

Lesson 11: November 11, 2018
Jacob Receives Isaac's Blessing
Bible Background • GENESIS 27:1–28:5

Printed Text • GENESIS 27:5–10, 18–19, 21–29 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 24:1–6

Deceiving others is a way that people get what they want. Does human deception erase the worth of human accomplishment? Even though the deception used by Rebekah and Jacob disrupted their family, God still worked through their situation to accomplish the planned and promised divine redemption of fallen humanity.

Words You Should Know

- A. Firstborn bekor (Heb.)—First in rank or chief as well as first born.
- B. Raiment malbush (Heb.)— Clothing.

Say It Correctly

- Isaac. i-ZEK.
- Esau. EE-saw.
- Jacob. JAY-cob.
- Rebekah. Re-BEK-ah.

Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: IDENTIFY how Jacob and Rebekah used deception with Isaac; REPENT of the times we have deceived others; and COMMIT to finding ways to express our needs and desires to others in honest and loving ways.

In Focus

Sibling rivalry is bad enough without the parents also choosing sides, but that's the way it was with Maurice and Darren. They argued with and competed against each other their whole lives. As the firstborn, Darren was Dad's favorite—the one Dad played sports with, taught boxing, and took on hunting trips. On the other hand, Mom made it to every one of Maurice's school events; Dad just offered apologies to him for not being there. Dad threw a party for Darren when he won a football scholarship, but was out of town on business for Maurice's college graduation. Mom gave Maurice a car for a graduation gift, and Darren was jealous. Throughout their lives, Dad paid Darren's bills because he "needed it more," but didn't do the same for Maurice.

One day, Mom suggested a way for Maurice to get some of Dad's assets. He wondered why he had agreed to the scheme; he could have—should have—said no, but he didn't. The fraud was exposed, and Maurice went to prison. But what hurt the most was the look in his grandfather's eyes at the trial. At the sentencing hearing, his grandfather said to Maurice, "You never had to do it. Everything was going to be yours. All you had to do was wait." Now, as the cell door closed behind him, Maurice whispered a prayer, asking for forgiveness.

Can we trust that what God has provided now is enough, and that He has more abundance in store for us?

Keep in Mind

“And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau’s hands: so he blessed him” (Genesis 27:23, KJV).

Focal Verses

KJV

Genesis 27:5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.

6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

9 Go 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:

10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son?

19 And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first born; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

21 And 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.

22 And 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.

23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau’s hands: so he blessed him.

24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am.

25 And 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.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

27 And 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 the LORD hath blessed:

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

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.

NLT

Genesis 27:5 But Rebekah overheard what Isaac had said to his son Esau. So when Esau left to hunt for the wild game,

6 she said to her son Jacob, “Listen. I overheard your father say to Esau,

7 ‘Bring me some wild game and prepare me a delicious meal. Then I will bless you in the LORD’s presence before I die.’

8 Now, my son, listen to me. Do exactly as I tell you.

9 Go out to the flocks, and bring me two fine young goats. I’ll use them to prepare your father’s favorite dish.

10 Then take the food to your father so he can eat it and bless you before he dies.”

18 So Jacob took the food to his father. “My father?” he said. “Yes, my son,” Isaac answered. “Who are you— Esau or Jacob?”

19 Jacob replied, “It’s Esau, your firstborn son. I’ve done as you told me. Here is the wild game. Now sit up and eat it so you can give me your blessing.”

21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Come closer so I can touch you and make sure that you really are Esau.”

22 So Jacob went closer to his father, and Isaac touched him. “The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are Esau’s,” Isaac said.

23 But he did not recognize Jacob, because Jacob’s hands felt hairy just like Esau’s. So Isaac prepared to bless Jacob.

24 “But are you really my son Esau?” he asked. “Yes, I am,” Jacob replied.

25 Then Isaac said, “Now, my son, bring me the wild game. Let me eat it, and then I will give you my blessing.” So Jacob took the food to his father, and Isaac ate it. He also drank the wine that Jacob served him.

26 Then Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come a little closer and kiss me, my son.”

27 So Jacob went over and kissed him. And when Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he was finally convinced, and he blessed his son. He said, “Ah! The smell of my son is like the smell of the outdoors, which the LORD has blessed!

28 “From the dew of heaven and the richness of the earth, may God always give you abundant harvests of grain and bountiful new wine.

29 May many nations become your servants, and may they bow down to you. May you be the master over your brothers, and may your mother’s sons bow down to you. All who curse you will be cursed, and all who bless you will be blessed.”

People, Places, and Times

Birthright. In the previous lesson, we saw how Jacob bartered with Esau to gain his birthright, or inheritance. While Jacob’s actions gave him access to the financial blessings reserved for the eldest, he did not automatically receive the spiritual and covenantal blessing. Isaac, aging and blind, decided it was time to bestow his blessing upon Esau.

Background

In ancient Middle Eastern culture, blessings (and sometimes curses) were pronounced by the patriarch of the family, often when aging or on his deathbed. These blessings were used to get his affairs in order, assuring not only that his estate would be cared for, but his legacy preserved. Various blessings could be bestowed upon different members of the family (usually sons), with the eldest son receiving the greater blessing and authority. These blessings and curses often invoked the assistance of a deity to make it come to pass. Similar to the naming of children after birth, these blessings were often seen as prophetic, securing the future of those being blessed or cursed. Such pronouncements were binding—what was said could not be “unsaid,” regardless of error, or as we will see, if gained by deception.

It is important to note that deception seemed to be a family trait, particularly when it was believed that one’s life or livelihood was at stake. Abraham lied when he was asked about Sarah being his wife. Isaac did the same when the men of Gerar inquired about Rebekah when they relocated during a famine. In this lesson, we see that Jacob and Rebekah work together to deceive Isaac and cheat Esau. Later in Genesis, Jacob will be deceived by his uncle.

What character traits—positive or negative— can you identify that have been passed down through generations in your family? How have they affected you personally? Your family (dynamics, legacy, relationships)?

At a Glance and In Depth

At-A-Glance

1. Rebekah Plots (Genesis 27:5–10)
2. Jacob Lies (vv. 18–19)
3. Scheme Executed (vv. 21–27)
4. Isaac Blesses (vv. 27–29)

In Depth

1. Rebekah Plots (Genesis 27:5–10)

In verses 1–4, Isaac, supposing that his death is near (he would, however, go on to live for several more decades), gives Esau instructions to prepare a meal so that he can pronounce his blessing over him. Rebekah overhears this conversation. Perhaps remembering the oracle predicting that Jacob would be the greater twin, she devises a scheme to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob. Like Abraham and Sarah before her, Rebekah decides to “help” God, taking advantage of Isaac’s blindness and creating a plan that manipulates his other senses— taste, smell, and touch.

Rebekah then commands Jacob to join her. While he does protest, it is not because he believes the plan is evil, but because he fears being caught and cursed. She responds, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey me” (v. 13). While God would still bless Jacob, their actions would negatively affect them both. After Jacob flees from Esau, Rebekah and Jacob would never see one another again.

What is the difference between guilt and conviction? Why does differentiating between the two matter?

2. Jacob Lies (vv. 18–19)

Jacob executes his mother’s plan. As instructed, he uses goatskins to appear hairy like Esau. He wears Esau’s clothes that Rebekah gave him. He presented the meal to Isaac that she prepared. While she orchestrated this entire process, Jacob had the opportunity to choose righteousness, and failed. When asked, “Who are you, my son?” he lied, “I am Esau, your firstborn.” It is then evident that he had taken full ownership of the scheme. He would go on to lie again, attributing his supposed quick success in hunting and cooking to God.

What impact have lies—either told to you or by you—had on your life?

3. Scheme Executed (vv. 21–27)

At multiple points, there are glimpses that Isaac was suspicious of Jacob, and aware he could be deceived. However, similar to other experiences—his own, Abraham’s and even Rebekah’s—he trusts himself and his own senses instead of seeking God.

He uses logic, inquiring about the speed in which Jacob returned from hunting. He uses touch, requesting to feel Jacob to see if his arms were hairy. He uses hearing, acknowledging that the voice sounded like Jacob’s

and not Esau. Still suspicious, he asks again if Jacob was really Esau (and Jacob lied for the third time). In a final act of confirmation, he uses smell, asking Jacob to come near to be kissed, as was typical in a blessing. As Isaac kisses him, he smells Esau's scent on the clothing. Satisfied by his senses, Isaac blesses Jacob. Rebekah and Jacob's scheme is successful, but would come at a price.

Consider a time when you made a major decision because it appealed to your "senses" (e.g., logic, emotions) instead of asking God for direction. What was the outcome?

4. Isaac Blesses (vv. 27–29)

Isaac ironically begins his blessing over Jacob by focusing on a trait that belonged to Esau— "the smell of a field." He asks God to make him prosperous (ample dew, rich land, and abundant crops), grant him dominion over other nations, and for favor and protection (curses and blessings). The mercy of God would bring these things to pass, despite Jacob's guilt.

Reflect on a situation where God blessed you in spite of your actions.

Search the Scriptures

1. Read Genesis 12:1–3. In what ways is Isaac's blessing similar to Abram's call? In what ways is it different? 2. Read Genesis 48:13–14. What simple action did Jacob (Israel) perform to give the greater blessing to the younger son? What does this say about God's sovereignty?

Discuss the Meaning

1. How can you love your family even when they don't treat you fairly? 2. Is it worth it to deceive people to make an expected result happen?

Lesson in Our Society and Make it Happen

Liberating Lesson

Our country has a lengthy dismal relationship with deception. Native Americans stripped of their lands in deceptive deals. African Americans prevented from obtaining freedom, civil rights and fair treatment because of dishonest practices. Politicians campaign on promises left unfulfilled once in office.

But deception is not new. Centuries ago, David wrote, "Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men. They speak vanity every one with his neighbour: with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak" (Psalm 12:1–2).

How do we respond? Write? Debate? Protest? Tweet? At appropriate times, absolutely. But ultimately, we must do the hardest thing of all—seek God—who responded to David with, "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him" (Psalm 12:5).

Application for Activation

Social media. Taxes. Work projects. Simple conversations. There are daily opportunities to lie and deceive. It is imperative that we realize that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). Recognizing this can keep us humble and alert.

In what ways have you recently been tempted to lie or deceive? What motivated you? Did you give in to the temptation? What can you do to safeguard against such temptation in the future?

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light On The Text

Genesis 27:5–10, 18–19, 21–29

When parents play favorites with their children, the family becomes dysfunctional. It will be characterized with deception, division, and manipulation. This is doubly so when one either through human wisdom or selfish desire tries to change God’s plan or help Him accomplish it. This can be said of Isaac and Rebekah’s family. God has promised to channel His blessing through Jacob, the younger twin brother (Genesis 25:23). Rebekah is aware of this. Consequently, Jacob not only became her favorite, she planned to ensure that Jacob would overshadow his older twin brother, Esau. Meanwhile, Isaac is aware of God’s plan, but he preferred Esau, his firstborn (Genesis 25:28). Apparently, this created a rift in the family. While Isaac attempted to alter God’s plan by trying to bestow the blessing on Esau, Rebekah through manipulation and deception tried to help fulfill God’s plan.

Genesis 27 begins with a description of Isaac’s physical condition. He has greatly aged (now probably about one hundred thirty-seven years old). As a result he could no longer see. It is common for people to lose their sight as they age, especially in biblical times (Genesis 48:10; 1 Samuel 4:15). However, Isaac’s other sensory organs, including his appetite, hearing, and feeling/touch, remain intact. He knows that his death is at hand. Since he doesn’t know when, he wants to perform his last patriarchal duties before he dies: bestowing of blessings on the firstborn. He therefore invites Esau to a private meeting. Esau is “a skilled hunter” known for making sumptuous and tasty dishes from his games (Genesis 25:27–28). Isaac asks him to go out to the field and hunt some game and “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” (Genesis 27:4). Isaac is aware of God’s plan that the younger son was to receive the covenant blessing (25:19–23), yet he intends to give the blessing to Esau. Moreover, he is aware

that Esau had despised his birthright and sold it to Jacob, thereby relinquishing his rights (Genesis 25:29–34). In addition, Isaac couldn't have forgotten that Esau had disqualified himself when he married Canaanite women (Genesis 26:34–35).

5 And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it. 6 And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, 7 Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the Lord before my death.

As Isaac hatches his plan to bless Esau, Rebekah is eavesdropping. The word “heard” is the Hebrew *shama'* (shaw-MAH), that is “to hear with attention or interest,” “to listen attentively” or “to hear intelligently.” That means Rebekah didn't just happen to hear their discussion on passing; she purposefully paid attention with keen interest to the conversation. Equipped with the knowledge of the ancient Near Eastern tradition and the importance of an aging man's last words, Rebekah monitors Isaac's every movement. It isn't that she just stumbles into Isaac's conversation with Esau. Oral statements, including deathbed bequests and blessings, had legal force in ancient Near Eastern law (Genesis 49:28–32). This is also consistent with African tradition and culture. Rebekah must have intentionally watched out for the day Isaac would plan to bless his preferred son. As she listens, Rebekah overhears Isaac's plan to bless Esau.

Scarcely has Esau left to hunt for the venison for his father when Rebekah calls Jacob's attention to Isaac and Esau's conversation. She reveals Isaac's plot.

8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

Rebekah makes her own plan to secure the blessing for Jacob. As earlier noted, God has already informed her that Jacob would become the family head (25:23–26). But Rebekah takes matters into her own hands to ensure her own favorite son receives that promised blessing. She resorts to doing something to bring about what God has already said would happen. Rebekah decides to control Jacob and deceive her husband.

To stress the seriousness of the matter, Rebekah uses the conjunction “therefore” (Heb. *'attah*, at-TAW). In other words, based on the information, action must be taken. The parental favoritism is about to bear its toxic and deceptive fruit (Genesis 25:28). In the context of this endearing and personal phrase “my son” is the notion of preferential treatment by Rebekah. Rebekah calls on him to obey every instruction she is about give him. The word “obey” is the same Hebrew for to “hear” or “listen” (*shama'*, shaw-MAH) as found in verse 5 (Deuteronomy 4:4). Here, listen is synonymous with obedience. When we tell children to “listen to your parents,” it is more than paying attention; it is to listen with the intent of obeying or following an instruction. With the clause, “obey my voice according to that which I command thee” Rebekah leaves no room for Jacob not to obey.

9 Go 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: 10 And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

Rebekah outlines her plan, one so quick and detailed that it could be assumed she thought it through well in advance. She instructs Jacob to go to their family flock and choose two young goats; she volunteers to cook them for Jacob just the way Isaac likes them. Some people will do anything to accomplish whatever they devise in their hearts, even deceitful things. Having lived with her husband Isaac these many years, Rebekah knows quite well the type of food he craves. However, to pull off this scheme—turning goat meat to taste like venison— will take extraordinary skill.

Verse 10 reiterates the purpose for the deception—for Jacob to gain Isaac’s blessing. For Rebekah, the end justifies the means. No matter how good our intentions, we should not attempt to accomplish them by doing what is wrong. God doesn’t need our help to fulfill His plan. Judas didn’t have to betray Jesus for God to accomplish His salvation plan for mankind (see Matthew 26:24–25). He could have done it in spite of man’s help. However, Rebekah proved to be as deceitful as her son, Jacob, whose name signifies deceit (v. 36; 25:26).

18 And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? 19 And 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.

Verses 11–17 detail the dialogue between Jacob and his mother. He objects and gives excuses why the plot could fail. His objections are not based on the moral dilemma, but rather on being caught and its consequences—a curse rather than blessing. Jacob is not concerned about his mother’s immoral device to deceive his old and vulnerable father. Instead he is concerned how it would affect him if the plot fails. Morality has disappeared in this family. While Jacob hesitates and questions his mother’s plan, although for the wrong reason, Rebekah is fully wrapped up in it. She prepares the food and hands it over to Jacob to present to Isaac, his blind father.

As a grown man of forty years (26:34), Jacob could have resisted and refused to connive with his mother’s deception. But instead he conforms to it and takes the food to his unsuspecting father. Here begins a series of Jacob’s lies in order to obtain what God has already promised him. The first falsehood is when he claims to be who he is not. It is tragic enough to lie, but to lie to someone you call “my father” is even worse; worse still is when one takes advantage of another’s disability. Nevertheless, Jacob uses the endearing phrase “my father” to evoke trust. Although Isaac has lost his sight, he has not lost his hearing. Suspicious of the voice, Isaac asks, “Who art thou, my son?” Jacob answers, “I am Esau thy firstborn.” The Hebrew for “firstborn” is *bekor* (beh-KORE) with the idea of “firstborn” in rank, hence, “chief.” Although, Esau sold his birthright to Jacob (25:31–34), he did not sell his name. His claim to be Esau only deepens Jacob and his mother’s deception.

Jacob’s second series of falsehoods is when he lies about the food and the Lord (vv. 19–20). He claims to have complied with his father’s wishes and calls the goat meat “my venison.” He says, “I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” Jacob’s absolute goal is the blessing; it doesn’t matter the method he uses to achieve it or the lies he tells. The Hebrew for “to bless” is *barak* (baw-RAK), which in some contexts means “to kneel,” but in other uses, such as when people “bless” God, it can mean “to bless (as act of adoration).” When the object of this verb is a person, *barak* is to invoke God’s blessing or benefits, so that God would cause the person to prosper. Surprised how quickly the food is brought, Isaac asks how this was possible. Jacob falsely gives credit to the Lord for achieving his goal. People often use the name of the Lord falsely to obtain what they want. Unfortunately this is found within Christian circles and churches today. This is dangerous and blasphemous—it is using the name of the Lord in vain.

21 And 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. 22 And 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. 23 And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau’s hands: so he blessed him.

The next series of lies Jacob tells has to do with his identity and his love for his father. Still suspicious and unwilling to rely on his ears, Isaac asks Jacob to approach so he can feel if this is the right son. Remember that Esau was born with what was “like a hairy garment all over” (Genesis 25:25). Mindful that this could have

resulted in failure to their deceitful plot, Jacob gave this very objection to his mother Rebekah (27:11–12). However, to cover this loophole, Rebekah uses “the skin of the young goats” to cover Jacob’s “arms and the smooth part of his neck” (27:16). The sense of touch is one of the faculties Isaac has not lost. Jacob approaches his father. After feeling Jacob’s hands, Isaac says, “The voice is Jacob’s, but the hands are Esau’s” (from v. 22). Tricked by Jacob, Isaac mistook the goatskin for human hair. He could not “discern” whether it was Jacob or Esau. The verb “discerned” the narrator uses here is the Hebrew *nakar* (naw-KAR), which means “to recognize or acknowledge.” That is to say, Isaac was confused and uncertain as to who it was. Nonetheless, he decides to bless him, thinking that it was Esau.

The family’s state of dysfunction caused by favoritism is apparent throughout this narrative. God has said in his oracle to Rebekah that the “elder shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23). Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a pot of stew (v. 34). There is no reason to assume these two events were not common knowledge among the family. Therefore, Isaac is aware that God has planned to extend the blessing He promised to Abraham through Jacob, not Esau. Nevertheless, he thought he could alter God’s plan.

24 And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. 25 And 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.

Isaac is still not fully convinced it is not Jacob he is about to bless. Therefore to be certain the blessing goes to the rightful person in his mind, Isaac asks again if the son before him is really Esau. Jacob lies again and says he is. Then Isaac asks him to bring the food closer so that he can eat and bless him. Jacob brings the food and Isaac eats; he also brings the wine to Isaac and he drinks. After eating and drinking, Isaac prepares to bless Jacob, supposing it is Esau.

26 And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. 27 And 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 the LORD hath blessed:

After eating the meal, Isaac asks Jacob to come and kiss him as yet another test. Jacob commits another fraud and kisses his father. A kiss in every culture is a symbol of love. Jacob’s kiss is hypocritical, a kiss of betrayal—the type Judas gave to Christ (Luke 22:48). As Jacob kisses his father, Isaac smells the odor of his garment. Rebekah had thought ahead and took care to provide for this particular test. She gave Jacob some of Esau’s clothes to wear (v. 15). The smell finally convinced him that it is Esau because it smells like the field and so sets the stage for giving of the blessing.

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: 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.

Finally convinced, thinking that it is really his son Esau, Isaac pours blessings on Jacob. As the spiritual head of the family, Isaac has the right to pass on blessing as related to the covenant of Abraham. It must be noted that in the ancient Near Eastern culture any blessing once bestowed would never be rescinded. This is the case here as would be confirmed later in the chapter (vv. 35–40). Isaac blesses Jacob in two major areas of life: prosperity and authority.

Firstly, Jacob will be blessed with natural and material wealth—comprising agricultural prosperity. The produce of the land and animals measured wealth in their culture. Isaac blesses Jacob with dew to water his crops, and with abundant grain and wine, the staples of their diet. These are common elements of blessings

(Deuteronomy 33:13, 28). Secondly, Isaac adds political authority with reference to his own people and other nations. Other nations will bow before him, and his own brethren will bow and serve him. Here Isaac reaffirms God's prophecy regarding the two boys: "The sons in your womb will become two nations. From the very beginning, the two nations will be rivals. One nation will be stronger than the other; and your older son will serve your younger son" (25:23, NLT). By using the plural "brethren" Isaac looks beyond Jacob and Esau's day to the future when Abraham's seed would multiply.

In addition to these blessings, Isaac also assures Jacob of the Lord's protection. Here he quotes the Lord's original promise of protection to Abraham (Genesis 12:3). In spite of man's flaws and his attempt to falter or alter God's purposes, God's promises and plan will always prevail. It is not the bestowal of these words by Isaac upon Jacob that made him blessed. Rather, Jacob was blessed because God chose him, long before Isaac pronounced the blessing (Genesis 25:23).

We need to understand through this account that God's attributes of constancy, grace, and justice are made plain. In spite of Jacob and his mother Rebekah's dubious method to obtain the blessing promised, God never changed His plan to bless Jacob. The Lord remained faithful to His word. Although He did not approve of the deceptive method they used to achieve their goal, God did not withhold His blessing on Jacob. This is grace in action. His attribute of justice is displayed in the consequences that followed Jacob's life: (1) Jacob was exiled from his family for many years; (2) Jacob never saw his mother again; (3) his brother wanted to kill him (27:41–42); (4) he was deceived by his uncle, Laban; (5) his family became torn with strife; (6) Esau became the founder of an enemy nation. Jacob would have received the birthright and blessing anyway without his and Rebekah's assistance (25:23).

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Reject Deceit, Seek God's Face
(Psalm 24:1–6)

TUESDAY

Live Openly and Honestly
(1 Peter 2:18–25)

WEDNESDAY

Isaac Prepares to Bless Esau
(Genesis 27:1–4)

THURSDAY

Rebekah Diverts Isaac to Bless Jacob
(Genesis 27:5–17)

FRIDAY

Esau Loses Blessing; Exiled
(Genesis 27:30–40)

SATURDAY

Jacob Charged to Marry Cousin
(Genesis 27:46–28:5)

SUNDAY

Jacob Received Isaac's Blessing
through Deceit
(Genesis 27:5–10, 18–19, 21–29)