

Lesson 41
Isaac's Life And Jacob's Lie

Genesis 26:1-27:46

I. INTRODUCTION

A. These two chapters give the reader insight into human nature, especially in relation to the true believer. The best of believers are still prone to rationalize and sin and the results of this are devastating.

B. These two chapters give the reader insight into God's sovereign plans and purposes and we see how no man can thwart God's sovereign will.

II. ISAAC'S LIFE 26:1-34

A. Introduction. Chapter 26 is the only place in the Bible that records something about Isaac's life alone. He is either overshadowed by Abraham or in the background to Jacob. He was the ordinary son of a great father, and the ordinary father of a great son. Yet, he was a true believer and his life had a definite purpose.

B. Isaac Flees and God Reaffirms His Covenant (26:1-5). Famine comes to the land and Isaac flees to Gerar, which was the borderland midway between Canaan and Egypt. God forbid him to go to Egypt, for Egypt represented the world and its philosophy. The land was the place of blessing and Gerar was half way between blessing and worldliness. Isaac was told to sojourn in Gerar but he dwelt there and for a long time (6, 8). NOTE. Isaac was not in the place of full blessing but God stopped him from going to Egypt. God also reaffirmed the Covenant with Isaac to assure him that he was to get back into the land.

C. Isaac Lies About Rebekah (26:6-11). While in Gerar, Isaac tells the Philistine men that Rebekah is his sister, for he selfishly feared for his own life. He risked the violation of her honor to guarantee his own safety. Finally Abimelech, king of the Philistines, caught Jacob and Rebekah "sporting" (hugging), and rebuked him for his deceit. The king then dealt graciously with Isaac and Rebekah. NOTE. Abraham, Jacob's father, was guilty of this same kind of sin when he told the Egyptians that Sarah was his sister. The son follows in the father's footsteps; he imitates the sin of his father. The sins of parents are frequently perpetuated in their children, even when there are different personalities such as Abraham and Isaac. NOTE. It is a terrible thing when a world ling has to rebuke a believer because that one is not walking close to his God.

D. Isaac Prospers in Gerar (26:12-16). The Lord prospered Isaac materially when in Gerar, so that he was asked to leave. NOTE: One may ask why God prospered Isaac so when he was guilty of the sin of lying about his wife. Isaac undoubtedly confessed it, but God was secretly disciplining Isaac for this act. God may at times honor His people in the sight of men while dealing with them in secret on account of their sins. (2 Tim. 2:13)

E. Isaac Digs Wells in Gerar (26:17-22): Isaac went to the valley of Gerar and began to re-dig the wells of Abraham that had been covered up by the Philistines. Each time Isaac would dig a well there would be strife and contention with the Philistines and he would move on. We can see how Isaac was a man of patience and did not want trouble. He was a peacemaker (1 Pet. 2:19-20). NOTE. This strife was part of God's plan for Isaac, for God was moving in his life to get him to go back to the land which is the place of blessing.

F. Isaac Receives an Appearance of God (26:23-25). Isaac moved from Gerer to Beersheba, which was in the Promised Land. Isaac was now in the place of blessing and God appears to him to confirm the Abrahamic Covenant. Notice that he first built an altar and then pitched his tent. He put God first in everything.

G. Isaac Is Blessed by His Enemies (26:26-35). "Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar" is very significant, for now because Isaac is in fellowship with his God and in the place of blessing, he is in favor with God and men. How true it is that "when a man's ways please the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him" (Prov. 16:7). When man honors God, God always honors man.

H. Isaac Grieved Esau's Wife (26:33-35). Esau, acting consistently with his rebellious nature towards God, married a Canaanite (Hittite) woman, who brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Esau married an unbeliever and an idol worshipper.

III. JACOB'S LIE 27:1-46

A. Isaac Bucks God's Will (27:1-4). When Isaac grew older, he decided to give the birthright to Esau. Again we see the arm of the flesh taking over, for Isaac knew well that God had sovereignly given the birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:23), but he was partial to Esau. Therefore, Isaac tries to overrule God's plan. NOTE. Esau as well knew of God's purpose, sold his birthright, and had married a Canaanite woman, but he still wanted the birthright and went right along with Isaac's plot. He too tried to thwart the will of God but his councils came to naught.

B. Rebekah Operates in the Flesh (27:5-17). Rebekah deliberately and sneakily overheard the conversation between Isaac and Esau. She devised a plot to keep the birthright for her favorite son, Jacob. She actually felt that God's plan and purpose were in danger and set out by human conniving to help God out. Rebekah's plotting is utterly inexcusable. She thought that God had forgotten His promise or that men could actually frustrate God's plan. She did not believe God, for she was not assured that God would bring His promise to pass. NOTE. The plot to disguise Jacob as Esau was questioned at first by Jacob, for he feared a cursing rather than a blessing (27:12). But his mother dominated him and was so deceitful that she said the curse could fall on her. She therefore persuaded him to carry out her plans. NOTE. The deceitful side of Jacob came from his mother who was every bit as tricky as Jacob.

C. Jacob Sins by Lying (27:18-29). Jacob impersonates his brother and Isaac gives him the birthright. Jacob's actions were despicable. First he impersonates his brother, tells lies to his father, and then ends by going the awful length of bringing in the name of the Lord God (27:20). Lie follows lie, for Jacob had to pay the price of lies by being compelled to lie even more. God permitted the action of Jacob but it was not His direct will. NOTE. God would have rightfully put the birthright on Jacob if all would have been patient and waited on God. Certainly Jacob did not have to steal it.

D. Esau Discovers the Plot of Jacob (27:30-40). Just after Isaac blesses Jacob and gives him the birthright, Esau returns with the cooked venison. Esau and Isaac discover that Jacob now officially has the birthright. Esau, realizing now the spiritual as well as the material blessings that went with the birthright, sought it with tears. Esau was furious and blames Jacob for everything (27:36), but he had forgotten or did not want to remember that he sold his birthright for some stew. Ultimately, it was not Jacob's fault but Esau's, for he willfully sold the birthright. He tried to blame someone else for his obvious rebellion to God in spiritual things.

E. Esau Threatens to Kill Jacob (27:41-42). Esau was mad enough to kill but determines he will not murder Jacob until his father dies. Rebekah hears of this and tells her son Jacob.

F. Jacob to Flee to His Uncle Laban (27:43-46). Rebekah was very possessive about Jacob and she wanted him to flee to Laban her brother for things to cool down. Jacob was to be there only "a few days" (27:44). Little did she realize that she would never see Jacob again for he would go away for 20 years and during this time she would die.

G. LESSONS FROM CHAPTER 27

1. What we sow we reap. Isaac sinned and God put him on the shelf for 40 years. Rebekah sinned and God took from her Jacob whom she would never see again. Esau sinned and never regained his birthright and became so hardened that he never believed in the true God. Jacob sinned by lying and deceit, and during the next 20 years of his life he would be cheated and swindled by his uncle Laban. POINT: The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small and surely.
2. The end never justifies the means. It is never right to do evil that good may come. All means should honor God as well as attaining lofty ends, for God is honored when things are done right and above board. Trickery, deceit, fraud, etc., are never blessed of God.
3. The Lord is in control. It is utterly futile to think that man can thwart the Divine purpose. Whenever man has attempted to play the part of Providence, the result has been disaster (Prov. 19:21; Psa. 23:10; Isa. 46:10). We know "a man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps" (Prov. 16:9). NOTE. How important it is for God's people to walk by faith and obedience so as to be in tune with God's will, so they can carry out His purposes in this life.