

Jacob's Deception

Key Verses: *“Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau. He did not recognise him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him.”*
—**Genesis 27:22,23,**
New International Version

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 27:1-29

him, selling his birthright to Jacob.”—vss. 29-33, *NIV*

The thought has been suggested that in ancient times it was a custom that the eldest son of the family would celebrate the anniversary of the birth of a celebrated ancestor by fasting. For the firstborn to break the fast on this special day would effectively mean the renouncement of his firstborn privileges. If such a custom was followed at this time, it might suggest that when Jacob said to Esau, “Swear to me first,” he was in fact warning

THE SONS OF ISAAC AND Rebekah “grew up, and Esau became a skilful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was a quiet man, staying among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.”—Gen. 25:27,28, *NIV*

One day, as Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came back from hunting. He said to Jacob, “Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I’m famished! Jacob replied, First sell me your birthright.” Esau then hastily answered, “Look, I am about to die. ... What good is the birthright to me? But Jacob said, Swear to me first. So he swore an oath to

Esau about breaking his fast and giving up his firstborn privileges. In spite of Jacob's warning, Esau swore, and gave up his birthright.

It seems that Esau never told his father, Isaac, about having given up his firstborn rights. Years later, "when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see," he called his older son Esau. Isaac asked him to hunt some wild game, then prepare it and bring it to him to eat. His plan was to give Esau the special firstborn blessing before he died.—Gen. 27:1-4

Rebekah overheard this conversation and took matters into her own hands. She conspired to deceive Isaac by having Jacob impersonate Esau. Although this deception was created by Rebekah, Jacob went along with it and only worried about whether he would get caught. The ruse was successful, and Jacob obtained the blessing Isaac intended for Esau.—vss. 5-29

When God said to Rebekah before the twins were born, "The elder shall serve the younger," he meant it. (Gen. 25:23) He did not need her deceptions, nor Jacob's lies to his father. Thinking that "the ends justify the means" has been a trap since the beginning of time. Let us not fall into it. The Lord is in control. He will not bless our misguided efforts to lie, cheat, or steal to get what we believe is rightly ours. Both Rebekah and Jacob paid a high price for their actions. She would not see Jacob for the next twenty years, and Jacob would later be deceived by Laban, his uncle and future father-in-law.

We need to develop trust in God in all situations, even if it means the loss of earthly advantages or our reputation amongst others. The Apostle Paul learned that God's grace was sufficient for him, thus he wrote, "That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties." (II Cor. 12:9,10, *NIV*) May we likewise let God equip us "with everything good for doing his will," so that he may "work in us what is pleasing to him."—Heb. 13:21, *NIV* ■