

“THE FLESH WILL FAIL YOU”

GENESIS 27:18-29

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INTRODUCTION

Last week we asked the questions: “Isaac, how could he do it?” “Rebekah, how could she do it?”

Now we ask, “Jacob, how could he do it?”

Here are some supposed justifications he may have used:

- 1) The justice of his cause
- 2) His mother’s support
- 3) The validity of the blessing, even if given in confusion
- 4) The infirmity of his father
- 5) His father’s determined purpose—despite God’s declared purpose
- 6) Esau’s badness and unworthiness

Jacob lied 5 times in vv. 18-24—once even directly **taking God’s name in vain** (v. 20).

Perhaps the real question is:

- Why didn’t God rebuke him?
- Why didn’t God withhold the blessing from him?
- Why did God later confirm His blessing?

Henry Morris argued that Jacob (and others like him) was justified in his lie: [pp. 435-36](#).

But, see John Murray: [Principles of Conduct](#), p. 137; Robert Candlish, [pp. 281-282](#).

Please remember this simple statement: **“It is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right!”**

Now that we have that settled, let us see the outline of this text. In this text we see the **failure and foolishness of living in the flesh**.

THOSE WHO WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH ‘CANNOT PLEASE GOD.’

Here we see the failure of every one of the natural senses.

- I. THE SENSORY PLAN OF ISAAC (18-29)
 - A. Sight—gone
 - B. Hearing (18-20)
 - His ears flashed a warning signal (22).
 - But the voices of children are often very similar—especially twins.
 - C. Touch (21-23)
 - D. Taste (24-25)
 1. Notice Isaac’s frivolity with food
 - His palate governed his heart (25:28—“Isaac loved Esau because he had a taste for game.”)

- His palate silenced his tongue—he could not rebuke the profane sin in Esau (25:30-33—sale of birthright due to craving for food).
2. Now he uses taste as the arbiter between peoples and nations!
- E. Smell (26-27)—the kiss
1. Compare Joab’s kiss (II Sam. 20:9—Joab to Amasa—time of Sheba’s revolt).
 2. Compare Judas’ kiss (Mt. 26:49).
 3. Now Jacob’s kiss.

Isaac rejects the evidence of his ears for that of his hands; he follows his palate and seeks inspiration through his nose.

II. THE BLESSING OF ISAAC

- A. Land—fertility of (28)
- B. Seed—dominance of (29a)
- C. Blessing to the nations—“your cursers—each one be cursed.”
 - Only in a negative sense; messianic element omitted
 - Cf. 28:4 where Isaac intentionally bestows blessing upon Jacob.

CONCLUSION

There was an element of faith involved in Isaac’s blessing of Jacob and Esau (Heb. 11:20).

Compare 11:21—Jacob’s blessing of his children.

- 1) He knew that he was Yahweh’s patriarchal representative.
- 2) He had probably convinced himself that his action was justifiable.
- 3) Once he realized his error, then in faith he accepted God’s sovereign plan.

Even man’s evil and foolish deeds are part of God’s plan: God triumphs here over the flesh.

We have no indication here that either Isaac or Rebekah had consulted with God—though they had both done so earlier.

How much better not to have relied simply upon the flesh—but to have acted in the Spirit!

THOSE WHO WALK ACCORDING TO THE FLESH ‘CANNOT PLEASE GOD.’

Lessons:

- 1) Let us not do evil that good may come.
- 2) “Be sure your sin will find you out.”
- 3) “Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart.”
- 4) “The Lord reigns”! It is futile to think that we can thwart His Divine plan and purpose.
“The true secret of living is to realize that we are not agents, but only instruments in carrying out the Divine will; and if with all our hearts we truly seek Him, waiting upon Him in prayer, trust, and obedience, we shall find ourselves taken up into the line of His wise providence, used to carry out His purposes, and enabled to live to His glory” (Thomas, 253).