

# Deception

Jeff Rogers  
Genesis 27

---

Jacob's life as a young man is not portrayed in the most glowing terms. Rather, it is a life of division and deceit (until chapter 32:22-32). This poor testimony is not limited to just him. It extends to his father Isaac as he defiantly attempted to derail God's revealed plan through Jacob. Genesis 27:3-4, *Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.*" While Isaac was defiant, Rebekah, Jacob's mother, distrusted her husband as both operated independently of each other (Gen 27:5). Jacob, the younger twin, led a life of deceit in his younger years and reaped the harvest of his life in his later years (exploited his older brother and deceived his blind and aging father). Lastly, Esau grew to be a "mighty hunter," an occupation inconsistent with God's plan for Israel (he is the second archer named, the first being Nimrod).

- God's grace continues to work through our mess.
- God's patience endures our missteps.
- God's mercy is new with every mistake.

After twenty years of exile and his wrestling match with God, Jacob reaped the harvest of years of deceitful living.

- He faced the challenge of Esau's revenge (Genesis 32:4-33:16)
- He wrestles with God and receives a displaced hip for life (Genesis 32:25-33)
- His only daughter Dinah is violated (Genesis 34)
- His beloved wife Rachel dies giving birth (Genesis 35:16-20)
- His first son, Joseph, is sold into slavery by his brothers, and the brothers use an article of clothing to deceive Jacob that Joseph is dead (Genesis 37:26-33).

## I. Jacob: the Moral Issue (27:1-28:5)

- A. His two deceitful actions
  1. He acquires the birthright (perhaps physical inheritance) by exploiting his brother's misery.
  2. He pilfers the patriarchal blessing by crafty deception of his blind and aged father.
- B. His few and hard years.
  1. Abraham's life recounted (**Genesis 25:8**, *Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people.*)
  2. Isaac's life recounted (**Genesis 35:29**, *And Isaac breathed his last, and he died and was gathered to his people, old and full of days.*)
  3. Jacob's report (**Genesis 47:9**, *And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The days of the years of my sojourning are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their sojourning."*)
- C. His twenty-year exile and beyond
  1. The deceiver was deceived (Sowing & Reaping)
    - a) Laban to Jacob (**Genesis 29:25**, *And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"*)
    - b) Of Jacob before Isaac (**Genesis 27:35**, *But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing."*)
- D. Scripture's condemnation of Jacob's early moral lapses.
  1. **Hosea 12:2**, *The Lord has an indictment against Judah and will punish Jacob according to his ways; he will repay him according to his deeds.*
  2. **Jeremiah 9:4**, *Let everyone beware of his neighbor, and put no trust in any brother, for every brother is a deceiver, and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.*

## II. Jacob: the National Division (Gen 25:19-26)

- A. The Troubled Pregnancy (Genesis 25:21-26 esp. vs. 22)

- 
- B. The Prophetic Oracle (Genesis 25:23) (Two Nations; Two Peoples; Division; One stronger than the other; The Older shall serve the younger)
1. God's promise to Abraham was one nation (Gen 17:4-6)(cf. Num 20:14, Deut 2:4, 8)
  2. Hosea's introduction of Jacob
  3. **Hosea 12:3**, *In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his manhood he strove with God.*
  4. Hebrew scholars have taught with a bent toward Jacob's desire to stall the birth of his twin
  5. By folk etymology, the name Jacob comes from the Hebrew 'take, "heel." Hebrew *ya'akav* stems from a Semitic root meaning "to protect." It is abbreviated from a fuller form with a divine name or epithet as its subject, "*May El protect.*" The name is then a plea for divine protection of the newly born – most appropriate for the one who was to live his entire life in the shadow of danger.<sup>1</sup> Other sources render it a "heel grabber" or "deceiver."
  6. The struggle for seniority between the twins commenced in the womb and continues into their adult lives.
- C. The divided love (Gen 25:28)

### **III. Jacob: the Exploitation of His Twin (Genesis 25:27-34) (under 40 years of age)**

- A. The Birthright's value - The firstborn ranked second only to the head of the family and was the automatic successor to the family patriarch.
- B. The Birthright's Acquisition
1. Two other aspects have recently been uncovered in Near Eastern documents:<sup>2</sup>
    - a) A father had the right to disregard chronological considerations.
    - b) An heir could barter away his future inheritance.
  2. The provisions in Deuteronomy 21:15-17 indicate that at some period, this was acceptable.
    - a) Examples Gen 49:3-4 (cf. 1 Chronicles 5:1)
    - b) Jacob passed over Manasseh (Genesis 48:13)
- C. Jacob exploits his brother's misery to gain what he thought an accident of birth had denied him.

### **IV. Jacob: The Marriage of Esau to Judith the Hittite (Gen 26:34-35) (Esau and Jacob are 40)**

- A. Side Note: Esau's character Hebrews 12:15-16
- B. He offended in contracting the marriage and not leaving the initiative to Isaac & Rebekah.
- C. He offended by marrying outside the "kinship group" or "tribe."
- D. He offended by intermarrying with the native women.
- E. Esau's two marriages provide a framework around the Deceitful Plan (Gen 28:6-9)

### **V. Jacob: The Deceitful Plan (Genesis 27:18-30)**

- A. The Questions (Genesis 27:18-20)
1. Who are you my son? (18--19) Asked by Isaac to Jacob.
  2. How have you found it so quickly, my son? (20)
- B. The Inspection (Genesis 27:21-23)
1. Come near (21)
  2. Come touch (22)
  3. Come clean (23)
- C. The Clarification (Genesis 27:24-25)
1. Are you really my son Esau?
  2. I am
  3. The meal (25)
- D. The Blessing (Genesis 27:26-29)
- E. The Betrayal (Genesis 27:30)

### **VI. The Outcomes**

- A. God's plan will be accomplished in our life with or without our cooperation.
- B. God's grace is always sufficient, however consequences are real.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sarna, Nahum M. *Genesis*. The JPS Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989. (180)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (181).