMATION OF THE WORD SPOKEN TO REBEKAH AS THE BOYS WERE IN HER WOMB THAT "YOUR MOTHER'S SONS WILL BOW DOWN TO YOU" (AKA THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER, GENESIS 25:23).

AT THIS MOMENT, JACOB IS NOW LEGALLY AND SPIRITUALLY THE FIRST BORN, THE HEIR AND THE BLESSED SON OF ISAAC, THE SON OF ABRAHAM.

JACOB LEAVES ISAAC'S PRESENCE AND IMMEDIATELY ESAU RETURNS HOME.

GENESIS 27:30-35 - ESAU RETURNS AND IS DEVASTATED

WHAT A HEART WRENCHING RESPONSE FROM ESAU. HE KNOWS THAT SOMETHING IRREVERSIBLE HAS JUST HAPPENED. ISAAC HIMSELF TREMBLES WHEN HE REALIZES WHAT HAS JUST HAPPENED. ESAU, NOW CRYING PLEADS WITH HIS FATHER TO BLESS HIM! ISAAC RESPONDS THAT THE BLESSING HAS ALREADY BEEN TAKEN AWAY.

IT'S INTERESTING TO READ THIS REACTION KNOWING THAT ESAU HAD GIVEN AWAY HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB IN A MUCH LESS SERIOUS SITUATION. IT SEEMS LIKE THE RELATIONSHIP THAT ESAU HAD WITH HIS FATHER IS A BIG PART OF THIS. THEY LOVED EACH OTHER. ESAU WAS CLOSER TO ISAAC THAN JACOB WAS AND CLOSER TO ISAAC THAN HE WAS TO REBEKAH. I WOULD IMAGINE THAT SOME OF THE EMOTIONAL DEVASTATION IS ROOTED IN THE BROKENNESS HE FEELS ABOUT THAT RELATIONSHIP.

GENESIS 27:36-40 - ISAAC BLESSES ESAU

ISAAC TELLS ESAU OF THE BLESSING HE HAS GIVEN TO JACOB. IT IS LIKELY HARD FOR ESAU TO HEAR THIS SINCE SO MUCH OF THE BLESSING RELATES NOT JUST TO JACOB'S FUTURE BUT TO ESAU'S (EX: "THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER). ISAAC HAS ALREADY SAID THAT HE CANNOT GIVE THE BLESSING TO ESAU BUT HE HAS A SECONDARY BLESSING, LIKELY ONE RESERVED FOR THE SECOND BORN SON THAT HE DOES GIVE.

ESAU REMARKS THAT JACOB IS "RIGHTLY NAMED JACOB" - A NAME MEANING "DECEIVE/CHEAT". INDEED THIS IS THE SECOND TIME JACOB HAS DONE SOMETHING LIKE THIS TO ESAU - THE FIRST BEING WHEN HE TOOK HIS BIRTHRIGHT. THE ESV STUDY OBSERVES THAT "FROM ESAU'S PERSPECTIVE, JACOB HAS CHEATED HIM OUT OF BOTH HIS BIRTHRIGHT (SEE 25:29—34) AND HIS BLESSING, ALTHOUGH ESAU WILLINGLY FORFEITED HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB (SEE 25:33)." ESAU'S NOT HAPPY WITH HIS TWIN BROTHER.

GENESIS 27:41-46 - JACOB FLEES

AS A RESULT OF THIS EVENT, ESAU COMMITS TO KILL JACOB AFTER ISAAC DIES. HE WILL BECOME CONSUMED WITH THIS GOAL. THE FAMILY OF ISAAC CHANGES AS A RESULT OF THIS DAY. REBEKAH OVERHEARS THE SECOND CONVERSATION RELATING TO HER SONS, AND THIS TIME IT LEADS TO HER TELLING JACOB TO FLEE TO LABAN'S HOUSE UNTIL ESAU'S "FURY SUBSIDES AND HE FORGETS WHAT YOU DID TO HIM (V.45)". WE'LL SEE HOW THAT WORKS OUT IN THE CHAPTERS TO COME.

THE CHAPTER ENDS WITH REBEKAH COMPLAINING TO ISAAC ABOUT ESAU'S WIVES (THE HITTITE WOMEN WHO CAUSED THE FAMILY TROUBLE IN 26:34-35.). WE'LL READ IN THE NEXT CHAPTER THAT WHILE JACOB IS IN MESOPOTAMIA WITH LABAN HE WILL FIND A WIFE. IT'S POSSIBLE THAT REBEKAH MAKES THIS CONCLUDING REMARK IN THE CHAPTER AS A MOTIVATION FOR JACOB'S LEAVING HOME - EVEN THOUGH IT WAS REALLY TO PROTECT HIM FROM ESAU. MORE DECEIT FROM REBEKAH AND IN THE HOUSE OF ISAAC.

A BIZARRE SERIES OF EVENTS UNFOLD IN GENESIS 27. WE'RE AGAIN REMINDED OF THE SINS AND FAILINGS OF THIS FAMILY GOD CHOSE TO CALL TO REDEEM THE WORLD. LIES, TRICKS, DECEIT, PLOTS AND DECLARATIONS ABOUT KILLING FAMILY MEMBERS READS MORE LIKE A MOB STORY THAN THE HOLY BIBLE - YET SUCH IS THE STORY OF SCRIPTURE. MUCH MORE TRUE TO LIFE, COLORFUL AND REFRESHINGLY TRANSPARENT THAN WE OFTEN THINK. GOD IS NOT AFRAID TO REVEAL THE FLAWS OF THE MAIN CHARACTERS OF HIS STORY AS SOME AUTHORS WOULD.

IF HUMANS WROTE THE SACRED TEXT TO FOOL THE MASSES INTO WORSHIPING THEIR GODS, THEY WOULD COVER UP THEIR HERO'S PROBLEMS. BUT NOT THE LORD. HE PRESERVES AND TELLS THE STORY TO US IN ALL ITS INGLOUSIOUS GLORY. AND THROUGH THIS WE GET TO SEE OURSELVES IN THE STORY MORE THAN WE MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT. IF GOD WORKS IN REBEKAH AND JACOB, MAYBE HE CAN WORK THROUGH US. WE SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR THIS. THIS DOESN'T MEAN SIN DOESN'T HAVE CONSEQUENCES OR THAT THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS, BUT IT DOES MEAN GOD IS GRACIOUS AND SLOW TO ANGER. HALLELUJAH.

HERE'S ONE FINAL REMINDER FOR US FROM THIS STORY IN LIGHT OF OUR DAY AND TIME.

WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY TODAY WHERE WORDS DON'T MATTER. INTEGRITY IS IN SHORT SUPPLY. PEOPLE TALK AND TALK AND FEW ARE COMMITTED TO BACKING UP THE WORDS THEY HAVE SPOKEN. LYING IS COMMONPLACE. DECEPTION ABOUNDS. WE SAY "JUST KIDDING" WE TAKE BACK OUR WORD, WE FAIL OTHERS AND FAIL OURSELVES. WE MAKE EXCUSES WHEN WE CAN'T FOLLOW THROUGH WITH WHAT WE HAVE COMMITTED TO. *EVERYONE DOES IT. I HAVE A LOT GOING ON. I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT WAS INVOLVED.* AND MORE. WE BOAST, WE BACK OUT. WE SPEAK, WE CHANGE OUR STORY. WE MAKE PROMISES WE CAN'T KEEP. WE OVEREXTEND, WE FLATTER, WE EXAGGERATE, WE TWIST THE TRUTH.

THAT IS NOT THE ATMOSPHERE OF GENESIS 27. THERE WAS GREAT ANTICIPATION OF THE WORDS OF BLESSING THAT A FATHER WOULD PRONOUNCE OVER HIS SON(S). AND IN A SHOCKING AND UNCOMMONLY BIZARRE TURN, WHEN THE BLESSING IS GIVEN TO JACOB, THERE IS NOT ANOTHER ONE FOR ESAU. WHAT ISAAC HAS SPOKEN HE HAD SPOKEN.

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE SAID? "OH MY BAD, LET ME GIVE YOU THE BLESSING NOW!" ISAAC SAYS NO SUCH THING. ONCE THE BLESSING HAS BEEN GIVEN, IT COULD NOT BE GIVEN AGAIN. WHY? BECAUSE WORDS MATTER.

THIS MAY NOT MEAN MUCH TO OUR WORLD. WE ARE SMART TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF WHAT PEOPLE SAY. WE EXPECT OUR POLITICIANS AND PUBLIC OFFICIALS TO BACK OUT OF THEIR PROMISES. BUT, EVEN SO, TO GOD WORDS MATTER.

WHEN GOD SAYS SOMETHING, HE MEANS IT. WHEN GOD PROMISES SOMETHING, IT HAPPENS. WHEN GOD DECLARES SOMETHING TO BE, IT IS. TO GOD, WORDS MATTER. AND WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL NOT TO LET THE LACK OF INTEGRITY SWIRLING IN THE AGE AROUND US TO AFFECT OUR TRUST IN GOD'S WORDS - NOR CHIP AWAY AT OUR OWN COMMITMENT TO MEAN WHAT WE SAY, AND SAY WHAT WE MEAN.

JESUS TELLS US THAT OUR YES SHOULD MEAN *YES* AND OUR NO SHOULD MEAN *NO*. JAMES TELLS US THAT WE SHOULD SAY "IF THE LORD WILLS WE'LL DO SUCH AND SUCH." WE SHOULDN'T BOAST AND EXAGGERATE NOR WITHHOLD TRUTH OR TWIST IT. WORDS MATTER. GOD'S WORDS AND YOURS.

SO THIS IS A GOOD MOMENT TO APPEAL TO OURSELVES TO BE MEN AND WOMEN OF INTEGRITY. PEOPLE THAT OTHERS CAN COUNT ON. PEOPLE WHO HAVE A REPUTATION OF HONESTY. PEOPLE WHO ARE KNOWN TO BE FAITHFUL IN WHAT WE SAY AND DO. PEOPLE WHO OTHERS DON'T HAVE TO BE SKEPTICAL OF. PEOPLE WHO MAY NOT ALWAYS HAVE OTHERS LIKE WHAT WE SAY, BUT WHO CAN ALWAYS KNOW WE WILL MEAN WHAT WE SAY.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB NOW HAVE SHOWN US THE POWER OF INTEGRITY AND THE UGLINESS OF TIMES WHEN IT IS LACKING. THEY ALL USE LIES AND DECEIT TO GET THEMSELVES OUT OF PERCEIVED TROUBLE, AND YET WE READ THOSE STORIES AND ARE EMBARRASSED FOR THEM. AND WE ALSO READ WHEN THEY ARE MEN OF INTEGRITY - PEOPLE WHO ARE RESPECTED BY THEIR NEIGHBORS AND EVEN ENEMIES AS MEN OF GOD - BECAUSE OF THEIR WORDS.

SO, ARE YOU SOMEONE WHO OTHERS CAN COUNT ON? DO YOU FIND YOURSELF BACKING OUT OF YOUR COMMITMENTS? WHAT WOULD OTHERS SAY ABOUT THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF YOUR WORD? DO YOU EXAGGERATE? DO YOU TELL "STORIES"? DO YOU EMBELLISH THE DETAILS? DO YOU COME CLEAN? DO YOU SPEAK TRUTH EVEN WHEN IT MIGHT COST YOU YOUR PRIDE OR SHOW YOUR FLAWS? DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO HAVE AN ANSWER? ARE YOU QUICK TO LISTEN AND SLOW TO SPEAK? DO WORDS MATTER? DO YOU HAVE INTEGRITY?

THE DARKER AND MORE CORRUPT THIS AGE BECOMES AS WE DRAW CLOSER TO ITS END, THE MORE DECEPTION WILL RISE. YOU AND I MUST COMMIT, EVEN AGAINST THE GREAT PRESSURE THAT WILL PRESS US AND THE GREAT TEMPTATION THAT WILL TEMPT US, TO BE PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY. PEOPLE WHO MEAN WHAT THEY SAY AND SAY WHAT THEY MEAN. PEOPLE WHO SPEAK THE TRUTH, IN LOVE. PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THAT WORDS ARE POWERFUL AND THAT WORDS MATTER. BECAUSE, WHETHER OR NOT THE WORLD AROUND US THINKS THAT WORDS MATTER, GOD SAYS THAT THEY DO. AND SO, THEY DO.