

Genesis Chapter 27

Genesis 27:1 "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, [here am] I."

“Isaac was old”: Blind Isaac evidently thought he was near death (verse 2) and would not live much beyond his current 137 years, which was the age of Ishmael when he died (25:17). He certainly did not expect to live another 43 years as he did (35:28; 30:24-25; 31:41; 41:46-47; 45:6; 47:9 to calculate Isaac’s age at 137 and his twin sons’ ages at 77 years old).

We learned before that Isaac's favorite was Esau. When Isaac called Esau, he was right there to answer his father.

Genesis 27:2 "And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:"

“I am old”: Isaac lived still another 43 years (35:28), and he was 137 at this time.

Genesis 27:3 "Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me [some] venison;"

"Now therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons": Or "thy vessels", or "instruments", his instruments of hunting.

"Thy quiver and thy bow": The former is the vessel or instrument, in which arrows were put and carried, and has its name in the Hebrew language from its being hung at the girdle, though another word is more commonly used for a quiver.

Onkelos and Jarchi interpret this of a sword; and which is not disapproved of by Aben Ezra and Ben Melech, who explain it either a quiver or a sword; and the latter was as necessary for hunting as the former (see Genesis 27:40).

"And go out to the field, and take me some venison": This does not necessarily intend what we commonly call so, but anything hunted in the field, as hares, wild goats, etc. And indeed, the latter seems to be what Isaac loved, by the preparation Rebekah afterwards made.

Genesis 27:4 "And make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring [it] to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die."

“That my soul may bless thee”: Ignoring the words of God to Rebekah (25:23), forgetting Esau’s bartered birthright (25:33), and overlooking Esau’s grievous marriages (26:35), Isaac was still intent on treating Esau as the eldest and granting him the blessing of birthright, and so arranged for his favorite meal before bestowing final fatherly blessing on his favorite son.

Isaac still favored Esau (25:28). He was apparently ignoring the fact that Esau had bartered his birthright (25:34), and had married heathen women (26:34). This is quite remarkable in light of the pains his father Abraham had taken to get a wife for him (in chapter 24).

Here was a father's request of his favorite son as a last request. Isaac knew he could not live very long, and he wanted to speak a blessing on his son before his departure. His son, also, was aware that his father could not live very long. He desired to get the right hand blessing (the best blessing), from his father before he died.

The son thought, if I would bring him food he loved, while he was still feeling good, he would give me the best blessings he had. The father said, go kill a deer and bring it to me.

Verses 5-29: Rebekah favored Jacob (25:28), and instigated the deception in verses 6-29. Jacob had to resort to lying (verses 19, 24); and Isaac allowed his senses of touch (verse 22), taste (verse 25), and smell (verse 27), to overrule what he heard (verse 22). The blessing included both benediction (verse 28), and prediction (verse 29).

Genesis 27:5 "And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt [for] venison, [and] to bring [it]."

“Rebekah heard”: Desperation to secure patriarchal blessing for Jacob bred deception and trickery, with Rebekah believing her culinary skills could make goat’s meat taste and smell like choice venison (verses 8-10), and make Jacob seem like Esau (verses 15-17).

"And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it": As his father directed and enjoined him; and thus, it was ordered by divine Providence, that there might be time and opportunity for Jacob to get the blessing before his brother.

Genesis 27:6 "And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,"

“And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son”: Who was in the tent with her, and for whom she had the strongest affection.

"Saying, behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother": She heard the conversation that passed between them, and particularly what Isaac had given in charge to Esau.

Genesis 27:7 "Bring me venison, and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death."

"Bring me venison, and make me savory meat ": Fetch him venison out of the field, and dress it in a savory manner, and bring it to him.

"That I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death": The phrase "before the Lord" is here added, which yet perhaps might be expressed by Isaac, though before omitted by the historian, and has a very considerable emphasis in it.

For this solemn blessing was given not only in the presence of the Lord, and before him as a witness, but by calling upon him. And praying for direction in it, and then pronouncing it in his name and by his authority, he approving of it, so that it was ever after irrevocable.

Rebekah had been eavesdropping, and she had heard that Isaac was about to bless his favorite son over her favorite son. She now, was starting this whole thing with Jacob.

Genesis 27:8 "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee."

"Now therefore, my son, obey my voice": Hearken to what I am about to say, and do it.

"According to that which I command thee": in every point; she required of him respectful obedience to all that she enjoined him; which, though not difficult to be performed.

She was aware Jacob would make objections to, as he did. And therefore, she is so pressing and commanding in her instructions, as well knowing it was respecting an affair of the greatest moment and importance.

Mama had come up with a scheme to change these plans of Isaac. She reminded Jacob that he was to obey her. Let us see what plan she had.

Genesis 27:9 "Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth:"

"Go now to the flock": To the flock he had the care of, and that immediately, for the case required haste.

"And fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats": Two young kids that were fat, as Jonathan and Ben Melech interpret it; and, though two may seem to be too much to be dressed for Isaac only. It may be observed, that Rebekah intended only to take out some of the choicest and most tender and delicate parts of them, and which would best suit her purpose.

And which she would make most like to venison and the rest could be disposed of for the use of the family. And, if it should be questioned whether Rebekah had a right to do this without her husband's leave, the Jewish writers have an answer ready. That, in her dowry or matrimonial contract, Isaac had allowed her to take two kids of the goats every day.

"And I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth": Such as would pass with him for venison. Jarchi says that the taste of a kid is like the taste of a young roe or fawn. However, by seasoning, the natural taste might be altered so as not to be distinguished, as we

find it was. And such as have the best skill in venison may be imposed upon and deceived by more ways than one, as Isaac was.

Genesis 27:10 "And thou shalt bring [it] to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death."

"And thou shalt bring it to thy father": For venison; and as if he was Esau that brought it.

"That he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death": To whom she knew by the divine oracle the blessing belonged (Genesis 25:23), as well as by virtue of the sale of the birthright to him by his brother (Genesis 25:33), and through Esau's forfeiting of it by marrying with the Canaanites (Genesis 26:34).

In these her sentiments she was right, but wrong in the ways and means she took to get it for him.

You can see what mama had figured out. Isaac was blind, and he would mistake Jacob for Esau. Mamma knew that it would take Esau a little while to locate a deer, and while he was hunting, Rebekah could fix that goat to taste like venison and trick Isaac into blessing Jacob.

Genesis 27:11 "And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother [is] a hairy man, and I [am] a smooth man:"

"And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother": Being nervous lest he should do an ill thing, and be accounted a deceiver, and bring a curse upon himself.

"Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man": covered all over with hair; as with a hairy garment; so he was born, and so he continued, and no doubt his hair increased (Genesis 25:25).

"And I am a smooth man": without hair, excepting in those parts where it is common for all men to have it.

Genesis 27:12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing."

"As a deceiver": To his credit, Jacob at first objected. The differences between him and Esau would surely not fool his father and might result in blessing being replaced with a curse as a fitting punishment for deception.

At least, Jacob realized that he would be responsible for the curse being spoken, and not anyone else. His father was blind, but he still could feel. He knew Isaac would be able to tell the difference.

Genesis 27:13 "And his mother said unto him, Upon me [be] thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me [them]."

“Upon me be thy curse”: With his mother accepting full responsibility for the scheme and bearing the curse should it occur, Jacob reluctantly followed Rebekah’s instructions.

Genesis 27:14 "And he went, and fetched, and brought [them] to his mother: and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved."

"And he went and fetched and brought them to his mother": Being satisfied with what his mother had said, he went to the field where the flock was, and took out of it two young kids, and brought them to his mother; and thus far he did right to obey her commands.

"And his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved": By picking out proper pieces, and seasoning them well, it was as appreciative to him as if it had really been venison, such as he loved.

Genesis 27:15 "And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which [were] with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son:"

“Goodly raiment ... her eldest son”: Esau, having been married for 37 years (Gen. 26:35), would have had his own tents and his own wives to do for him; so how and why Rebekah came by some of his best clothes in her tent is unknown.

Perhaps these garments were the official robes associated with the priestly functions of the head of the house, kept in her house until passed on to the oldest son. Perhaps Esau had, on occasion, worn them, thus their smell of the field (verse 27).

Genesis 27:16 "And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:"

"And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands": Upon both his hands, and the whole of them that was bare, that he might appear to be like Esau.

"And upon the smooth of his neck": Which his neck was covered with hair as his hands; and Hiscuni, a Jewish writer, observes, that the skins of goats are rough, and like the skin of a hairy man. Bochart remarks, that goats' hair in the eastern countries is not much unlike human hair (see 1 Samuel 19:13).

Right here, we need to deal with Rebekah. Was she a deceiving woman, or was she remembering the thing God told her about her two sons before their birth? God told her that the older would serve the younger. You know, Esau really did not deserve the birthright. He sold it to Jacob for a bowl of soup.

Did God give Rebekah this plan? Did she scheme this up herself, or did God give her this plan to save this blessing for Jacob? Jacob was God's choice from the beginning, but Hebrews gave the best blessing to their oldest son. It was the custom.

Was this Rebekah's plan, or God's plan? God was not happy with Esau when he sold the birthright, and also married two earthly women.

Genesis 27:17 "And she gave the savory meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob."

"And she gave the savory meat": Seasoned and dressed in such a manner as might be taken for venison.

"And the bread which she had prepared": To eat with it.

"Into the hand of her son Jacob": The dish of meat in one hand, and the bread in the other.

Genesis 27:18 "And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here [am] I; who [art] thou, my son?"

"And he came unto his father": Into the tent and apartment where he was.

"And said, my father": To try whether he was awake, and to let him know that he was come, since he could not see him.

"And he said, here am I": What hast thou to say to me?

"Who art thou, my son?" For, from the voice and the quick dispatch made, he suspected it was not his son Esau.

Genesis 27:19 "And Jacob said unto his father, I [am] Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."

"And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn": Had he only said that he was his firstborn, he might have been excused from lying, because he had bought the birthright of Esau. But when he says, I am Esau, he can by no means be excused. For to say he impersonated Esau will not do; besides, he afterwards says he was his very son Esau (Genesis 27:24).

"I have done according as thou badest me": Which is another lie, for Isaac had not bid him bring him any venison, nor go into the field for it, and take it and dress it for him. Nor indeed had Jacob done either of these.

"Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison": Or "hunting", what he had hunted. Another untruth, for it was not venison he brought him or anything that was hunted by him. By this it seems that Isaac lay upon a bed or couch through infirmity therefore is bid to arise and put himself in a proper posture for eating; which in those times and countries was usually sitting.

"That thy soul may bless me": As this was the thing in view, so speaking of it as soon as he came in, and which he desired might be done after his father had eaten and drank, might serve to take

off the suspicion of his being another person. Since this was what Isaac himself proposed to Esau to do, and this he said when there were none else present.

Genesis 27:20 And Isaac said unto his son, How [is it] that thou hast found [it] so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought [it] to me."

Isaac's perfectly legitimate question in verse 20 (hunting took time and Jacob had come so quickly with goats from the pen), afforded Jacob an escape route, confess and stop the deceit!

"And he said, because the Lord thy God brought it to me": Which was another falsehood; for it was not the Lord, but his mother brought it to him. And this seems to be the most marvelous of all, that so good a man should dare to bring the name of the Lord God into this affair.

Instead, Jacob, with consummate ease, knowing he needed Isaac's irrevocable confirmation even though he had bought the birthright, ascribed success in the hunt to God's providence. A lie had to sustain a lie, and a tangled web had begun to be woven (verses 21-24). Although Jacob received Isaac's blessing that day, the deceit caused severe consequences:

- (1) He never saw his mother after that;
- (2) Esau wanted him dead;
- (3) Laban, his uncle, deceived him;
- (4) His family life was full of conflict; and
- (5) He was exiled for years from his family.

Indeed, he does not say the Lord my God, or our God, but thy God; which some think was done on purpose, the more to cover the deceit. Because they suppose that Esau, whom Jacob impersonated, was an idolater, but this is not so evident; rather it looks as if Jacob had not the confidence to call the Lord his God with a lie in his mouth.

By the promise of God, he would have received the birthright (25:23). He didn't need to scheme this deception with his mother.

Genesis 27:21 "And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou [be] my very son Esau or not."

"And Isaac said unto Jacob, come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son": Still suspecting some fraud in the case; and whereas he knew that Esau was a hairy man, and Jacob smooth, he thought by feeling he could discover the impostor, if there were any.

"Whether thou be my very son Esau, or not": Which he still pretty much questioned.

Genesis 27:22 "And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice [is] Jacob's voice, but the hands [are] the hands of Esau."

"And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father": Boldly and without trembling; which he could the better do, as his father could not see him, and so not capable of discerning any change in his countenance or outward behavior.

"And he felt him": Some parts of his body, especially his hands.

"And said, the voice is Jacob's voice": Very like it, as if it was the same, as indeed it was.

"But the hands are the hands of Esau": Are like them, being hairy as they; or as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem," the feeling of the hands is as the feeling of the hands of Esau; they feel like them.

Genesis 27:23 "And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him."

"And he discerned him not": As he could not see, he could make no judgment by that sense and though he had his hearing, thought the voice was like Jacob's. He might imagine there might be an alteration in Esau's voice, coming in haste and weary from the fields. Yet, as there could not be any deception in his feeling, he thought it safest to trust to that.

"Because his hands were hairy as his brother Esau's hands": Which could not in a short time become so naturally. It was more reasonable to think that Esau's voice should be altered and become like Jacob's, than that Jacob's hands should become like Esau's.

"So he blessed him": Or intended and determined within himself to bless him, for the blessing was not given till afterwards. Unless this is to be understood of a common blessing, congratulating him on the quick dispatch he made, and the great success he met with.

After this gave him the patriarchal blessing, which as yet he had not, being not thoroughly satisfied of him, as appears by what follows.

The plan had worked. Goat, if it is fixed correctly, tastes like venison, so Isaac would not be able to tell the difference in taste. He was amazed how fast it was prepared, but his son, Jacob, had learned early from his father that it was ok to lie to save yourself, so he said; God helped him find the deer.

He also lied when he told his father he was Esau. His father could not understand, if he was Esau, why he had Jacob's voice. The hairy hands, and probably the odor from Esau's clothes, convinced the father that this was truly Esau. So, he blessed Jacob.

Genesis 27:24 "And he said, [Art] thou my very son Esau? And he said, I [am]."

"And said, art thou my very son Esau?" Still having some doubt on his mind whether he really was so or not, because of his voice.

"And he said, I am": As for the observation of Jarchi upon this, in order to excuse Jacob from lying, that he does not say, "I am Esau", only "I", it will not do, since it is an answer to Isaac's question, with a design to deceive him. And he intended by it that he should understand him as he did, that he was really Esau.

He (Jacob), told a lie one more time to save himself.

Genesis 27:25 "And he said, Bring [it] near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought [it] near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank."

"And he said, bring it near to me": Being in a good measure satisfied that it must be Esau that was with him, he agreed that he should set his savory meat before him he had prepared and brought to him.

"And I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee": This showed that as yet he had not blessed him, at least that the main and principal blessing was yet to come.

"And he brought it near to him, and he did eat": Set it on a table before him, and guided his hands to it, or fed him with it, and he made a meal of it.

"And he brought him wine, and he drank": And so was comfortably refreshed, and in a good temper and disposition of mind to confer the blessing.

Genesis 27:26 "And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son."

"And his father Isaac said unto him": After he had eaten and drank, and the repast was over, and all were taken away.

"Come near now, and kiss me, my son": Which was desired either out of affection to him, excited by this instance of preparing such savory and agreeable food. Or else having some suspicion still, and willing to have more satisfaction before he proceeded further to bless, from the smell of his breath, and of his garments.

Verses 27-29: Finally, with all lingering doubts removed, Isaac pronounced the blessing upon Jacob, although the opening words show he thought the one receiving it was Esau, the man of the field. His prayer-wish called for prosperity and superiority and ended with a repeat of God's words to Abraham (verse 29; 12:1-3).

The words indicated that Isaac thought the covenantal line should have continued through his eldest son, Esau.

Genesis 27:27 "And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son [is] as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:"

"And he came near, and kissed him": Jacob came near and kissed Isaac his father.

"And he smelled the smell of his raiment": Which being not like the smell of a sheep coat, but of a field, might give him more full satisfaction that it was truly Esau.

"And he blessed him": With his patriarchal and prophetic blessing.

"And said, see, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed": Like a field full of fragrant herbs, flowers, and spices, watered with the dews and rain of heaven. And so made fruitful, emitting a most, delightful odor. This may duplicate the scent of Esau's clothes, now on Jacob's back, which they received from the fields, which Esau continually frequented.

Whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia (Psalm 45:8), even Isaac's principal son, that should be of his seed, of whom Jacob his present son was a type, and who was to spring from him.

Genesis 27:28 "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:"

"Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven": Or "shall" or "will give thee", seeing he was blessed of God and the blessed seed should spring from him, as well as his posterity should inherit the land of Canaan. For this is said rather by way of prophecy than wish.

And the dew of heaven is the rather mentioned, not only because that makes the earth fruitful on which it plentifully falls, but likewise because the land of Canaan, the portion of Jacob's posterity, much needed it, and had it, for rain fell there but seldom. Only twice a year, in spring and autumn; and between these two rains, the one called the former, the other the latter rain.

The land was impregnated and made fruitful by plentiful dews; and these signified figuratively both the doctrines and blessings of grace.

Which all Jacob's spiritual offspring, such as are Israelites indeed, are partakers of, and especially under the Gospel dispensation (see Deuteronomy 32:2).

"And the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine": And such the land of Canaan was, a fat and fertile land, abounding with all good things (see Deuteronomy 8:8); by which are figured the plenty of Gospel provisions, the word and ordinances, which God has given to his Jacob and Israel in all ages, as he has not given to other people.

And especially in the times of the Messiah, Jacob's eminent seed and son (see Psalm 147:19).

Genesis 27:29 "Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed [be] every one that curseth thee, and blessed [be] he that blesseth thee."

Jacob would be the head over Isaac's household: "Let people serve thee ... let thy mother's sons bow down to thee".

The blessing that Isaac blessed Jacob with had been his ever since the day that Esau sold it. This blessing was the preferential right hand blessing. A blessing that a patriarch spoke was as an oracle of God. He was God's agent speaking this blessing.

It was without repentance. God would not change it. It would be done to the utmost. This blessing was that even nature itself would bless Jacob. He would rule over nations, and even his brother would bow down unto him. God's curse would be on anyone who cursed, and would bless anyone who blessed Him.

Even though he received the message through trickery, it would not be reversed. This was God's doing, as well as Rebekah's and Jacob's, or it would not have gone so well. Sometimes God uses things that, in our mind, do not appear the right way, to perform the results he wants.

Genesis Chapter 27 Questions

1. What was wrong with Isaac's eyes?
2. Who was Isaac's favorite?
3. Why was Isaac about to bless Esau?
4. What did he ask Esau to do? Why?
5. What did Esau know about Isaac?
6. In essence, what did Isaac tell Esau?
7. Who overheard this conversation of Isaac and Esau?
8. Was this pleasing to her?
9. What did she tell Jacob to do?
10. What did she remind him about parents?
11. Jacob told Rebekah that Isaac would know the difference between the son's, because of what?

12. If there was a curse, who would it be on?
13. Who cooked the meat?
14. What did she put on Jacob's hands?
15. What choices were brought up about Rebekah?
16. What had God told her about the two boys?
17. Why did Esau not deserve the blessing.
18. Who was God's choice for the blessing?
19. Was this Rebekah's plan, or God's plan?
20. What question did Isaac ask Jacob when he carried the meat to his father?
21. Did Jacob explain why he got the meat so fast?
22. What did Isaac say about the voice and the hands?
23. Who did Jacob learn to lie from?
24. What two things convinced Isaac that Jacob was Esau?
25. Name several ways he blessed Jacob.
26. Who would be cursed?
27. When a patriarch blessed, he was representing whom?
28. Could this blessing on Jacob ever be reversed?
29. Name three who were actually part of this?