

Navigating the Future

Genesis 27

OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Do you remember these things? [map slide] This is an ancient artifact from the Bible times called a map. In the olden times, people used these to navigate from one place to another. Can you imagine handing these to a teen today [Map find the mall]. Practically every family in this room has a device that serves as a Global Positioning System [GPS]. We tell it where we want to go; it identifies where we are; it finds our destination; and it charts a course. Many give every turn-by-turn direction. It's a new day.



GPS works because of a concept called **TRIANGULATION** and a mathematical formula called **TRILATERATION**. Simply put, your phone knows where you are based on your location relative to satellites orbiting above you.

When we look at Scripture, we see it employs a similar strategy in a spiritual sense. The Bible constantly views this present world in relation to Revelation and Culmination. In other words:

1. What do we know to be true as it is revealed in scripture? **Revelation**
2. What is the specific goal toward which history is moving? **Culmination**

As we understand more about those two aspects of reality, the more we will understand how to make good, God-honoring decisions in the present.

CONTEXT: *Genesis 27 is an Anti-type. So, in other words, I can't show you how a person honored the principles of Revelation and Culmination in Gen. 27, but I can show you the sad circumstances that result when someone ignores them.*

Genesis 27:1–46 (ESV)

¹ When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son”; and he answered, “Here I am.” ² He said, “Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. ³ Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, ⁴ and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my **soul** may bless you before I die.”

A. Issac's Plan was Private - This was a common practice to prepare a feast for the declaration of blessing. What was uncommon was for it to be done in secret - this was typically a very public, legal ceremony.

B. Isaac's Plan was Passionate - That phrase - "That my soul may bless you" is a powerful statement - As Sarna's Commentary explains, "Isaac summons from the very depths of his own soul all the vitality and energy at his command in order to invoke God's blessing upon his son." This was the intention and will of Isaac to bless Esau.

Why do I point that out? Well, for a couple of reasons:

1. Esau had **sold his birthright** to Jacob for a bowl of soup. That was a legitimate and legal transaction. So what Isaac is desiring to do from the depths of his soul is morally and ethically wrong.

But not only that -

2. Remember the **oracle** when these two boys were born

Genesis 25:23 (ESV)

²³ And the Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided;

NATIONS: Incidentally, make sure you catch that. We tend as believers when we speak up for the ***right to life of the unborn*** to focus on the individual child. And that's true - this is a living soul made in the image and likeness of God. But do you see what God sees... God sees in these two embryonic babies the residing potential of NATIONS. In other words, God sees the person, but also the potential and every conceivable possibility that could come from that person.

When an abortion is performed, it is a tragedy. Still, when we consider the number of people that could have potentially arisen from the one, we see that *every abortion is, in a sense, a holocaust performed by a scalpel.*

But also notice the last part -

23b. the one shall be stronger than the other, the older (Esau) shall serve the younger (Isaac)."

So God decreed that Isaac was the favored child - he was to receive the covenant blessing. Yet, Isaac *passionately* desired from the depths of his soul to overturn the decree of God.

⁵ Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau.

Now, with age comes the loss of hearing, and a person can't hear well; they often ***compensate*** by raising their voice. Perhaps this is why Isaac's secret wasn't so secret.

JOKE: Listen, if you are in your 30s, see all you want to see, sometime in your 40s, things begin to fall apart. You can't hear as well, you can't see as well, and if you look at a carb, you swell up.

Rebecca goes and tells what she heard to Jacob and suggests that they work together to deceive Isaac into blessing Jacob instead of Esau.

¹¹ But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. ¹² Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing." ¹³ His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me." ¹⁴ So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. ¹⁵ Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. ¹⁶ And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. ¹⁷ And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Now, stop for a minute and just think how ridiculous Jacob must have looked, goat skins tied to his arms and neck. Remember this is the Father of the Jewish people - His name will soon be changed from Jacob to ISRAEL. Now, if you were making up a story to explain to your people where their nation came from, would you make him look so silly? This is their Washington, their Lincoln... yet, as a grown man, he's playing dress-up with his mommy to trick his daddy... the only explanation for why this story is recorded in Holy Scripture is that it happened...

He proceeds to tell three lies...

¹⁸ So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" ¹⁹ Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

That was a lie **number 1**...

²⁰ But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the Lord your God granted me success."

That was lie **number 2**, and what a lie it was. Jacob named God as his accomplice in this deception.

²¹ Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not."

You can tell the old man sensed something wasn't right...

22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands. So he blessed him.

That was the **third lie**.. and it sealed the deal.

What happens next is difficult to understand. **Matthew Henry’s** commentary suggests that the Holy Spirit comes upon Isaac in a unique way for this blessing. He suggests that the power of God is evident at this moment, much like when the Spirit would come upon Samson to accomplish the will and purpose of God for one moment and then was gone the next. Isaac pronounces a sacred blessing over the head of Jacob, and it falls with power upon him.

He blesses him with fertile land, abundant provision, a national empire, then ultimately the blessing of Abraham - that those who bless him are blessed and those who curse him are cursed. The Spirit came powerfully in this moment upon the words of Isaac, and everyone knew it.

Esau returns to discover what had happened... he asks Isaac to do it again.. It’s just words...say them over me... but Isaac knew they were more than words.

ILLUSTRATION: Frank Sinatra once said in an interview that he was terrified and literally shook for the first 4 to 5 seconds as he walked onto stage... unsure if his voice would be there for the song. After he hit his first note, his confidence returned, and he owned the stage.

Billy Graham said something very similar. He would always wonder - what if the gift is lifted... what if I preach and nothing happens.

Well, when **Isaac** blessed Jacob - something happened, and Jacob knew it... he could no more work it up again than a lame man could run a marathon. God gave it, and God took it away.

NOW - what are we to take from this story? How will Monday morning be different for you because you read this story on Sunday? A couple of things I want to show you...

#1 Isaac violated the...

1. The Principle of Revelation

God had plainly spoken regarding Jacob and Esau - yet Isaac bet against God. And might I say that is what we do every time we violate God’s revealed will.

God’s commands are not advice, they are not suggestions, they are Divine Revelation, they are unalterable and unbreakable.

*I saw a bumper sticker one day that said, “God said, I believe it - that settles it”.
No friend - God said it, and that settles it, whether you believe it or not.*

ILLUSTRATION: When a man jumps out of a ten-story building, he doesn't break the law of gravity—he *demonstrates* it. In the same way when you choose to live in a way that contradicts what God says ***you aren't breaking the law, you are being broken ON the law of God.***

When you are making major decisions, the first question that you must ask is, “**What has God said?**”

If you stake your future on the Word of God, it is God's job to vindicate His Word.

2 Chronicles 16:9 (ESV)

⁹ For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him....

God is looking for someone today who will trust Him, who will, in the face of innumerable odds, say as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. God says, NOW - I can support that, I can bless that, I can honor that.

A Decision to believe the Word of God really is a **Keystone decision**. That is, it is one of those decisions that settles 1000 other decisions. It determines the course of your life, the quality of your relationships, as well as the destiny of your soul.

When you stand at an intersection where you have to make a decision, ask yourself, “What has God said about this?”

That's the principle of Revelation....

2. The Principle of Culmination - Toward Where is History Moving?

You see, Isaac wasn't just favoring Esau over Jacob. Isaac was choosing the line of Esau over the line of Jacob.... Why is that significant?

Because you see, **Jacob** was destined to have a son named **Judah** - he whose tribe the scepter of leadership would never depart from...**Judah** had a descendant named **Boaz**, who would marry **Ruth**, and they would have a grandson named **David** (who would be King of Israel). David gave birth to **Solomon** by the wife of Uriah. Solomon's descendant would be a young man named **Joseph** from the village of Nazareth... Joseph would be the adoptive father of one **Jesus** of Nazareth, who would be King.

So you see, when Isaac opposed the blessing of Jacob, he was opposing the only hope he would have of God one day providing a Savior for his soul.

Now - did Abraham know that? No! But consider all the things you can't possibly know when you decide to disobey the Lord.

You only see the immediate effects, but God, being omniscient, sees all and knows all of the possible ramifications of your disobedience.

So ask yourself - What has God said? Toward Whom is History moving? We know that history is moving toward one day every knee bowing and every tongue confessing the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Is the decision you are about to make standing within that trajectory or against it?

ILLUSTRATION: I've often explained it this way - *Imagine if you will that there is a School of Drama that has given itself entirely to the Study of the Playwright, William Shakespeare. Imagine they come across a lost play that has been hidden for hundreds of years. As they read through the script, they realize that the play has 5 scenes, but scene 4 is missing.*

Given their immense study of Shakespeare, given the fact that they have the first three scenes and scene 5, they can probably make a pretty good guess at how the missing 4th scene would read.

Well our lives are being lived out in the missing 4th scene.

We have got God's word from Creation all the way to the founding of early Church... Then there is in genre of literature called Apocalyptic Literature that describes the culmination of all things... that toward which all of history is moving. As we consider Revelation AND Culmination... we can discern the direction for our lives.

INVITATION:

You see, in this story -

Jacob takes on the appearance of another in order to **steal** a blessing.

Jesus took on the appearance of another to **provide** a blessing

Jesus is the True and Better Jacob - He will take on flesh and dwelt among us. He will speak not to deceive but to deliver. He will give us better food and better drink.

This is a day when the Covenant blessing is offered to all who will come! Our Father greater than the Power of Isaac invites us to come and be blessed! But friend, you must come when he bids... lest later, when you feel you have made things ready, the blessing is no longer available.

Can you imagine the wails of Esau? Can you see the tears streaming down his face? Oh, but still can you, at a distance, hear the wails of the multitude? The myriad of people who heard the Gospel, who heard the invitation but said, "Yes, I will have it, but

not now..." They did not reject the Gospel of Grace; they simply neglected it... and they found it no longer available once reality had set in.

Oh friend, the ark would have been full the day after the rains fell, but God had closed the door.

TODAY if you hear His voice, harden not your heart - Come!