

# Explore the Bible: March 17

*A Deceiver • Genesis 27:18-30*

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Isaac pleads with the Lord for Rebekah to be able to bear children. The Lord grants his plea. Rebekah becomes pregnant, but there comes a point when she doesn't understand what is happening, so she inquires of the Lord.

The Lord reveals to her that there are twins. Two nations, one stronger than the other, and the younger would be over the older. The firstborn is Esau, red and hairy, a skilled hunter. Jacob comes next with his hand grasping Esau's heel. He's "a mild man, dwelling in tents" (Gen. 25:27 NKJV).

Scripture tells us that Isaac favored Esau while Rebekah favored Jacob, adding more contention. Also, there was a day when Esau returned from hunting, weary and hungry. He sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew and bread.

When Genesis 27 opens, we find that Isaac is old and almost blind. He calls for Esau and instructs him to go to the field, hunt game, and make a savory meal. When he returns, Isaac will bless him.

Rebekah overhears the conversation. She instructs Jacob on how he is to assume the identity of Esau and receive the blessing. The deception would change the entire family forever.

**Trap Set (Gen. 27:18-20 CSB)** – Jacob (the name means deceiver) approaches his father and says, “My father.” Isaac replies with a statement and a question. It’s the first time he asks, “Who are you, my son.”

Jacob, coached by his mother, begins the deception. He states that he is Isaac’s son, Esau, and has completed the assignments. He tells his father to eat so that he can bless him.

Note the hesitation from Isaac. We don’t know the time lapse between when Esau went off to hunt and when Jacob appeared with his meal of a goat. But it’s enough that Isaac is processing the situation. He asks, “How did you ever find it so quickly, my son?” Something wasn’t adding up.

Notice how Jacob answers, “the Lord your God,” meaning Isaac’s God, not his.

In Hebrew culture, the firstborn son is to receive a double portion of the inheritance. Leadership was required of him for the tribe, and he was responsible for providing for his widowed mother and unwed sisters. They were also to serve as priests for their families until the Lord appointed the tribe of Levi (Num. 3:11-13). The blessing was also irrevocable and bestowed upon the son before the father’s death.

**Deception Carried Out (Gen. 27:21-27)** – Isaac, still unsure, asked Jacob to come closer. He wanted to touch him. And for the second time, he asks, “Are you really my son Esau or not?”

Jacob moves closer. Isaac touches him. There is a check in Isaac’s spirit because he recognizes Jacob’s voice, but the skins from the kids of the goats, which Rebekah had put on his

hands and neck, convince him. He bestows a blessing.

But there is still that nagging sense of doubt. Isaac asks for the third time, "Are you really my son Esau?" The replies from Jacob are growing shorter. This time, he says, "I am," and waits for the next instruction.

Isaac tells him to come closer. He is ready to eat. Jacob brings him the choice kids of the goats Rebekah has prepared. He eats and drinks. When finished, he tells Jacob to come closer and kiss him.

The final test – smelling his clothes. Rebekah had thought of everything, from the food to the hairy skin. She had Jacob put on "the choice clothes of her elder son Esau" (v. 15). When Jacob came closer and kissed Isaac, the smell of clothes sinched the doubt. Isaac exclaims, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed."

**Blessing Granted (Gen. 27:28-30)** – Isaac's four-fold blessing included agricultural success, productive harvests and herds. The second blessing is that he would be respected and successful among the nations. Next came the recognition that he had authority over the tribe – lastly, the reference to God's promise to Abraham, the blessings and curses.

Isaac finished the blessing. Jacob departed before his brother, Esau, arrived from his hunting.

"Isaac had promised his blessing to his firstborn. Had he blessed Esau, he would have supplanted the Lord's declaration that the older son would serve the younger. However, in the end, Isaac's plan could not supersede God's will" (Lifeway).

We need God's grace and Word to deal with our deceitful hearts.

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