

Genesis 27-29

An overview of Chapter 27

Isaac is old and nearly blind. Before he dies, he wants one last good meal. He asks his favorite son, Esau, to bring him a yummy dish to eat. Isaac plans to eat his last supper then bless his son Esau. Rebekah overhears this and while Esau is out hunting she convinces her favorite son, Jacob, to bring the meal to Isaac. Because Esau is hairy she has Jacob wear animal skin so he will feel and smell like his brother Esau.

Jacob brings the meal to his father and makes him think that he is Esau. Isaac falls for this deception and blesses Jacob.

Right after Jacob leaves the room Esau returns and prepares a meal for his father. When he brings the meal to dear old dad they both see that Isaac was deceived. Esau cries and weeps and asks his father to bless him as well. Isaac cannot take back Jacob's blessing, but he does pray that Esau will break away from Jacob's leadership some day. Because of Jacob's deception he promises to kill his brother after their father dies.

When Rachel hears that Jacob's life is in danger she asks him to go visit his uncle Laban in Haran.

An overview of Chapter 28

Before Jacob leaves to live with his uncle Laban in Haran his father warns him not to marry a Canaanite. Besides, the blessing that Jacob stole, Isaac also passes the promise given to Abraham on to Jacob. When Esau finds out that his parents didn't like his wives then he marries Ishmael's daughter Mahalath in hopes of gaining his parent's favor.

As Jacob flees to Haran he stops to nap. His pillow was rock hard, and he has a weird dream. In this dream, he sees a ladder that is a stairway to heaven for angels. At the top of the ladder he sees the Lord, and the Lord speaks with him. God repeats the promise to Jacob that he had promised to Abraham. Esau sets up a pillar and names the place Bethel (the house of God). Jacob makes a conditional confession of God as his Lord. If God takes care of him during this journey then Jacob will accept Him as his God and will give him a tenth of all that he has.

An overview of Chapter 29

When Jacob arrives in Haran he goes to the local watering hole where his father's wife Rebekah was found. While he is there he meets his cousin Rachel, and after introducing himself she tells her father, Laban. Laban invites Jacob to stay with them, and offers to pay him for working while he lives with him. Jacob asks to marry Rachel in return for serving Laban for seven years.

At the end of the seven years Laban throws a party and gives his daughter to Jacob, unfortunately, it is not Rachel - it is her older, less attractive sister Leah. Jacob does not realize this until after the marriage has been consummated. When he approaches Laban about this "bait and switch" deception he is told that the older sister must be married before the younger. Laban offers to give Rachel to Jacob as well, after he has completed the first week of marriage with Leah. There is a catch; of course, after Jacob and Rachel are married Jacob will owe Laban an additional seven years of service.

The Lord sees that Jacob loves Rachel, and not Leah so God blesses Leah with children while Rachel is barren. Leah has Reuben (the Lord sees), then she has Simeon (the Lord hears), next is Levi (to bring together), and lastly Judah (praise the Lord).

Reflection

Do you favor one of your children over the other? Do you think favoring one child over the other will cause your children to fight? Would you be willing to deceive your family in order get ahead in this world? Is your confession of Christ contingent on God blessing you? Are you hospitable to your family when they are in need?

For Further Study

Jacob: Genesis 32:28, Hebrews 11:20

Esau: Genesis 36:1, Hebrews 12:15-16