

I HAVE LOVED JACOB

by

Joseph Hoffman Cohn, D. D.

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CHAPTER THREE

THE BLESSING FROM ISAAC

REBEKAH calls Jacob aside and tells him to go to his father, state that he is Esau and secure the blessing. Now watch Jacob's answer: **"My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver"** (Genesis 27:12).

Jacob knew he was no deceiver, but that to the father would only seem so, because the father naturally knew nothing about this bargain and sale of the birthright. Even with this possibility before her, it was Rebekah herself who insisted that Jacob proceed with the errand, and concluded with this final absolution: **"Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice . . ."** (Genesis 27: 13).

And so Jacob had a double authority vested in him, one legal and one moral; first, he had purchased the birthright, and secondly, now his mother commanded him to go. Let any jurist say whether Jacob did the slightest thing by way of transgressing the moral code!

Jacob obeyed his mother, Rebekah.

- It was she who made the savoury meat and took the goodly raiment belonging to Esau and put it upon Jacob.
- It was she who put the skins of the goats upon his hands and upon his neck,
- It was she who gave the savoury meat and the bread which she had prepared, into the hands of her son Jacob;
- And no doubt she instructed him exactly as to what he should say to his father.

Note again, that God never charged Jacob with any wrongdoing in this incident with Isaac. He was doing what he had been trained to regard as a young man's first duties—to obey his mother. And he was exercising his legal right to the ownership of the birthright, which he had bought and paid for. Scripture was also being fulfilled in his receiving the blessing from his father, for God wanted him to have it.

Neither did Isaac blame Jacob, or accuse him of any wrongdoing. On the contrary, we have an incontrovertible confirmation of the fact that God wanted Jacob to have the Covenant blessing, in the record of Genesis 27: 33, Here Isaac discovers that it was not Esau who had received the blessing, but Jacob; and Isaac asks the question:

“Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed.”

“Yea, and he shall be blessed!” The devastating question now presents itself; if Isaac believed that he had been defrauded when he was led to give the blessing to Jacob, why did he not now rescind that blessing? Certainly it was a moral obligation for him to do so, if Jacob actually had stolen the birthright! Surely a basic moral law is that anything obtained by fraud is null and void as soon as the fraud is discovered. But here Isaac knows of the so-called “fraud,” and yet he reaffirms the original promise by saying, **“yea, and he shall be blessed!”**

Now again we must be uncompromisingly logical; either Jacob’s transaction with Isaac was a fraud, or it was not a fraud. If it were a fraud, then Isaac knew that to be a fact; and therefore, when Isaac, instead of rescinding the blessing, only confirmed it, he became a party to the fraud; and in terms of our modern legal language, he was compounding a felony, and therefore guilty equally with Jacob, if, indeed, not more so.

Hear Esau’s whine: **“He (Jacob) took away my birthright, and now he has taken away my blessing!”** (Genesis 27:36) Esau lied, for he himself had sold the birthright, and knew full well the inevitable implications of the sale. He knew full well that the birthright was the blessing. What else was it? And see with what hypocritical insolence he now pleads ignorance of what the birthright meant. There was no one to blame but himself, the profane birthright-despising Esau! And yet, in spite of these inescapable facts, we read, **“Esau hated Jacob”** and determined to kill him! (Genesis 27:41).

“Arise and Flee!”

Rebekah hearing of this, called Jacob and told him, **“Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother’s fury turn away!”** (Genesis 27:43), Again Jacob, as a dutiful son, obeyed.

To be sure when it was discovered what had taken place, Isaac said, **“Thy brother came with subtlety and hath taken away thy blessing.”** But he knew nothing of the bargain with Esau and the part the mother had taken in the transaction. Further than this, Isaac had not a word of censure for Jacob. For certainly no fraud had been practiced upon Isaac. A fraud can only be a fraud if the person “defrauded” has been robbed, or has been in any way damaged. When, and where, and how, had Isaac been damaged? On the contrary he called Jacob to him and blessed him again. Read for yourself the evidence in Genesis 28: 1-4:

“And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother’s father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham.”

Isaac understood that God's hand was in it.

Again, dear child of God, use the brain and conscience God gave you, and ask yourself the question, "If Jacob had actually cheated Isaac, or had done him an injury, could Isaac by any stretch of the imagination, say '**And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful**'?" God does not bless a liar or a cheat!

The Tithe at Bethel

Jacob gets unjustly condemned for the "sharp" bargain he made with God at Bethel. Let us take a look at it. Note that Jacob received the vision from God when he was fleeing for his life from his brother whom he is supposed to have wronged so seriously. Read the story in Genesis 28, and observe what God Himself has to say about this "bad" Jacob:

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and. said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (Genesis 28:12-15).

Now note the items in Jacob's vow to God (verses 20, 21) and observe that they are all mentioned in the promises God had made in the dream. Notice also that the Hebrew word translated "**if**" in verse 20 is also translated "*since*" in Jeremiah 23:38; in Job 14: 5, it is translated "*seeing*." In Job 22: 20 it reads "*whereas*." Note further that in Genesis 28:20, 22 the words "**and**," "**so that**," and "**then**" are all translations of the same Hebrew word, or rather of a single letter, and that this letter is rendered "*therefore*" a multitude of times, as in Genesis 3:23.

With these facts in mind, let us translate the vow anew and see how it sounds:

"Whereas God will indeed be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, and will bring me again to my father's house in peace, and the Lord will be my God, therefore this stone which I have set for a pillar shall make a spot where I will worship God; and of all that Thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

The vow is therefore the expression of a devout heart breaking out in grateful praise.

Esau judged Jacob to be worthy of death; but God blessed him, and gave a gracious promise of protection, prosperity and return to his kindred. How could Jacob do less, upon his return, than to make this "**place of reverence**" a place for God's worship, and give a tithe to God? Does the Church today brand as "selfish," men who make such vows as that? God give us a multitude like Jacob!

In an unusually honest and gratifying article entitled, “Was Jacob a Selfish Man?” Dr. William M. Carle writes:

“A recent Sunday school lesson says Jacob was a selfish man, and all the writers seem to agree, some of them going pretty strong in their denunciations. But is there any Bible proof of it?

“It seems daring, or even foolish, to suggest that ‘all the regiment is out of step but me.’ Still we might take another look at the recorded facts.

“The red bean soup is given as first proof; Esau comes in faint, and hungry, and asks Jacob for a dish of the soup. Jacob refuses until Esau takes the oath that he surrender to Jacob the birthright which we assume belongs to Esau as the oldest son of the family. What more proof is needed that Jacob had a mean, grasping disposition?

“But look again. Read Genesis 25: 23, and observe what God had said about the two boys before they were born: ‘**The elder shall serve the younger.**’ See also Romans 9:10-13. The oldest son of Abraham did not get the birthright, nor become the heir of the promise, ‘**in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blest.**’ Neither does Esau follow as heir to that promise. Was he, in God’s purpose, to be heir of the birthright? Could he have the birthright and also serve the younger?’

“But before Jacob could have the birthright, Esau must surrender it, or Jacob must fight for it, or some other way be opened. In the bean soup affair Jacob wins Esau’s consent, and the oath makes it sure to Jacob until Esau changes his mind. Esau whines, ‘**He took away my birth-right.**’ But was it his? Now turn to Hebrews 12: 16, 17, and read the inspired comment on the bean soup affair, and see who gets the blame. And I think we will search the Scriptures in vain to find a hint of any condemnation of Jacob over his birthright, the blessing, or his supposedly sharp practices with his Uncle Laban.”

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