

On the Beginning

30. Jacob's Flight

NOTE ESPECIALLY GENESIS 27 and 28

The relationship between the two sons of Isaac, Esau and Jacob, is a subject of some real importance in the Bible. They were twins, but Esau “*came out*” first (Genesis 25:24-26). Jacob however, “*took hold on Esau's heel*” and was given a name that means “supplanter” (See also Genesis 27:36). God had told their mother before their birth that “*the elder shall serve the younger*” (25:23), and the stories that follow tell how Jacob got Esau's birthright (25:29-34) and then the blessing that normally should be given to the firstborn (Genesis 27). The New Testament has some very interesting commentary on Jacob's supplanting of his brother. Romans 9:10-12 uses it as an example of the effect of God's sovereign choices. God just decided that Jacob would exceed and supplant Esau. Hebrews 12:16-17, however (Read both of these passages), uses it as an example of a “*profane person*” losing a blessing because of his weak character. Esau lost the blessing because he “*sold his birthright*.” The relationship between Esau and Jacob shows us the relationship between divine election and human decisions. This illustration does not have to do with their salvation—both may have been believers—but it does have to do with what happens in our lives. God, who knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10), makes choices about our lives that are totally His and always right, but they may also involve the choices we make without Him coercing us. It is both a mystery and a wonderful truth!

1. Rebekah's **Tricks**.

The first section (vs. 1-29) of Genesis 27 tells how Rebekah got Jacob to trick her aging husband to give him the blessing of Abraham although he meant to give it to Esau. Maybe she was unhappy about how Isaac seemed to ignore the prophecy God had given her about Jacob (See Genesis 25:23 and 28). Perhaps she was trying to make her husband do God's will. Whatever her motivation, the trickery she and Jacob performed was both deceptive and disrespectful. They did wrong, but God made it work out right.

2. Esau's **Bitterness**.

The rest of Chapter 27 describes the “*bitter cry*” and great anger of Esau when he found out what Jacob had done. The passage we read in Hebrews 12 says that *it was too late* for Esau to cry. Sometimes it is too late to decide for God. There are deadlines in His dealing with us, and we must beware. Esau's terrible wrath against Jacob was somewhat understandable, but it was not justified. His own poor sense of values was the reason God gave the blessing to his brother. Of course, it was also God's sovereign choice, but as far as he was concerned, the cause was to be found first in the fact that he “*despised his birthright*” (Genesis 25:34).

3. Jacob's **Dream**.

Chapter 28 tells about Jacob's departure from his parents in Beer-sheba supposedly to get

a wife at Laban's house. On his way, he slept at "*a certain place*" and saw a vision in a dream (vs. 10-15). In that vision was a ladder from earth to heaven, with the LORD conferring the blessing of Abraham on Jacob. Noting what Jesus said in John 1:51, it is clear that the ladder represented the Saviour Himself! The most important part about the patriarchal blessing was its connection to and promise of the Seed Who would be the Lord Jesus.

4. God's **House**.

Jacob named that place Bethel (vs. 16-22), which means "the House of God" in honor of his encounter there. Here begins the Biblical concept of a place on earth where the presence of God is especially recognized. God has a house in Heaven (John 14:2), but He also has had a house on earth. The Tabernacle was called His House (Exodus 23:17-20). The Temple was called His House (I Kings 8: 26-29). The New Testament local church (not the building but the congregation) is also called God's House.

*"These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
(1 Timothy 3:14-15)*

One day God's heavenly house and His earthly house will be one (See Revelation 21:1-3). Jacob's honoring of Bethel speaks of our relationship to God's House!

