

**BELOVED DECEIVERS:  
SANCTIFICATION AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**  
(Gen. 27)

Pre-service Texts: Gen. 25:19-34, 26:34-36

**I. Welcome, Prayer, Opening Illustration and Application**

- The mystery of metamorphosis (Slide)
- This illustrates what the NT teaches: There are three kinds of people in the world:
  - a. Natural (S: 1 Cor. 2:14)
    - Discuss: Controlled by the flesh
    - Example: Esau, who despised his birthright
    - Birthright: According to then-prevalent tradition, this was the right of the first-born to: a) serve as the leader of the family; b) to serve as the priest of the family and the custodian of its spiritual heritage; c) to receive a double-portion of the family inheritance; d) and to receive the special pre-eminence and honor associated with these roles. / *But in the covenant family the birthright meant something far more: the right to receive all the blessings God had promised to father Abraham: to possess the land, to live in it with God under his protection, and to become a great nation that would bless all the nations of the world through the Promised Seed. And in the NT, we learn what these blessings—and the birthright—really are: eternal life itself!*
    - Example: A natural man with a difference: loved of God, chosen of God, and therefor graciously granted a taste for the things of God
  - b. Carnal (S: 1 Cor. 3:1-4)
    - Discuss: Spiritually reborn, but dominated by the flesh
    - In today's text: Isaac (especially), Rebekah
  - c. Spiritual (S: 1 Cor. 2:15-16)
    - Discuss: Dominated by the Spirit
    - Example: The Jacob who is yet to be! Who meets God at Bethel, where he enters into covenant with him (new birth), and later at Peniel, where he wrestles with the

Son of God, prevails, and becomes a truly spiritual man: clinging to Christ, limping along, and learning to lean!

Application:

- Jacob is a type of the Church: His story is our story!
- What we learn from his story: A loving, sovereign God has chosen and predestined a deeply sinful family of worms to enter into eternal fellowship with Him through Christ, shake off the chrysalis of their carnality, and emerge into the bright light of day as beautiful band of butterflies, flying freely and joyfully on the winds of the Holy Spirit!
- Let's keep all this in mind as we jump into today's text, and as we read and learn about Jacob in the weeks ahead

## II. (1-4) Blind Isaac Prepares to Bless Esau

27 When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." <sup>2</sup> He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death." <sup>3</sup> "Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, <sup>4</sup> 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."

- Intro: Isaac is now about 100 years old, and his two sons are about 75. Isaac is going blind and may be an invalid. Fearing his death is near, he sends Esau out to hunt for game and prepare it, so they may feast together as they often do, and so that he (Isaac), in high spirits, may bestow the patriarchal blessing on his favorite son.

To Note:

- *Isaac, formerly a spiritual man, has now become carnal.* On the one hand, he has fallen into sensuality, especially gluttony (note in the text ahead the emphasis on Isaac's senses). On the other, he has fallen into a sick, soulless relationship with his bewitchingly charismatic, but completely unspiritual son, Esau.
- *Isaac is now spiritually, as well as physically, blind:* He is blind to his own spiritual condition; blind to the true character of Esau (who has willfully married two pagan women, and here breaks his covenant with Jacob); and blind to the virtues of his son Jacob. Worst of all, he is blind to the dreadful irony of going against the declared will of God to bless in the name of God a man who has no use whatsoever for God! Finally, he is

also blind to the grave danger to which he now exposes himself, his family, and the plan and purpose of God. (S: Rev. 3:17-18)

- Application 1: Christians must beware of soulish ties to ungodly people, whether family, friends, colleagues, or leaders of any kind (religious, political). We must “hate” all people and tie ourselves to Christ, so that He can give us back to them with his Word and Spirit and Presence, so that we can do them eternal, spiritual good.
- Application 2: Like Isaac, spiritual Christians can fall into the flesh. In part, the antidote is to be aware of the lusts and deeds of the flesh, and to do battle against them. But in larger part, the antidote is to catch a vision for the course and character of our sanctification—for the great metamorphosis that God has planned for his people—so that our ever-increasing joy in knowing, loving, and serving the Lord in ever-greater measure expels the lusts of the flesh.

### **III. (5-13) Deceptive Rebekah Wins Jacob to Her Plot**

<sup>5</sup>Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, <sup>6</sup>Rebekah said to her son Jacob, “I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, <sup>7</sup>‘Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.’

<sup>8</sup>Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. <sup>9</sup>Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. <sup>10</sup>And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies.”

<sup>11</sup>But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. <sup>12</sup>Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing.”

<sup>13</sup>His mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me.”

- Rebekah: When she overheard Isaac, she ought courageously to have fulfilled her calling as the helper of her husband and gone to him and reminded him of God’s express will in this matter. Or, if she saw that that was impossible, she ought simply to have done nothing, except to pray and entrust the matter to the Lord. Instead, she chose to embrace evil, carnal means in order to achieve a good, spiritual end. (S: Pink, 241-2)

- Jacob: Here, Jacob shows himself a merely natural man. He has no reservations about the morality of this plan, only a selfish fear of its resulting in a curse rather than a blessing. Also, he failed lovingly to reprove his mother for her suggestion, but obeyed her as she led him into sin.
- Application #1: Spiritual people love spiritual ends, but detest ugly, sweaty, carnal means for achieving them. Eager to see God at work and getting all the glory, they renounce underhanded ways, and simply speak the truth in love as the Lord leads. The results they leave to God. (S: 2 Cor.)
- Application #2: Even though Rebekah and Jacob sinned, their sin was clearly part of God's plan to over-rule *Isaac's* sin, and to bring His holy purpose and plan to fulfillment. Spiritual people can learn from this. Yes, God is displeased with our sins; yes, they will often elicit his discipline; and yes, we should repent heartily and resolve to do better. But when we sin, we should never follow Satan by falling into despair or self-loathing over our sin. Instead, we should say, "I am a beloved deceiver. In His love and wisdom, the sovereign God has ordained my sins, as well as my great struggle with them. He will use them to accomplish his holy purpose in my life and in the lives of others. As I make my faltering way towards becoming a spiritual man, he will cause all things—even my sin—to work together for good."

#### **IV. (14- 25) The Plot Unfolds (and the worm Jacob looks pretty bad!)**

<sup>14</sup> So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. <sup>15</sup> Then Rebekah took *the best garments of Esau her older son*, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. <sup>16</sup> And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. <sup>17</sup> And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

<sup>18</sup> So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" <sup>19</sup> Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." (Lie #1)

<sup>20</sup> But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success." (Lie #2, and a blasphemy to boot!)

<sup>21</sup> Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not.” (Knowing how Jacob previously stole the birthright from Esau, Isaac is now suspicious)

<sup>22</sup> So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” <sup>23</sup> And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. (non-verbal lie #3)

So he blessed him.<sup>24</sup> (A preliminary blessing, but not the patriarchal blessing)

He said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He answered, “I am.” (Lie #4)

<sup>25</sup> Then he said, “Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

- Here we see Jacob at his worst, opening a window on the very essence of the depravity of man: a profound self-centeredness that gives no thought whatsoever to the law or honor of the God who created us for himself and his glory. Nevertheless, God loves him, and will therefore use the next 20 years to deliver him from it!
- Application: Why do we lie and deceive? As a rule, because we fear something bad or desire something good, and believe that it's up to us to do all we can to avoid the one and get the other, even if that includes lying. In other words, we lie because we don't believe in a loving, sovereign, omnipotent God who promises to protect us and supply our every need. / Spiritual men do, and so are set free to speak the truth at all times, thereby shining like lights in a dark, dishonest world, and so bringing great glory to God! (S: Verses on truth)

## **VI. (26-29) The Plot Succeeds: Jacob Secures the Blessing**

<sup>26</sup> Then his father Isaac said to him, “Come near and kiss me, my son.” <sup>27</sup> So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments (sense of smell) and blessed him and said,

“See, the smell of my son

is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed!

<sup>28</sup> May God give you of the dew of heaven

and of the fatness of the earth  
and plenty of grain and wine.

<sup>29</sup> Let peoples serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,  
and may your mother's sons bow down to you.

Cursed be everyone who curses you,  
and blessed be everyone who blesses you!”

- Though Isaac thought he was blessing Esau, the blessing was still bestowed in the power of Spirit, by faith, and was therefore sure to come to pass!
- Despite Isaac’s sinful intentions, the sovereign God has overruled him and blessed Jacob. “There is no wisdom, no insight, and no plan that can avail against the LORD.” – Proverb 21:30
- A blessing for all budding typologists: (S: Arthur Pink, p. 244)

## **VI. (30-38) The Plot Explodes: Isaac and Esau Receive the Shock of Their Lives**

<sup>30</sup> As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

- An amazing display of the sovereignty of God. He is in absolute control of what happens; He himself saw to it that the plot succeeded!

<sup>31</sup> He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, “Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me.” <sup>32</sup> His father Isaac said to him, “Who are you?” He answered, “I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.” <sup>33</sup> Then Isaac trembled very violently.

- Here is Henry Morris on WHY Isaac trembled so greatly (S: p. 439). It is a fearful thing for a carnal Christian to awaken from his sin, but a blessed thing nonetheless.

And he said, “Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.”

- Jacob feared that if Isaac discovered his deception, he would curse him. Isaac does not, but humbly bows before the revealed will of the sovereign God. Isaac has repented of his sin and rebellion . . . *which God never mentions again in all Scripture.*

<sup>34</sup> As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!”

- This is not a *godly* sorrow, which is sorrow for sin and for all the devastation it causes to God and man, and which leads to true repentance. Rather, it is the sorrow *of the world*, which is sorrow over the loss of temporal goods, and which leads only to death. (Revelation 18, HSL)

<sup>35</sup> But he said, “Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing.” <sup>36</sup> Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.”

- There is some truth in what Esau says here, truth that will catch up with Jacob. But there is more error than truth, for Esau was the one who freely sold his birthright, and with that the right to receive the blessing. Jacob did not steal them from Esau, Esau gave them away.

Then he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” <sup>37</sup> Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?”

<sup>38</sup> Esau said to his father, “Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

- According to Heb. 12, the weeping of Esau holds a deeper meaning, and a solemn one. It pictures the weeping of all people who reject their spiritual birthright—the right to inherit salvation from Christ—and so, in the day of Judgment, find it impossible to secure a change of heart in Father God. (S: Heb. 12:15-17, ASV)

## VII. (39-40) The “Blessing” of Esau

<sup>39</sup> Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

“Behold, away from the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be,  
and away from the dew of heaven on high.

<sup>40</sup> By your sword you shall live,  
and you shall serve your brother;

but when you grow restless  
you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

- The blessing is an anti-blessing, a cursing
- Its fulfillment is both historical and eschatological. Edom, the nation that flowed from Esau’s loins, will live in an infertile land, fight against many enemies, be subject to Israel (in the days of David and Solomon), briefly break from them, and in time perish forever. / Edom pictures the unbelieving world which, like Esau, will not inherit eternal life in the beautiful new World to Come.

### **VIII. (41-45) The Bitter Fruits of Deception**

<sup>41</sup> Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, “The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

- Bitter fruit in Esau: Hatred and murder

<sup>42</sup> But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, “Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. <sup>43</sup> Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran <sup>44</sup> and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away— <sup>45</sup> until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereft of you both in one day?”

- Bitter Fruit in Rebekah: Fear, flight, and separation. Naïve Rebekah did not realize that it would be twenty years before Esau’s anger turned away and Jacob returns to the Promised Land; nor that she would die before that happened, and so never see Jacob again; nor that she would never enjoy the company of godly Rachel and Leah (her daughters-in-law), or see her 13 grandchildren. Instead, she would be left alone with a penitent but sorrowful Isaac, bitter Esau, and his two Hittite wives who were a continual vexation to her soul.
- Bitter Fruit in Jacob: Fear, flight, and separation, and something more: Twenty years of hardship under the deceptions of Uncle Laban, and at least 20 years of grief under the deception of his 11 sons, who tricked him into believing that his own favorite son, Joseph, was dead.

- Moral: The NT solemnly warns us, “*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows, that will he also reap.*” Yes, God is loving and forgiving towards his own, but he will not wink at sin. Rather, in love he will discipline the sinner so he may rid him of his sin; so that he (God) may transform him into spiritual man, a spiritual butterfly who can walk on the wind.

## IX. Conclusion/Application:

A. Review: At the outset of my sermon I suggested that Jacob is a picture of the Church, of all sinners of all times and all places whom God brings to Christ, setting them on a sure course to becoming spiritual men and women, perfectly conformed to the image of His Son. In other words, in the life of Jacob we learn certain important—and very encouraging—truths about our *sanctification*. Here are a few:

B. From Jacob’s life—illuminated by NT—we learn:

1. The *course* of our sanctification (i.e., Canaan, Bethel, Peniel; natural, carnal, spiritual)
2. The *goal* of our sanctification
3. The *impediment* to our sanctification
4. The (unavoidable) *struggle* for our sanctification
5. The *certainty* of our sanctification
6. The GOD of our sanctification (S: Pink)
7. The (proper) motive for our sanctification: gratitude, desire, confidence
8. The zeal for our sanctification

C. A closing Illustration from Uncle Clint

- Fear and guilt-ridden legalists, listen up!
- Baby Jacob learns to walk

