



International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

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Genesis 27:5-10, 18-29
New American Standard Bible
November 11, 2018

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, November 11, 2018**, is from **Genesis 27:5-10, 18-29**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

(Genesis 27:5) Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home,

Because Isaac was almost blind and thought he was dying, he told Esau he wanted to give him the blessing that belonged to the firstborn son. It seems unthinkable that he did not know about (or believe?) Rebekah after the LORD told her that the older son would serve the younger son

(Genesis 25:23). The LORD's words indicated that Jacob would receive Isaac's blessing instead of Esau. The Bible does not tell us how often they discussed the meaning of the LORD's words to her and what Isaac should do about what the LORD had told her. Isaac may or may not have known that Esau had sold his birthright and the corresponding blessing to Jacob, but Isaac's blessing was not Esau's to sell. In any event, Isaac asked Esau to bring him a dinner of wild game to eat before he blessed him. Hearing this conversation, Rebekah took the matter into her own hands. Despite what Rebekah or Isaac did, the LORD achieved what He had foretold Rebekah.

(Genesis 27:6) Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying,

Rebekah decided that she would do all she could to ensure that what the LORD had revealed to her about Jacob would be fulfilled. Rebekah's goal, purpose, or end may have been worthy — that the LORD's will be done — but the means and methods she chose were sinful and wrong. In Christian ethics, the end does not justify the means. A good goal will not make the wrong means and methods right. Furthermore, she involved her son in her deceptive, sinful behavior, but perhaps to honor his mother, Jacob did what was wrong in obedience to her. The Bible does not tell children to honor and obey their parents by doing wrong when their parents tell them to sin.

(Genesis 27:7) ‘Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.’

Isaac loved Esau because of the game he brought him. If he had consulted the LORD or believed his wife and chose to ignore God’s will to uphold tradition and bless the son he loved for his good food, he put his stomach before his head and obedience to the LORD. The blessing was to be official because the LORD was to hear the blessing. The blessing could not be retracted once Isaac gave it. The blessing involved what Isaac hoped the LORD would do for his son, and God did do what Isaac asked in his blessing, but the blessing went to Jacob instead of Esau.

(Genesis 27:8) “Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you.

Rebekah wanted Jacob to impersonate Esau and pretend to have done what Isaac had requested of Esau. When Jacob objected, he did not object on the basis that what she wanted him to do was dishonest and deceptive. He objected on the basis that Isaac might catch him in the deception, but Rebekah said that if he did catch Jacob in the deception that the curse would fall upon her and not on him – she truly loved Jacob and wanted the blessing for her son according to the LORD’s promise to her. In some sense a curse did fall up on her after Jacob received Isaac’s blessing, for after she and Isaac sent Jacob away to find a wife, she never saw Jacob again.

(Genesis 27:9) “Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves.

Rebekah decided that she could prepare two goats (perhaps choosing the best parts of each one) in a tasty way that would make Isaac believe it was wild game that he was eating. So, one of her lies involved “fake food.” We do not know if she had prayed before she began her deceptive ways, but it is not likely. If she had prayed, the LORD could have shown her the right way to change Isaac’s mind and bless Jacob instead of Esau, or the LORD could have changed Isaac’s heart and mind in answer to her prayers according to the will of the LORD as He foretold her.

(Genesis 27:10) “Then you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death.”

She prepared Jacob’s hands and neck to be hairy using skins from the goats he brought her (perhaps that is why she chose goat’s skin instead of sheep’s wool). She dressed Jacob in Esau’s best clothes and gave him the food to take to Isaac before Esau returned. Because Jacob received the LORD’s blessing even though his mother and he deceived Isaac indicates that the LORD can use human evil and sin and overrule evil deeds to achieve His good purposes without doing evil or approving evil. The LORD achieved

what He told Rebekah would be done without approving their evil means. Indeed, both Rebekah and Jacob suffered in different ways because of the sins they committed. They were separated never to see each other again in this life.

(Genesis 27:18) Then he came to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?”

Having been prepared to go to his father with his dinner, Jacob went and called to his father, and Isaac replied that the person must be his son because he had called him “My Father.” However, even though the voice was that of Jacob, Isaac asked him “Who is it?” At any point along the way of this deception, the LORD could have intervened and stopped the deception, but as far as we know God does not often stop people from committing sins and receiving the unhappy consequences as a lesson.

(Genesis 27:19) Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me.”

Jacob lied when he claimed to be Esau, and he compounded the lie when he claimed to be Isaac’s firstborn son. He also did not do what Isaac had told Esau to do; he did what his mother told him to do. He lied when he said his prepared goat was game. He said he wanted the blessing he had been promised, but Isaac had promised

the blessing to Esau. Isaac did not suspect the deception or think about the fact that his conversation with Esau could have been overheard so that Rebekah and Jacob could have plotted to deceive him. However, the LORD intended for Jacob to receive Isaac's blessing, and He intended for Jacob and Rebekah to learn hard lessons from their lying that might make them avoid that sin in the future.

(Genesis 27:20) Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because the LORD your God caused it to happen to me.”

From experience, Isaac knew how long it could take to hunt, prepare, and cook a meal from wild game, so he asked a normal question, perhaps also wanting assurance that even though he was hearing Jacob's voice he was in fact talking to Esau. Jacob then sinfully invoked the name of the LORD in his deception by giving God the glory for having found the game so quickly. Despite their deception, the LORD had intended from before Esau and Jacob were born that Jacob would receive Isaac's blessing and the LORD would have worked the situation out for good without doing wrong except for Rebekah's and Jacob's sinful interference that still achieved God's will.

(Genesis 27:21) Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.”

Doubting that it was his son, Isaac continued talking to Jacob. Knowing that Esau was a hairy man, Isaac wanted to touch his son. He made it clear that he was doubting what Jacob was claiming and that he wanted to give this test. Perhaps he knew the LORD's will from discussions with Rebekah over the years and planned to circumvent the LORD's will. We do not know.

(Genesis 27:22) So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.”

Probably with some trepidation, Jacob went close to his father. Again, Isaac expressed his reason for caution and testing, for the voice was Jacob's, which might have led to Jacob's tearful confession and forgiveness by his father if he had been found out. But Jacob was probably thankful that the goat skins were a good enough substitute for Esau's hair that he passed the test — as his mother had said he would.

(Genesis 27:23) He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

The Bible repeats the fact that in his blindness Isaac could only distinguish Esau from Jacob by voice, touch, and smell. The son pretending to be Esau had Jacob's voice, but Isaac mistrusted his ears, and he instead chose to

follow his feelings. Sometimes people follow their feelings to overcome their doubts instead of following the voice of God in the Bible.

(Genesis 27:24) And he said, “Are you really my son Esau?” And he said, “I am.”

Isaac kept questioning Jacob and Jacob kept lying to him. We have no indication that Isaac prayed to the LORD for guidance before telling Esau that he would bless him or during the time he thought he was talking to Jacob. He surely would have known the LORD's will from having talked to Rebekah before Esau and Jacob were born, but it seems he never prayed to the LORD for guidance in how to achieve the revealed will of God. If he had prayed to the LORD, his family situation would have ended differently.

(Genesis 27:25) So he said, “Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's game, that I may bless you.” And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank.

As he ate and drank, Isaac had the opportunity to continue thinking about whether or not the voice he heard each time he talked to him was Jacob's or Esau's voice. Isaac probably wanted to believe that the son he was talking to was Esau and probably had no reason to think Jacob would ever lie to him, so he ignored the meaning of the sound of Jacob's voice that he heard.

(Genesis 27:26) Then his father Isaac said to him, “Please come close and kiss me, my son.”

In one last effort to determine who he talked to, Isaac asked for his son to come near and kiss him. Once again, he would depend on his physical senses instead of the voice he was hearing that was so clearly Jacob’s voice.

(Genesis 27:27) So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, “See, the smell of my son Is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed;

When Isaac smelled the clothing of Esau’s that Jacob was wearing, he blessed him, not thinking that Jacob might be wearing Esau’s clothing. Esau was wrong to sell his birthright, and Jacob was wrong to deceive his father. Isaac was wrong to try to thwart the LORD’s will, and Rebekah was wrong to try to deceive her husband and involve her son in telling lies. Each one suffered the consequences of their wrong choices. Jacob would be away from home for twenty years, be deceived by Laban, and never see his mother alive again. Esau would hate his brother and want to kill him. Isaac trembled when he learned that he had blessed the wrong son, perhaps knowing that he had disobeyed the LORD and might never see Jacob again. Despite everyone having done wrong and suffering the consequences, the LORD fulfilled His word to Rebekah about Jacob receiving the blessing.

(Genesis 27:28) Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, And of the fatness of the earth, And an abundance of grain and new wine;

Isaac's blessing of Jacob included receiving many worldly blessings from the LORD, including all that would give him an abundant produce from the land. Jacob would have all he and his family needed to eat and drink as the Lord provided good farmland and water for his crops. Jacob would continue in his preferred way of life as a shepherd and farmer. Remember: Esau enjoyed hunting wild game, not staying at home, so the blessing was more fitting for Jacob than Esau. Esau would not have been a good head of the family. With Rebekah's help over the years, Jacob had prepared himself to care for the family in the future, but he was not given that opportunity for twenty years and Rebekah died before he returned from Haran.

(Genesis 27:29) May peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you; Be master of your brothers, And may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, And blessed be those who bless you."

Jacob would be lord over his brother and nations. Nations bowed down to the descendants of Jacob which happened in the reigns of King David and King Solomon. After Jesus Christ, a descendant of Jacob, returns, all nations will serve Him and all peoples will bow down to Him. Later,

Paul wrote: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse” (Romans 12:14). All those who bless Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior will be blessed. All those who listen to and believe the Bible will be blessed.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. For what sins were Rebekah and Jacob guilty?
2. As far as we know, what did Isaac refuse to do?
3. Which son do you think was prepared to receive Isaac’s blessing? Why?
4. What kind of a person was Esau?
5. How was the blessing of Jacob ultimately fulfilled.

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