

Deception's Blessing – Genesis 27

GENESIS 27:1-4

As we step into this chapter, we quickly discover that Isaac's family dynamics aren't as they should be. Rebekah is manipulating her husband, Jacob is deceitful in his interactions with his father, and Esau has prioritized his physical desires over spiritual blessings.

If you remember in Genesis Chapter 25, we talked about how human choices and affections can conflict with God's purpose at times. Isaac preferred Esau, so perhaps he saw him as a strong and capable leader. Did He know about the prophecy given to Rebekah? One can only speculate.

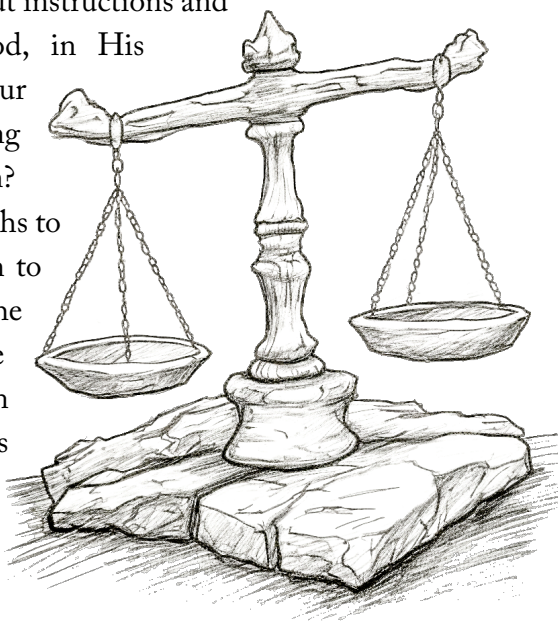
The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." (Genesis 25:23, NIV)

God didn't choose Jacob because of his age or his skills. He saw something deeper—an unwavering pursuit of righteousness coupled with persistent faith. This preference for the younger over the older is seen again later on in Genesis when Jacob intentionally crosses his hands, placing his right hand on Ephraim, Joseph's younger son, and his left hand on Manasseh, the firstborn. This act signified that Ephraim (the younger) would receive the greater blessing.

God's unconventional choices are found throughout scripture, baffling those who are affected by them, while reminding us that God's ways are not our ways. Paul, once a zealous persecutor of Christians, was chosen by God to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. Even the disciples themselves were initially skeptical of his conversion due to Paul's infamous past. Despite his limitations, a young shepherd boy, was chosen by God to be king. And by the power of the Spirit, David faced giants, battled enemies, and led a nation.

This balance between logic and the wisdom of God is something that people have grappled with from the beginning of time. Our limited understanding yearns for clear-cut instructions and predictable outcomes. But God, in His infinite wisdom will often defy our expectations, leaving us asking questions like, why? Or why him?

God doesn't choose these paths to confuse us, rather He uses them to display His power and glory. In the process, they help us recognize the limitations of our human understanding, and position us as vessels for His power. When we accept our limitations, they become opportunities for His strength to shine through.



But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.
—1 Corinthians 1:27–29, NIV

❓ Sometimes God’s choices are unconventional. I pointed to a few examples in this chapter. Can you think of any other people God chose or situations in the Bible that defied the wisdom of man?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

❓ Why do you think God often chooses unlikely heroes?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

? Jacob's pursuit of the birthright suggests a value placed on spiritual blessings over immediate physical gratifications, while Esau was willing to trade his birthright for a bowl of "stew." What are some ways, if any, you've done the same?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

GENESIS 27:5-7

Charles Spurgeon once said, "He that carves for himself will soon cut his fingers. He that runs before the cloud of God's providence may have, ere long, to come back again faster than he went forward." Those words echo the actions of Rebekah, who rather than patiently waiting on God and trusting His plan, ran ahead of the Lord taking matters into her own hands.

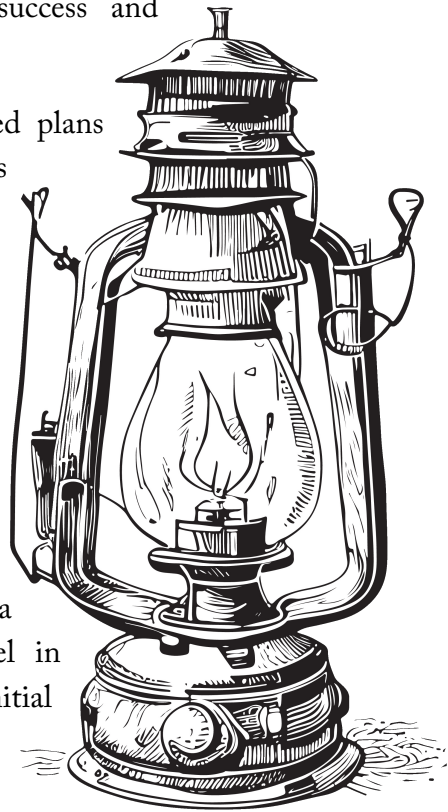
While her intentions may have aligned with God's message to her, Rebekah's impulsive actions demonstrate the importance of prayer and discernment before making significant decisions. Some of the best opportunities in life, from commitments to church and missions work to career aspirations, homeownership, and the sacred covenant of marriage, might appear to be God-given opportunities, but our understanding is limited, which is why it's important to prayerfully consider if our choices align with God's will. And if they do, we should also consider whether they align with His timing. Here are a few examples:

- **Commitment to Church Involvement:** While serving at church is noble, overextending ourselves at the cost of our family is not. Balancing church commitments with family responsibilities ensures alignment with God's will.

- **Undertaking Mission Work:** Mission work is commendable, but agreement with your spouse and readiness are vital. Counting the cost and seeking God's timing are crucial for effective missions.
- **Career Advancement and Ambition:** Pursuing success is valid, but not at the expense of values or spiritual health. Aligning ambitions with God's purpose and maintaining integrity are key in career pursuits.
- **Homeownership:** Buying a home is a significant decision. While it's a common aspiration, it's important to seek God's guidance to ensure it aligns with His plan and doesn't hinder spiritual growth or financial stewardship.
- **Marriage:** Marriage is a sacred commitment. While desiring companionship is natural, it's essential to seek God's will and timing in choosing a life partner. Ensuring alignment with His plan fosters a strong foundation for marital success and spiritual growth.

It's easy to believe our well-intentioned plans align with God's perfect design, but that's not always the case. In Acts 16:6-10, we read how Paul and his companions were prevented by the Holy Spirit from entering certain regions, despite seeming like logical steps for their mission.

Why? Because God sees the bigger picture, the ripples of our choices beyond our immediate perception. He led them towards Macedonia through a vision, ultimately spreading the gospel in Europe—something beyond their initial plan.



Paul's experience attests to a profound truth: God's wisdom transcends our own. As Isaiah proclaims, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," (Isaiah 55:8, NIV). The heavens stretch infinitely above the earth, reflecting the immeasurable difference between our limited perspective and God's encompassing vision.

❓ What three actions does Proverbs 3:5-6 instruct us to undertake to align ourselves with God's will?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

❓ How do Esther's preparations before approaching the king in Esther 4:16, differ from Rebekah's approach to securing the blessing for Jacob in Genesis 27? What can we learn from this?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

❓ Are there decisions or situations where you struggle to trust God because you want to rely on your own logic or understanding?

.....

.....

.....

.....

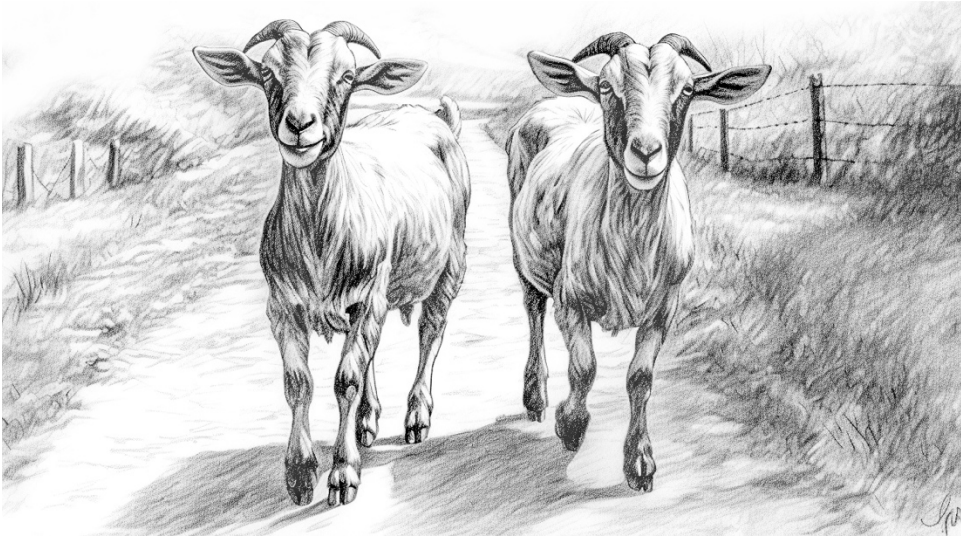
.....



GENESIS 27:8-29

Rebekah's decision to send Jacob to fetch two goats is interesting. It's fair to say that two average-sized goats could provide enough meat for several gallons of stew. So why two goats? It could be that the two goats in this story point to the day of atonement. On that particular day of the year, the high priest was instructed as follows: "take two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat." (Leviticus 16:7-10, NIV)

These two goats serve as a foreshadowing of the two-fold redemption brought about by Christ—both the atonement for sin through His sacrifice and the removal of sin's penalty. Jesus, like the scapegoat, takes upon Himself the burden of our sin, carrying it away so that we may be justified and reconciled to God.



What's interesting to note here is that although Rebekah and Jacob were deceiving Isaac, the Lord was working through the situation to accomplish His will. This is one example of God turning evil intentions into good, but there are several others in the Bible where we clearly see God's hand at work despite the evil intent of man. A good example of this is further on in Genesis when Joseph is sold into slavery by his brothers. Joseph's words, "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives," (Genesis 50:20, NIV) remind us that God determines the outcome of our actions.

Looking back to chapter one, we talked about the two "Adam's." How Esau symbolized the first Adam (the carnal man) and Jacob pointed to the second, which is Christ. Jacob, clothed in the likeness of Esau, draws a parallel to Philippians 2:7 which tells us that Christ, "made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."

Again, let's remember that while parallels underscore the interplay between Old Testament types and their fulfillment in the New Testament, any "types" or "parallels" that we find in the scriptures are imperfect representations of Christ and His redemptive work for mankind. They serve as foreshadows and illustrations, but the fullness of Christ's person and mission surpasses any earthly comparison.

? How do the two goats in Leviticus point to the two-fold redemption of Christ?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

? In this chapter, we saw two examples of God’s hand at work despite the evil intent of man. Can you think of any other examples from the Bible?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

GENESIS 27:30-46

I'd like to preface this section by saying that while the blessing and the birthright are closely intertwined, they're distinct. Notice how Esau separates the two in verse 36 when he says, "He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!" He lost his birthright in chapter 25, and now he's just discovered that he lost the blessing as well. So, what is the difference between the two?

A blessing typically refers to a verbal or spiritual expression of favor, prosperity, or divine protection pronounced upon an individual or group. It often carries significant spiritual and practical implications for the recipient.

A birthright, on the other hand was a customary right that was traditionally given to the firstborn son. It came with several privileges, including a double portion of the father's inheritance and leadership within the family upon the father's death. The one who received the birthright would typically receive the father's blessing as well. By selling his birthright, Esau forfeited not only his material inheritance but also his spiritual inheritance and divine favor as the firstborn son.

Esau's reaction to losing the birthright and the blessing may seem disproportionate as we see him cry out in this chapter. One possible reason

for this is that the blessing carried significant weight in ancient Near Eastern culture and had far-reaching implications for their future status, inheritance, and prosperity.

Additionally, Esau may have felt the loss of the blessing more deeply because it represented a formal acknowledgment of his father's favor and a tangible inheritance of leadership and prosperity.

There's a lesson to be learned here: the choices we make today will affect us tomorrow. Some of our choices, even the small ones we make, can set us up for a better future. Other choices will dampen the future with feelings of guilt, remorse, and regret.

Hebrews 12:17 tells us, "Afterward, as you know, when he [Esau] wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done."



As a side note, the King James Version says, "afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." If you're reading this version, don't let the word "repentance" trip you up. It was the situation that Esau was seeking to change, but couldn't. Esau had regrets, but true repentance includes a sincere desire to change our behavior. Matthew 3:8 tell us to, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." As we see further on in this chapter, he held a grudge and wanted to kill his brother.

Things we do today can make our day better tomorrow, like washing our dishes before bed, planting a garden, or paying the bills on time, but let's remember that our present choices extend beyond this life. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18)

Maybe we're not trading our birthright for a bowl of stew, but perhaps we're exchanging important relationships for excessive screen time, sacrificing integrity for the desire to gain approval from others, or prioritizing material possessions over our spiritual growth. Let's pause for a moment to examine our hearts and ask ourselves if our focus is in the right place. Are we making decisions that sacrifice long-term blessings for immediate gratification? Or are we faithfully prioritizing the will of our Lord? May this awareness challenge us, not just today, but every day, as we strive to align our actions with our faith.

Let's remember that our mistakes don't define who we are. They don't dictate our future, nor do they limit God's plans for our lives.

Our pasts may be marked by missteps, but they're also filled with countless opportunities for growth and redemption. Let these experiences be used by God to teach us and move us forward. And finally, let's hold on to the promise that God's plans are shaped by His love, designed to prosper us and not to harm us, to give us hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11).

❓ How does Romans 8:18 help us find meaning in suffering? Discuss how this perspective can change the way we view our hardships and daily frustrations?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

❓ How can the idea of "not trading our birthright for a bowl of stew" serve as a metaphor for the decisions we face daily? Can you think of an example in your life where you had to choose between long-term blessings and immediate satisfaction?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

? List three painful choices Jesus made that extended beyond His time on earth.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

? Aside from Jesus, list three people from the Bible, and with each one, note a costly choice that they made.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



Answer Key

Chapter 3 – Genesis 27

GENESIS 27:1-4

Sometimes God's choices are unconventional. I pointed to a few examples in this chapter. Can you think of any other people God chose or situations in the Bible that defied the wisdom of man?

There are several examples in the Bible here are a couple of mine:

- David - Despite being the youngest son, traditionally overlooked for leadership, God chose David to be king of Israel (1 Samuel 16:7). His selection illustrates that God values heart over appearance or age.
- Gideon - Called to save Israel from the Midianites, Gideon was the least in his family, which was also the weakest in their tribe. Yet, God chose him and reduced his army to 300 men to show that the victory was by divine, not human strength (Judges 6-7).

Why do you think God often chooses unlikely heroes?

God often chooses unlikely heroes to demonstrate His power and glory, ensuring that the focus remains on His strength and providence rather than human ability.

Jacob's pursuit of the birthright suggests a value placed on spiritual blessings over immediate physical gratifications, while Esau was willing to trade his birthright for a bowl of "stew." What are some ways, if any, you've done the same?

(This answer will be different for everyone)

GENESIS 27:5-7

What three actions does Proverbs 3:5-6 instruct us to undertake to align ourselves with God's will?

Proverbs 3:5-6 provides three clear actions to help align ourselves with God's will:

- 1) Trust in the Lord with all your heart: This means fully relying on God's wisdom and provision rather than our own understanding or insights.
- 2) Do not lean on your own understanding: This instructs us to humble ourselves and recognize the limits of our own knowledge and perspective.
- 3) In all your ways submit to Him: This involves acknowledging God's authority and guidance in every area of life.

How do Esther's preparations before approaching the king in Esther 4:16, differ from Rebekah's approach to securing the blessing for Jacob in Genesis 27? What can we learn from this?

Esther's preparations (Esther 4:16), involved fasting, prayer, and seeking community support, highlighting her reliance on God. In contrast, Rebekah's approach to securing the blessing involved deception and manipulation, relying on her own wisdom and strength rather than trusting and waiting on God.

We learn the importance of seeking God's will through prayer and community support rather than relying on our logic and strength.

Are there decisions or situations where you struggle to trust God because you want to rely on your own logic or understanding?

(This answer will be different for everyone)

GENESIS 27:8-29

How do the two goats in Leviticus point to the two-fold redemption of Christ?

The two goats in Leviticus symbolize Christ's two-fold redemption: one goat is sacrificed, representing Christ's atoning death, and the other, the scapegoat, is sent away, symbolizing the removal of our sins through Christ.

In this chapter, we saw two examples of God's hand at work despite the evil intent of man. Can you think of any other examples from the Bible?

This answer will be different for everyone. Here is mine:

In the Book of Esther, despite Haman's plot to exterminate the Jews, God worked through Esther and Mordecai to not only foil the plot but also save the Jewish people, showing God's ability to turn evil intentions into good outcomes.

GENESIS 27:30-46

How does Romans 8:18 help us find meaning in suffering? Discuss how this perspective can change the way we view our hardships and daily frustrations?

This verse helps us find meaning in suffering by framing it as temporary and insignificant compared to the eternal glory that awaits believers in Christ. This perspective shifts how we view hardships and daily frustrations, encouraging us to endure difficulties with hope and faith.

How can the idea of "not trading our birthright for a bowl of stew" serve as a metaphor for the decisions we face daily? Can you think of an example in your life where you had to choose between long-term blessings and immediate satisfaction?

The metaphor is a reminder against sacrificing long-term blessings for short-term gratification. This concept applies to daily decisions where immediate desires can often overshadow and compromise our longer-term spiritual health and commitments.

(The second part of this question will be different for everyone)

List three painful choices Jesus made that extended beyond His time on earth.

- 1) **Chose to be born as a human:** Jesus chose to leave the glory of Heaven and took on human form, enduring the limitations and sufferings of human life (Philippians 2:6-8). This not only was a sacrifice during His time on earth but also permanently altered His experience, as He remains fully God and fully man.
- 2) **Chose the path of the cross:** Jesus consciously chose to embrace the cross, knowing it meant suffering and death (Matthew 26:39). This decision was necessary for the redemption of humanity and has eternal implications for salvation and the relationship between God and man.
- 3) **Forgave His enemies:** During His crucifixion, Jesus made the painful choice to forgive those who were executing Him (Luke 23:34). This act of forgiveness brought Him to the cross and extended to all sinners.

Aside from Jesus, list three people from the Bible, and with each one, note a costly choice that they made.

Everyone's answers will be different. Here are three that I chose:

- 1) **Abraham** - Chose to obey God's command to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22).
- 2) **Moses** - Chose to lead the Israelites out of Egypt sacrificing his comfortable life in the Pharaoh's palace (Exodus 3).
- 3) **Daniel** - Chose to continue praying to God despite the decree that made such prayers a capital offense (Daniel 6).