

A Rood Awakening!
Presents
Awakening in the Word

By Glenn McWilliams of TK TORAH KEEPERS
www.michaelroodministries.com

THE OVERVIEW

Our portion this week continues the with the Esau/Jacob narrative. Isaac has grown old and blind and desires to give a blessing to his offspring. Isaac calls Esau, his firstborn, into his chamber and gives him a quest to find venison for a special meal for his father, after which Isaac intends to impart his blessing upon Esau. Rebekah overhears Isaac's plan and puts into action a plan of her own. Rebekah quickly informs Jacob of what is about to transpire and convinces him to impersonate his brother, deceive his father, and receive the blessing intended for Esau. Jacob does as he is told, and the blessing is bestowed upon him. At the heart of the portion is Isaac's blessing.

THE OUTLINE

The outline of this portion may be broken down by scenes, each containing two people. We should note that this is just part one of the narrative of the stolen blessing; thus, this pattern and outline will continue into the next portion as well.

- Genesis 27:1-4 Isaac commissions Esau
- Genesis 27:5-17 Rebekah schemes with Jacob
- Genesis 27:18-27 Jacob deceives his father Isaac
- Genesis 27:28-29 Isaac blesses Jacob

SUGGESTED STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Why does Isaac mention the fact that he does not know when he will die?
2. What is meant by the expression "his eyes were dim"?
3. Why does Isaac call Esau and not Jacob?
4. Why does Isaac send Esau out to go hunting?
5. What is the blessing?
6. What is Rebekah's concern?
7. Why does Rebekah add to Isaac's words?
8. Does Jacob do right to listen to his mother?
9. What is Jacob's fear?
10. What wrongs does Jacob commit?
11. Does Jacob have a right to the blessing?
12. Whose blessing is it?

THE TEXT

Genesis 27:1-29 *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. ²And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: ³now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; ⁴and make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. ⁵And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. ⁶And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, ⁷Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before YHWH before my death. ⁸Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee. ⁹Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: ¹⁰and thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. ¹¹And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: ¹²my 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. ¹³And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. ¹⁴And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved. ¹⁵And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: ¹⁶and she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: ¹⁷and she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. ¹⁸And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? ¹⁹And 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. ²⁰And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because YHWH thy Elohim brought it to me. ²¹And 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. ²²And 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. ²³And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. ²⁴And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. ²⁵And 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. ²⁶And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. ²⁷And 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 YHWH hath blessed: ²⁸therefore Elohim give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: ²⁹let 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.

A Rood Awakening!

Presents

Awakening in the Word

By Glenn McWilliams of TK TORAH KEEPERS
www.michaelroodministries.com

Like many of you, I grew up in a Christian family. Most of my faith was learned from my parents, my grandparents, and my Sunday School teachers. As I have shared on numerous occasions, I was given my first King James Version Bible at the age of five. Before I could even read I was given a leather bound treasure chest with a zipper and a gold cross and my name emblazoned in gold letters across the front. I remember sitting in my grandfather's lap in the old Morris chair, bought with S&H Green Stamps, while Pop smoked his pipe, drank his morning coffee, and read the Bible. My mother and grandmother were my Sunday School teachers during these early years. I also remember receiving a Children's Bible with pictures of the heroes of the Bible and their stories. Highlighted in this picture Bible were the special stories of "Jesus." I had been taught to believe, to pray, and to attend church. But it was not until much later that it all became real to me. In many ways these men and women, the heroes of the faith, were but characters in a storybook to me. There was little difference between Moses, Elijah, Daniel, and Jesus, and Superman, the Hulk, the Green Lantern, and Sergeant Rock. It was not until high school when I saw the movie "Jesus Christ Superstar" that I began to see these Bible characters in a new and more realistic light.

While I do not necessarily agree with all of the theology of the musical "Jesus Christ Superstar," as a youth, it was enough for me to see that Yeshua was real. He got angry, wrestled with spiritual things, showed frustration with those around him, loved people, and was in so many ways just like me. It was at this time that the Spirit of the Holy One put a very great love, zeal, and hunger for the Word of YHWH in my heart. As I began to read the Bible from cover to cover again and again, I realized that these storybook characters that I had heard about and read about as a child were also very much like me. Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and David had all made mistakes; they had all experienced fears and concerns about their lives. They also wrestled with spiritual issues and they wrestled with their flesh. They were also imperfect, just like me. WOW! What a revelation! The more I read the Scriptures, the more I realized that the Bible has incredible integrity. Scripture does not try to hide the weaknesses of its heroes; instead, it puts them right on the written page for every generation to see.

- Adam eats the fruit of the forbidden tree – Genesis 3:6
- The righteous line marries ungodly women – Genesis 6:1-2
- Noah gets drunk and naked – Genesis 9:20-21
- Abraham lies to Pharaoh about Sarai – Genesis 12:18-19
- Abraham sleeps with Hagar – Genesis 16:3-4
- Abraham lies to Abimelech about Sarah – Genesis 20:1ff
- Isaac lies to Abimelech about Rebekah – Genesis 26:9
- Jacob deceives his blind father – Genesis 27:1ff
- Levi and Simeon massacre the men of Shechem – Genesis 34:25
- Joseph's brothers sell him into slavery and lie to their father – Genesis 37:1ff
- Moses murders a man – Exodus 2:11-12
- Nadab and Abihu offer strange fire before YHWH – Leviticus 10:1ff
- Aaron and Miriam rebel out of jealousy – Numbers 12:1ff
- Moses strikes the rock a second time – Numbers 20:1ff

- David has an affair with Bathsheba and has her husband killed – 2 Samuel 11:1ff
- Solomon the wise multiplies wives unto himself and builds pagan altars – 1 Kings 11:1-8
- Elijah despairs for his life – 1 Kings 19:10

The list could go on and on. Whether speaking of individual kings, prophets, the Israelites, or of the people of Israel collectively, the Scriptures reveal the very fallen humanity of the chosen servants and people of Elohim. While this negative reality is not to be glorified, it is, nevertheless, a comforting word of truth. First, it speaks to the truth and validity of the Scriptures. The Bible is not a fairytale or comic book about superheroes; it is a book of truth and the Creator's interaction with real people. Second, it brings hope to the imperfect and fallen to know that even in our weakness, YHWH can use us to glorify Himself. We were created with two natures, a carnal nature and a spiritual nature. In our fallen state these natures tend to war with each other, as the apostle Shaul has clearly pointed out in his writings:

Galatians 5:17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

Romans 8:5-9 *For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. ⁶For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷Because the carnal mind is enmity against Elohim: for it is not subject to the law of Elohim, neither indeed can be. ⁸So then they that are in the flesh cannot please Elohim. ⁹But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Elohim dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Messiah, he is none of His.*

While we are often found living in our flesh and warring with our spirit, we are, nonetheless, still called to love YHWH with our whole heart, mind, and strength. This means that we are to submit even our weaknesses and shortcomings to the service of YHWH. We clearly see this principle played out in the testimony of the Scriptures concerning the “heroes” of the Bible.

Whether speaking of moral weaknesses, character flaws, or simply human nature in its fallen state, the Scriptures do not hide the truth of the chosen vessels of YHWH. Such is clearly the case in our portion this week.

Our portion begins with very revealing words concerning Isaac's condition:

Genesis 27:1-2 *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. ²And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.*

A disciple once asked his teacher when the best time to repent was. The teacher answered him by saying that one should repent the day before he dies. The disciple responded to the teacher's answer by pointing out the fact that no one knows exactly what day he is going to die. The student said, “One could suddenly drop dead tomorrow.” The teacher responded, “This is true, so you had better repent today.” I agree strongly with this little anecdote. Since we do not know how many days have been determined for us, we should not delay in confessing, repenting, making restitution, fulfilling vows, doing righteous acts, and blessing others. Our father Isaac is very correct in his assertion.

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

We should learn this wisdom from our father Isaac and not delay in doing good and fulfilling our calling. We should learn to number our days and use them wisely, since they are but few in number.

Psalms 90:12 *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

Job 14:5 *Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.*

Exodus 22:29 *Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto Me.*

Deuteronomy 23:21 *When thou shalt vow a vow unto YHWH thy Elohim, **thou shalt not slack** to pay it: for YHWH thy Elohim will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.*

Isaac is wise enough to know that he is old and that life in this fallen state is limited. Therefore, he knows there is no reason to delay the blessing of his son. The declaration of Isaac's advanced age, his blindness, and the talk of his death do seem to add a sense of urgency to the actions of this story. Isaac's request that Esau go hunting and prepare him an exquisite meal certainly seems to indicate otherwise. In truth, Isaac lives for a number of years after this event. The Scripture does give us some indication of Isaac's age when this event takes place.

- Genesis 25:20 tells us that Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebekah.
- Genesis 25:26 tells us he was 60 years old when the twins were born.
- Genesis 26:34 tells us that Esau was 40 when he married, making Isaac 100 at the time.
- Genesis 31:38 tells us that Jacob was gone from Isaac for more than 20 years.
- Genesis 35:28 tells us that Isaac was 180 when he died. His death took place after Jacob was back in the promised land. This means that Isaac was somewhere between 100 and 160 years old when he gave his blessings to his sons.

Isaac may be old and diminishing in health, faculty, and strength, but he is clearly not on his deathbed. Isaac's death does not take place for more than another 20 years. But due to his diminishing strength and the awareness of his own mortality, perhaps Isaac desires to bless his son without delay. It is important to understand that this blessing is not a deathbed bestowing of the birthright to the firstborn; it is simply a father desiring to bless his son. There is no mention within the blessing proper of receiving a double portion. There is a great deal of ambiguity surrounding this blessing, which we shall look at in a moment. For now, however, we witness the integrity of Scripture to show the fragile nature of even the greatest heroes of the Bible.

We must ask, however, whether the revelation of the integrity of the Scriptures is the only reason for the Torah's informing us of Isaac's diminished faculties. The Torah seems to emphasize the fact that Isaac's "eyes were dim, so that he could not see." This blindness on the part of Isaac is clearly an intricate part of the story of Jacob's deception. It is, in fact, Isaac's inability to see that allows Jacob to deceive his father by impersonating his brother Esau. Had Isaac been able to see clearly, then this scheme by Rebekah and Jacob never would have worked. Thus, we see that Isaac's blindness is an important part of the story. But is there even more to this blindness than meets the eye?

In other words, is the Torah telling us something about Isaac other than just his physical condition? Is it possible that Isaac is blind in the spiritual sense as well? We should remember from the teachings of Yeshua that there is indeed more than one type of blindness. This truth is made explicitly clear in Yeshua's words to the scribes and Pharisees, who were distraught over the fact that Yeshua had healed a man born blind.

John 9:39-41 *And Yeshua said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. ⁴⁰And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? ⁴¹Yeshua said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.*

It is indeed ironic that in the gospels, the physically blind see Yeshua for who and what he really is, while the religious leaders – the priests, the scribes, the Sadducees, and the Pharisees – do not.

Matthew 20:30 *And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Yeshua passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David.*

Matthew 23:16 *Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!*

The rest of Scripture likewise gives testimony to the fact that there is more than one type of blindness.

Exodus 23:8 *And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.*

Deuteronomy 16:19 *Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.*

1 Samuel 12:3 *Behold, here I am: witness against me before YHWH, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? And I will restore it you.*

Job 23:9 *On the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.*

Isaiah 44:18 *They have not known nor understood: for He hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see; and their hearts, that they cannot understand.*

John 3:3 *Yeshua answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of Elohim.*

1 Corinthians 2:14 *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of Elohim: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

John 12:40 *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

2 Corinthians 4:4 *In whom the elohim of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Messiah, who is the image of Elohim, should shine unto them.*

2 Peter 1:9 *But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.*

1 John 2:11 *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.*

It is clear from the testimony of Scripture that blindness may be understood on many levels. As we have already pointed out, the Pharisees and Sadducees could not see who Yeshua was, yet the physically blind could. The Pharisees and Sadducees were blinded by their own religious systems and piety. There are those in the Scriptures who are clearly blinded by ignorance, while others are blinded by too much knowledge. Some are blinded by unbelief, while others are blinded by spiritual pride. Job could not see

that his own self-righteousness was the source of his affliction until YHWH revealed it to him. The Proverbs are filled with wisdom concerning man's blindness to his own shortcomings.

Proverbs 12:15 *The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.*

Proverbs 16:2 *All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but YHWH weigheth the spirits.*

Proverbs 21:2 *Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but YHWH pondereth the hearts.*

Even in our own culture we speak of love being blind. Is there a possibility that Isaac is not only physically blind, but that in his old age, he has become spiritually blind as well? The argument may be made that Isaac was blinded by his love for his firstborn son; therefore, he continually overlooks Esau's obvious weaknesses. We should remember that Esau has already demonstrated his lack of respect for his birthright and the purity of the line of Abraham.

Genesis 25:29-34 *And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: ³⁰and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. ³¹And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. ³²And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? ³³And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.*

Genesis 26:34-35 *And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: ³⁵which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.*

Against these obvious faults on the part of Esau, we must consider this testimony concerning Isaac:

Genesis 25:27-28 *And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. ²⁸And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

Here we must ask whether it is Isaac's love for Esau or the wild game Esau provides that causes Isaac to turn a blind eye to Esau's faults and weaknesses and desire to bestow upon him a father's blessing. If Esau has proven himself to be of the character of Nimrod – a cunning hunter who marries two idolatrous Canaanite women, grieves his mother and father, and willingly sells his birthright for a pot of lentil stew to satisfy his flesh – why, we must ask, would he merit any blessing at all?

The possibility that Isaac's love for Esau blinds his eyes to what is right raises a number of very important questions. The most important of these questions is "Whose blessing is it?" Does the blessing rightfully belong to Jacob as part of the sale of the birthright? What would cause both Isaac's wife and his son to intentionally deceive him? Who is the true pretender, Jacob or Esau?

At the heart of this portion is the very blessing itself. Therefore, let us turn our attention to the blessing and see if we may discover an answer to this question.

Genesis 27:28-29 *Therefore Elohim give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: ²⁹let 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.*

Isaac's blessing is in many ways a typical ancient Near Eastern blessing. Victor Hamilton points out the strong focus on fertility in the blessing.

The essence of the part of the blessing found in v. 28 is agricultural fertility. Thus, future fertility is described with the poetic pair, "the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth." Interestingly, the same two phrases are used for Esau later in the chapter, but in reverse order (v. 39). The reversed phrase represents a reversal of the blessings.¹

Hamilton goes on to point out some other peculiar features concerning the wording of this blessing.

This blessing of fertility is further spelled out as an "abundance of grain [dagan] and wine [tiros]." That Dagan is a Canaanite (Philistine) deity is well known. Tiros is also now recognized as the name of a Canaanite god, a kind of Bacchus from which the Hebrews obtained the term "tiros," their poetic word for wine.

Parts of v. 28 are much like some lines from an Ugaritic text... "dew of heaven, fat of earth, rain of the rider of clouds." In light of the similarity of phraseology and the identification of Dagon and Tiros, Dahood is prepared to translate v.28 as follows: "May God give you of the dew of Heaven and of the oil of Earth, and of the spray of Dagon and Tiros." That is, the God of Jacob will provide Jacob with all the ingredients of fertility that were thought to be given by the Canaanite gods, Heaven, Earth, Dagon, and Tiros.²

Is it possible that Isaac is blessing his son by mentioning pagan deities? I would contend that the answer is yes. In attempting to discern for whom Isaac's blessing is truly intended, let us look carefully at what is being said in this blessing. We have already heard that Isaac loves Esau. Here we must remember that a parent's love is as close to unconditional as one can get. The fact that Rebekah and Isaac are grieved by Esau's behavior can only be understood as a sign of their love for their son. While Isaac may be physically blind, I do not believe he is spiritually blind to the faults of his son. Instead, I believe that Isaac sees the rebellious nature of his son very clearly. Therefore, before he blesses Esau, he sends Esau on a simple quest consistent with his very nature. Does Isaac truly love venison so much that he sends his son on a dangerous hunt to satisfy his own cravings? I doubt that lust for meat is Isaac's motivation for this sudden quest. Instead, I believe that Isaac sends Esau on this hunt to give his otherwise rebellious son an opportunity to obey and please his father. It is based on this obedience that Esau will merit his father's blessing, in spite of everything else he has done to disqualify himself from receiving such a blessing.

I also believe that there may be some merit in Dahood's translation of the blessing in the quote mentioned above. If Esau is living with two idolatrous Canaanite women, then I believe that it is possible that Isaac would bless Esau with a blessing teaching that it is YHWH Elohim who is responsible for all that his pagan wives attribute to their idols. If Dahood and Hamilton are correct, then we may clearly state that this blessing can only make sense if it is intended for Esau. I will suggest here that Isaac's love for his wayward and rebellious son evokes a hoped-filled blessing upon his son not because he is worthy, but because he is needy. We may compare this blessing to Abraham causing his most trusted servant to swear an oath to him before sending him on his quest for a wife for Isaac.

Genesis 24:1-3 *And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and YHWH had blessed Abraham in all things. ²And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: ³and I will make thee swear by YHWH, the Elohim of heaven, and the Elohim of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell.*

¹ New International Commentary on the Old Testament, The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50, Victor P. Hamilton, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Pg. 221

² Ibid.

Clearly if Abraham trusts his servant with his entire household, the administration of the oath cannot be understood as a lack of trust or faith in the servant. Indeed, it is quite the opposite. Abraham knows his servant is a faithful, trustworthy man of integrity. It is precisely these character traits that qualify Eliezer to be the steward of all of Abraham's possessions. By causing this trustworthy man of integrity to swear an oath, Abraham knows it will strengthen his servant's resolve in spite of any challenges and hardships that may await him on his journey. It is precisely because of Abraham's trust and the servant's trustworthiness that the oath will be effective. If the servant were a notorious liar, then no oath sworn by him would be trustworthy.

In many ways, we may say the same thing about Isaac's blessing of Esau. It is not because Esau is a worthy candidate for a blessing that Isaac blesses him; it is precisely because he is *not* worthy of a blessing that Isaac bestows the blessing upon him. It is not because Isaac is blind to Esau's faults that he blesses him; it is because he clearly sees Esau's faults and weaknesses. Since Esau does not seem to have the strength of character or spirit to bear the yoke of Torah on his own merit, Isaac asks this divine blessing upon him that he might be strengthened by it. In other words, it may be Isaac's desire to provide a crutch for his weakest son so that he too might come to know that the true source of all that he enjoys from the field is YHWH, the Elohim of his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. If this is true, then we may conclude that the blessing is truly intended for Esau, and is, in fact, stolen by Jacob.

We must ask, therefore, what causes Rebekah, Isaac's only wife, to scheme to deceive her husband in his intent to bless their troublesome son. There are several clues that help to give us an answer to this question. First, let us note again that Isaac's blindness might play a part in Rebekah's actions. Since the Torah clearly states that Isaac loves Esau while Rebekah loves Jacob, it is possible that Rebekah feels that Isaac's love is blinding him to Esau's faults and possibly to Jacob's merits as well. It is also stated that Rebekah overhears Isaac speaking to Esau. While Rebekah hears Isaac's words, it is possible that she does not hear or know his heart in this matter; therefore, she misunderstands his intent.

I believe that Isaac only means to support and bless Esau in hopes that he will come to the light. We should note that there is no mention in the blessing of a double portion being given, nor is there any mention of the covenant promise of seed and land that was given to Abraham and to Isaac. But since Rebekah hears Isaac make mention of his uncertain death, she may fear that Isaac is going to bestow the right of the firstborn upon the unworthy Esau. Whether Isaac or Rebekah know about Esau's sale of his birthright to Jacob is not made clear in the Torah. Thus, Rebekah's fear that Isaac is blinded by his love for Esau as well as the mention of Isaac's impending death may be enough to provoke Rebekah to take extreme measures to secure the blessing for Jacob, whom she loves.

We should also remember that when she was pregnant, Rebekah inquired of YHWH as to the reason for the struggle going on within her. She received a prophetic response that likewise may have motivated her actions.

Genesis 25:22-23 *And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of YHWH. ²³And YHWH said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and **the elder shall serve the younger.***

Is it possible that Rebekah remembers this prophecy and is seeking to fulfill it by whatever means necessary? We may remember here that Rebekah is seen as having replaced Sarah as the matriarch of the faith. We see some of Sarah's traits in Rebekah.

Genesis 24:67 *And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*

We may recall that when Sarah heard the prophecy that Abraham would have an heir from his own bowels, she sought to fulfill this prophecy by her own means and ingenuity.

Genesis 15:4 *And, behold, the word of YHWH came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*

Genesis 16:2 *And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, YHWH hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.*

If this be the case, then we should indeed learn well from these stories the danger in seeking to fulfill the prophecies of YHWH by means of our own flesh and fallen reasoning. In both of these instances we witness the great and lasting strife that is birthed out of these actions. It should not surprise us that the Ishmaelites born from Sarah's reasoning and the Edomites born out of Rebekah's reasoning eventually join together as enemies of Israel. Oh, how much damage we do when we try to replace the infinite wisdom and power of YHWH with our own finite and fallen reasoning and weaknesses. I believe, therefore, that Rebekah's behavior, though well-intentioned, is based upon her misunderstanding of Isaac's intention and her weak attempt to fulfill in her own flesh what YHWH is quite capable of doing Himself.

We should note here the apparent contradiction between the revelation to Rebekah and the blessing intended for Esau.

Genesis 25:22-23 *And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of YHWH. ²³And YHWH said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; **and the elder shall serve the younger.***

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.*

Could it be that this contradiction substantiates the fact that this blessing rightfully belongs to Jacob, since it was prophesied that he, as the younger, should be served by Esau, his elder brother? Let me again draw from Victor Hamilton for insight on this issue.

The last part of Isaac's blessing over Jacob shifts from agricultural fertility (v. 28) to political supremacy (v. 29). Peoples will serve and bow down to Jacob. Closer to home, his brothers and mother's sons are also to come under his authority. Now, to be sure, nowhere does Genesis state that Isaac and Rebekah had other children besides Esau and Jacob. But Genesis does refer to Jacob's brothers (see 27:37; 31:46). Also the association of the terms "brother(s) and mother's sons" was a standard feature of OT verse, and thus "brothers" / "mother's sons" may be poetic craft rather than a reference to Jacob's blood brothers.³

Therefore, it could be that there is no contradiction at all between the prophecy given to Rebekah and the blessing intended for Esau. Instead, what we read concerning his "brothers" may be simply poetic speech and not intended to be understood in a literal manner. Either way, we should recognize that Rebekah does not know the content of the blessing when she instructs Jacob to deceive his father. Her actions are based solely upon her own assumptions.

³ New International Commentary on the Old Testament, The Book of Genesis Chapters 18-50, Victor P. Hamilton, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Pg. 222

It is clearly Rebekah who provokes Jacob to fulfill her deceptive scheme. While not altogether innocent, Jacob does seem to show some hesitancy in going so far as to deceive his father. It is Jacob who raises three objections to Rebekah's plan.

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

Genesis 27:12 *My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver.*

Genesis 27:12 *...and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.*

The first objection Jacob raises is the fact that he and Esau do not look, or in this case, even feel the same. Jacob recognizes the possibility that Isaac might feel his hand, arm, or neck and discern that it is Jacob and not Esau. Jacob's second concern is that if he is discovered in such an attempt to deceive his father, his father will see him as a deceiver, not as a faithful son worthy of a blessing. Finally, Jacob is concerned that being seen as a deceiver, his father will withhold his blessing and instead, speak to him using harsh words. We should note that all of these objections are focused upon what Jacob would experience if he were discovered. What is lacking on Jacob's part is any sense of moral indignation over the suggestion that he should deceive or disrespect his father Isaac. Thus, we must question Jacob's character shortcomings as well as Esau's.

Rebekah seems to have a plan for all the possible pitfalls Jacob raises and encourages her son's obedience to her words. Here we may see that Jacob is caught between a rock and a hard place. He is to honor his mother and father, yet his mother is telling him to be obedient to her while at the same time to dishonor his father. Jacob's choice in this matter should be clear. Our parents are to be to us as YHWH upon the earth. We respect and honor our parents as a sign of our love for YHWH, but we must always remember that whether we love our father and mother or our enemy, it is always out of obedience to YHWH first. In this regard we must understand that when it comes to respecting those whom YHWH calls to lead and instruct us, whether they be parents, prophets, or kings, we are first and foremost to obey YHWH. Therefore, if parents, prophets, or kings instruct us to violate the Torah, we must remain faithful to YHWH, for all other authorities in our lives come from Him above.

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,² and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other elohim, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;³ thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for YHWH your Elohim proveth you, to know whether ye love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart and with all your soul.⁴ Ye shall walk after YHWH your Elohim, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and ye shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him.*

John 19:10-11 *Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee? ¹¹Yeshua answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

Romans 13:1-2 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of Elohim: the powers that be are ordained of Elohim. ²Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of Elohim: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

Acts 5:29 *Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey Elohim rather than men.*

Therefore, while it may be a difficult choice, the choice is still clear. Jacob should not agree to deceive his father. Many of the rabbis, seeking to put a positive spin upon Jacob's actions, point out his hesitancy to deceive his father and also seek to show that he tries not to lie to his father.

Jacob approached his father. Isaac asked, "Who are you, my son?" Jacob replied, "I Esau your firstborn," which could be punctuated in two ways, with different meanings. It could be read, "It is I, Esau, your firstborn," which is how Jacob hoped Isaac would understand his words. Or, it could be read, "It is I, Esau is your firstborn," which is a true statement. Thus Jacob fulfilled his mother's instructions while not telling an outright lie (Rashi; see Mizrachi). The te'amin (cantillation notes) support this second reading, for the pashta above (the final yud of the word anokhi "I") indicates a slight pause. (VeChur LaZahav).⁴

This type of craftiness on the part of Jacob was not uncommon in the ancient Near East. Nahum M. Sarna writes:

Jacob as a young man is not portrayed in a favorable light. First he acquires the birthright through his heartless exploitation of his own brother's misery; then he purloins the patriarchal blessing by means of crafty deception practiced upon his blind and aged father. In both instances, the outcome is legally valid and irrevocable, notwithstanding the unsavory aspects of Jacob's actions. It is evident that the successful application of shrewd opportunities was well respected in the ancient Near East as it is in contemporary society. The two incidents also appear to betray a thoroughly formalistic conception of law in which the strict outward adherence to certain practices or principles is decisive, irrespective of the true spirit of the law and in disregard of moral considerations. It is remarkable, therefore, that the Biblical narrative has succeeded in weaving the stories into the larger biography of Jacob in such a way as to add up to an unqualified condemnation of Jacob's action.⁵

We see a similar trait practiced among the later Pharisees, who likewise looked for loopholes in the law, defying the spirit of the Torah while at the same time living according to the letter of the Torah. This behavior was soundly and repeatedly condemned by Yeshua.⁶

Matthew 23:23 *Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

Mark 7:10-13 *For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: ¹¹but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. ¹²And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; ¹³making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.*

Regardless of how well-intentioned Jacob may be in deceiving his father, the fact of the matter is that he deceives him. At any time during this charade Jacob has the opportunity to stop and confess to his father what he and Rebekah are up to. Instead, at the prompting of his mother, Jacob continues the act of deceiving his father in at least three different ways. Taking advantage of his father's blindness, Jacob claims to be Esau. Second, he impersonates Esau by putting on lamb's wool and Esau's clothing. And most grievous of all, Jacob utilizes the name of YHWH to deceive his father.

⁴ The Kestenbaum Edition Tikkun / The Torah Reader's Compendium, Rabbi Avie Gold, ArtScroll / Mesorah Publications, Pg. 59

⁵ The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis, Nahum M. Sarna, Jewish Publication Society, Pg. 397

⁶ Simply read the Sermon on the Mount where Yeshua corrects the Pharisees' teachings.

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 YHWH thy Elohim brought it to me.*

If there is any wiggle room for Jacob in the other actions, here it is very clear that Jacob is transgressing the line of righteousness. Clearly this is a violation of the Torah, from which nothing good can come. There is simply no way to put a positive spin on such behavior.

Exodus 20:7 *Thou shalt not take the name of YHWH thy Elohim in vain; for YHWH will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.*

Leviticus 19:12 *And ye shall not swear by My name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy Elohim: I am YHWH.*

Deuteronomy 5:11 *Thou shalt not take the name of YHWH thy Elohim in vain: for YHWH will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.*

The question we must now ask is how YHWH can allow Jacob to steal a blessing that rightfully belongs to his brother. While we may understand that Isaac is deceived due to his blindness, it is not possible for YHWH to be deceived. Some would argue that since YHWH does not prevent Jacob from receiving the blessing from Isaac, it must clearly be Jacob's blessing to begin with. Pointing to the sale of the birthright as justification, some may argue that it is Esau who is being deceptive, since he knows that he is not deserving of the patriarchal blessing, yet he seeks to steal it back from his brother Jacob by his silence.

If this is the case, then it is possible that the blessing rightfully belongs to Jacob, and Esau is trying to steal it. If this is so, however, why does Jacob not simply tell his father and mother of the purchased birthright in order to claim what is rightly his? Why does he withhold the truth and choose to deceive his father instead? Even if the birthright is rightly his, Jacob should trust YHWH to see that justice is done. Therefore, we are still left with the question as to why YHWH allows Jacob to deceive his father and steal Esau's blessing. Does YHWH honor this blessing to Jacob? I believe a small story may help to explain how we should understand this peculiar blessing.

Once upon a time there was a pair of beautiful gold bracelets. They were considered to be the most beautiful and valuable bracelets anywhere in the world. Not only were these bracelets desirable for their beauty and value, but it was said that there was a special power in these bracelets that would cause the wearer to stand up in every circumstance and challenge, and that once they were on, no one could ever remove them from the wrists of the wearer.

One day a young woman went on a search for these very unique bracelets. She had heard that they were in the ruins of a castle at the top of a mountain. Day after day this young woman searched for the bracelets, hoping to obtain their blessing. She thought of how wonderful it would be to possess their power and beauty. How great it would be, she thought, to be able to stand up to any challenge.

While walking through the ruins of an old castle one day, she noticed something shining from behind what appeared to be a stone stock. There it stood, all alone in the courtyard. The stone stock had two small holes in which one could place one's hands and a small stone bench to stand on. Upon closer inspection she discovered that the very bracelets she had been looking for rested on the other side of the stone stock. She tried every way imaginable to reach the bracelets, but could not.

Finally, she climbed onto the stone bench, dreaming all the while of the bracelets' great power and blessings, and slowly put her hands through the small holes and into the bracelets. The young woman felt the bracelets slowly squeeze around her wrists. She could feel the power of the bracelets as they bound themselves to her hands. Oh, how blessed she was! She sang and rejoiced at the success of her quest. She, after all, was the one who now possessed the golden bracelets!

But when she tried to pull her hands through the small holes in the stone stock so that she could return home, to her great shock and horror, her hands would not fit through the small holes while wearing the golden bracelets. She tugged and pulled, wiggled and yanked, but there was no way she could pull her hands through the holes while the bracelets were on. She tried to take the bracelets off, but such was the blessing that no one could remove them, not even the wearer of the bracelets. So there stood the maiden, unable to sit or lie down or walk. She could do nothing but stand in every circumstance, challenge, and weather with her hands caught in the blessing.

In many ways, this is what happens to Jacob. What he believes and hopes is a blessing eventually becomes a curse and a source of resentment, hatred, threat, anxiety, fear, and humiliation for him. YHWH gives Jacob what he wants, but once he has it, he quickly comes to realize that it is not what he has bargained for. We may once again recall the wisdom of the Proverbs in this matter.

Proverbs 14:12 *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

We shall revisit this issue again as the saga of Jacob and Esau continues in the next few portions. For now, however, let us content ourselves with what YHWH has given us and not trouble ourselves with what YHWH has intended for others. To avoid the pitfall of Jacob we need learn the virtue of contentment.

Philippians 4:11-13 *Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. ¹²I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. ¹³I can do all things through Messiah which strengtheneth me.*

1 Timothy 6:6-8 *But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.*

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

It is easy to understand that what YHWH gives us, He gives us out of love. It is a little more difficult for us to accept the fact that what YHWH withholds from us, He withholds from us out of the same love. It is even more difficult for us to understand how YHWH can give to one member of the body in love, while at the same time, withhold something from another member of the body in that same love. We must learn to trust that our Heavenly Father loves us, knows what is best for us, and desires only good for us. When we come to understand this truth, we will content ourselves with what we have, giving thanks for what is given and for what is not given.

A Rood Awakening!

Presents

Awakening in the Word

By Glenn McWilliams of TK TORAH KEEPERS

www.michaelroodministries.com

Our heart at A Rood Awakening is to spread the message of the pure Torah to the four corners of the earth. We know that there are many brothers and sisters around the world who are hungering and thirsting for the pure water of the Word. We have been working diligently to make these weekly Torah teachings available around the world via the internet and television. It is our hope to keep these teachings available to the whole world at no charge. To do this we need your help and support. If you have been feasting or even gleaning strength, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and encouragement from these weekly teachings, then please help us to continue this ministry to the world with your support.

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”

(Matthew 10:8)

Your tax deductible contribution to A Rood Awakening will help to assure that these and other such teachings will continue to reach and edify the body of Messiah even to the ends of the earth.

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”

(Matthew 10:8)

YES! I have been blessed by the Awakening in the Word Torah teaching series and I want to support the continuance of this vital ministry. Please accept my donation which is given in a spirit of love and gratitude.

Name _____ Amount _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Please make checks payable to A Rood Awakening Ministries International.

Send contributions to:

AWAKENING IN THE WORD
c/o A Rood Awakening Ministries International
P.O. Box 309
Byron Center, Michigan 49315
USA