

*Blessing
by way of deception*



*Bible Study Series
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Blessing by way of Deception

Recently, I read a study about Jacob, the father of the Israelites. It was a reasonably good study, but what bothered me so much about this study, is that the author was obviously very biased for Jacob, counting every deed of his as Godly, while this in fact is far from the truth, the thing which prompted me to write this article.

And before I start my discussion, I would like to ask:
Why is it too difficult for any one to state the truth as it is written in the Scripture?
Why do people go into a lengthy effort to paint someone in a picture which does not belong to him while the Scripture clearly tells otherwise?

Why don't we accept what the Scripture tells us good or bad?
The Scripture was never shy of mentioning the mistakes which some people did, take for example Rahab. She was a harlot, yet the Scripture recorded her name in the lineage of our Savior Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5). Paul is another example. He hated Christ and the Christians to the extent of killing and putting them in prison (Acts 9: 1-2), yet God in His wisdom chose him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, without whom, you and me may have never known or heard about the great gift of salvation and eternal life.

I feel, that, he who does not recognize facts like these, he in fact denies the great Grace and Mercy of God who changes the wickedest person into a new creation, and becomes an example for us to follow.

So, here is the story.

At the age of forty, Isaac took Rebecca as a wife (Gen. 25:20). But Rebecca was barren for twenty years (Gen. 25:26). Isaac prayed for a son. And God gave him more than he asked for. He gave him two sons (twins Gen. 25:23). But it happened that Esau was born first, and then Jacob came out holding on his brother's heel (Gen. 25:24-26).

Esau was hairy and red and was loved by his father, and Jacob was not hairy with smooth skin and was loved by his mother (Gen.25:28). Neither the Scripture nor any man knew or mentioned why this happened. Let us say that it was a matter of preference. The twins grew up, and Esau loved the outdoor life, and he was a skilful hunter, while Jacob loved the indoor life (Gen.25:27) staying at home whether on his own accord or under the influence of his mother who loved him and was keen to keep him near her, perhaps of fear that something wrong may happen to him. As it is said "tied to his mother's apron strings".

Now let us make one point clear here. The Scripture did not mention anywhere that Jacob did any useful work or any work at all. All what the Scripture says is

that he was mild and lived in tents Gen. 25:27). Yet the author of that study mentioned above, stated that he worked as a shepherd, commenting that being a shepherd was a Godly task while hunting was ungodly one !! Meaning that Esau did not like home living !! This is very important in the development of Jacob's Character.

Now let us go back to the time when Rebecca was pregnant. The Scripture tells us that she felt some difficulty with her pregnancy, and she inquired of God, Who reveled to her that she had twins, and two nations and that the older will serve the younger (Gen. 25:23). This in itself may have been the major influence which made her love the younger, care more for him and keep him near her at home all times. And if this was the case, then she may have kept repeating this story to him, till it was implanted in his mind and character that he is more important than his brother, and perhaps that he was the chosen of God as well. Now, for any child that his mother keeps him attached to her and fear for him from anything wrong that may happen to him, and all the time providing him with the best, **he becomes spoiled, selfish and possessive**. And as he grows this way, he unconsciously feels that he is entitled to everything he wants or desires **whether it is his or someone else's**.

And that is how he felt about the birth right.

But before we discuss this incidence, I would like to mention that Isaac's household was already dissociated, dissolved and practically non-existing. For what sort of a house is it, where a brother asks his brother for something to eat and he wouldn't give him. Not only that but asks for a price for that meal (Gen. 25:31). And yet this happens in a people who lived in tents, and would give all what they have to a stranger passing by, let alone a brother!! See what the Scripture says about Abram and Lot who ran towards the strangers coming towards them, bowing in front of them , and begging them to rest and have their feet washed and have a meal and rest for the night before resuming their journey (Gen.18:1-8 & 19:1-3).

Surprisingly and strangely enough, the author of that study, did not think of it as odd and wrong. On the contrary , he thinks of it as a fair deal, and blames Esau for accepting it, whom the Scripture describes as dying of hunger (Gen.25:30).

Now, the birth right at their time was a pagan ritual and part of their culture, and had nothing to do with the people of God, although they practiced it as part of the culture they lived in..

So, to try to tell me (as the author of that study did) that Jacob knew its Spiritual; value, is utter nonsense and biased guess. Yes, he knew its importance as far as inheritance and dominion over the rest of the family goes, and that was what he was hungry for all his life, and that was what his loving mother feeding him since his childhood. And that was the mutual ambition of both him and her. And why not?! **He grew up feeling that this was his right** as we mentioned above, and that is what anyone expects from a **spoiled, selfish, greedy and possessive child**.

And that was not a child's talk or game, we are talking here about adults over 20

years old, and since as we mentioned above that Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebecca as a wife, and that she was barren for 20 years, and inheritance was not before the child becomes of legal age , this means that Isaac was at least 80 years old when all this mess happened.

Now let us discuss the matter of the birth right and the blessing.

Rebecca had a dream or a vision (Gen. 25:23) or whatever it was. Very well. And the Scripture does not tell us when did she tell Isaac about it, or whether she ever told him about it at all. The author of that study assumes that she must have told him. How could he be so sure? How could we even know that they ever discussed each individual love or preference to one or the other of their children?

Assumptions do not constitute facts. And a wise person does not build his conclusions or deductions on assumptions, unless he intends to mask the truth. Now, as we mentioned above, Rebecca may have told Isaac about her dream or she may have not. Let us see what could have happened, if she had told him and when :

!- If she had told him immediately:

He may have believed her or not. If he had believed her, then he may have remembered that after 20 years or he may have not. Remember he was over 80 years old at the time of the blessing.

2- If she had told him later.

He probably would have dismissed that since he knew that she loved Jacob and obviously she wants the best for him. But we cannot be sure of that, for he may have believed her.

I am stressing on this point because this is the assumption that our esteemed author built his case on, for he argues that Rebecca surely told Isaac about her dream or vision , and that Isaac ignored the will of God and accordingly he plotted to bless Esau against God's will and behind Jacob's back.

Of course there is still also the possibility that she may have never told him, keeping that in her heart as Mary kept all what she heard about the child Jesus in her heart as the Scripture tells us in Luke 2 :51) ; that is if Rebecca was as Godly and Pious as Mary! Which surely was not the case since the Scripture never indicated directly or indirectly that Mary lied to Joseph and / or encouraged Jesus to lie, the matter which Rebecca dared full heartedly to do.

Now, let us go back to the scenario.

Isaac was over 80 as we mentioned above. He loved eating venison (Gen. 27:3,4). Don't we all love certain meals? What is wrong with that? But, our esteemed author says that this indicates that his Spiritual life was weak at that time because his mind and heart were on earthly material things. May I ask our esteemed author, what is the Biblical reference for this statement?! Where it says in the Scripture that when one asks for a meal of venison or whatever meal he likes, indicates weak Spiritual life?!

So, he called Esau and asked him to prepare that meal of venison which he loved (Gen. 27:1-4). Now let us not get ideas here, because he could have asked Jacob, but he knew and we know that Jacob did not have the skill of

hunting, and that is why he did not ask him. I say this, because our esteemed author considered it a plot between the Spiritually weak father and his elder son Esau behind Jacob's back, to prepare that meal for him..

What I would like to ask here is : if someone (not necessarily my son) in my old age or when I am near death as Isaac stated in Gen.27:2 , offers me the meal that I loved and craved for all my life, would it be a sin to thank him full heartedly and even give him a word of blessing for what he had done?! That is what Isaac told his son Esau. What is wrong with that? **No**, but our esteemed author considered it a plot . What I like to know: where is the reference in the Scripture which indicates this?

I guess, it takes someone from the middle east to know and appreciate an elderly father near death to ask for the meal he loves and thank and bless whoever prepares it for him.

Enough of that, and let us see **the real and serious plot !**

Rebecca overheard Isaac telling Esau his wish (Gen. 27:5). I myself do not think that Rebecca overheard. She was intentionally listening. And the reason I say that is that the Scripture tells us that Isaac was advanced in age and had weak vision (Gen. 27:1), and obviously he had to shout loud enough to draw Esau's attention, and so Rebecca heard his call and wanted to know what did Isaac call his son Esau for, the son whom she did not love.

She went bizarre, not because Isaac is not doing **God's will**, but because he is not doing **her will**. Because if she really knew God well enough, she would have known that **God's will**, shall be done on earth as it is in Heaven (The Lord's prayer) no matter what man does. And I would like to pause a while at this point. There is a saying in my country which goes on like this: "Had the murderer been patient enough and waited, the murderer would have died on his own" This is a folklore saying, nevertheless, it indicates that God's will, shall be done no matter what happens. It is God's will that the murderer will die that day, so he would die no matter who or what the means are, but we humans are impatient or we do not have enough faith that God will intervene at the right time and on His own terms. That is exactly what Rebecca had done, assuming that God had in fact talked to her.

And again our esteemed author justifies what Rebecca had done, saying that it is a **counterplot** defending her beloved son's interest against the wrong doing of Isaac.

Now, let us look at God's will and how He makes it happen:

Our earthly saying "The end justifies the means" is not so with God, simply because God does not approve or condone cheating or lying. And that is what Rebecca did. If one believes that God was pleased with what Rebecca had done to bring His will to reality then he or she is deadly mistaken. God does not need help for his will to be done! He does not need Rebecca or anyone else to fulfill His promises let alone that it was done in a very devious way.

In our present story, God could have asked Isaac to summon his two sons and

though he cannot see well, God would have inspired him and by faith he would have put his hand on Jacob's head and blessed him exactly as Jacob himself did, (when he was dying in Egypt and while he was blind), for the Holy Scripture tells us that by faith he blessed Ephraim the younger and not Manasseh the older (Joseph's two sons), in spite of the correcting effort of Joseph reminding him that Manasseh is the older, (Heb.11:21 & Gen. 48 :8-20).

Now Rebecca whom our author thinks that she was defending her son's rights, committed serious sins. She did not only lie to Isaac, but she influenced her son to lie to his father, and did every possible effort to defraud her older son (he was her son also, wasn't he?) from fixing the meal he was supposed to prepare, to using his own garments and covering Jacob's neck and arms with the Kid's skin.

Then after realizing the very serious consequences of her doing and that her beloved son is in the danger of being killed by his brother, she runs to Isaac complaining against his older son Esau that he is breaking her heart by marrying pagan women (Gen.27:46). **Look who is talking!!** Where did she herself come from? She came from the house of Nahor. Yes he was Abraham's brother (Gen. 22:20-23), but he was not called by God. It was and still is a pagan family, and Abraham was the only one that was called by God (Gen. 12:1-4). And Laban her brother was pagan too as per what is stated in Gen.31:19 that his daughter Rachel the second wife of Jacob, stole her father's idols when departing from Haran.

One point I would like to make here: marrying from the same family or from the same people was their culture in that part of the world at that time, and still being practiced in some of the eastern countries particularly in the middle east. It has nothing to do with Godliness as our author tries to make believe. This custom came to be God's instructions to the Children of Israel when they entered the promised land about 5 centuries later, to preserve their lineage and the lineage of the promised Messiah to come. So, Esau did not do anything wrong by marrying from the Canaanites, neither did Isaac and Jacob do anything more right by marrying from Abraham's family in Haran. It was just their culture and not God's orders.

So, back to Rebecca. She reminds Isaac about Esau's marriage which is breaking her heart, for two reasons in her mind:

First to inflame the rage in his heart against his son, the one he loves, and to assure him that Esau does not deserve the blessing, in case there was still some sense of remorse and regret in Isaac's heart about this incidence.

Second to find a palatable reason which Isaac can easily swallow, to send Jacob to Haran, under the impression that it is Godly for him to take a wife from her family.

But the main reason was that it is safe for Jacob to flee away from his brother. And Isaac did exactly as she wanted blessing his son Jacob and permitting him to go to Haran to his mother's family (Gen. 28:1,2).

Did God stand still, doing nothing about all this deception?

Certainly not. Though not mentioned as such in the Scripture, yet there is even

not one verse that indicates that Rebecca ever saw her beloved son again.

Let us go now to Jacob in exile.

And here again, our author is defending Jacob all the way. I am also in favor of Jacob, only because Jesus came from his lineage as per the flesh, but what is wrong with telling the truth? If a person is devious and deceiver, then tell it as it is, and praise the Lord who through His Grace and Mercy, changed and blessed him and made him the father of many nations.

Now our author says that Laban cheated Jacob and treated him unfairly changing his wages thirty times. But that is what Jacob said to make his wives sympathize with him and agree to leave their land and family and go with him. And there is nothing in the Scripture which indicates this claim during his 20 years of residence with Laban. On the contrary, regarding the wages, it was Jacob who named it. He was the one who told Laban that he will work for him seven years for Rachel (Gen. 29:18), and it was Jacob who named his wages for shepherding Laban's sheep and goats (Gen. 30:28-32)

Yes Laban cheated him once by giving him Leah as a wife and not Rachel, but he cheated Laban all the way after that.

As for the incidence of the striped and solid colored sheep and goats, it was Jacob who cheated Laban. And although Mendel's genetic law of inheritance tells that the chances of striped or spotted off springs would have been about 60% in the first generation and to increase during the following generations, yet Jacob's intent of Cheating was there anyway, and when he left Laban, he did not mention to him that he was leaving (Gen. 31:20, 21, 26, 27).

And look, how gracious was Esau to his brother Jacob when he met him after 20 years, he hugged him and kissed him and welcomed him (Gen. 33:4, 12).

This is the story as I see it from all what is written in the Scripture.

The problem was in Rachel and her beloved son Jacob, not in Esau whose only fault was disrespect to the birth right, but he did no harm to any body.