

April 9, 2017 – Gen. 27:1-27 – Jacob Takes Esau’s Blessing

Torah Reading: Gen. 27:1-27 – Jacob Takes Esau’s Blessing

Psalm 21

Haftarah – Isaiah 46:4-13 + 47:4

1 Samuel 4:15 – 5:1 + 6:14

1 Samuel 2:22-30 + 35

Joshua 23:1-10

This is another story of the Bible’s seemingly dysfunctional families, like Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, etc.

Why did Rebekah connive to get her favorite son the blessing? Like Abraham and Sarah, Rebekah resorted to human effort and subterfuge to accomplish something that God could have done without their “help.”

Remember that Rebekah had been told by God:

“Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.” (**Genesis 25:22–23**)

So Rebekah and possibly Isaac knew the facts. The younger (Jacob) would be inheritor of the line of the Messiah/Deliverer of **Genesis 3:15** and the covenantal blessings and promises to Abraham. Isaac either didn’t know or was ignoring this because he loved Esau’s venison.

(What are we ignoring spiritually because of our desire for ‘savory meat’ or a mess of pottage?)

The differences between Jacob and Esau were evident even before their birth, by their struggling in the womb.

Jacob is said to be a simple (tam - which can mean perfect) man, Esau a rough man of the field.

More on Esau

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5846-esau>

Esau was "a true progeny of the serpent," according to the Zohar. ‘

As previously mentioned:

The Jerusalem Targum says of Esau, "and he despised his part in the world to come, and denied the resurrection of the dead;" and the Targum of Jonathan on Genesis 25:29 says, that "on that day he committed five transgressions; he performed strange worship

(or committed idolatry), he shed innocent blood, he lay with a virgin betrothed, he denied the life of the world to come (or a future state), and despised the birthright;” which confirms the character the apostle gives of him, that he was a fornicator and a profane person, (Hebrews 12:16).

In fact, Esau’s shameful conduct brought on the death of his grandfather, Abraham (Pesiq. R. 12).

Then, on the very day that Abraham died, Esau went forth to hunt in the field, when he fell in with Nimrod, who for a long time previously had been jealous of him. Esau, lying in wait, pounced on the king, who was unaware of his proximity, and, drawing his sword, cut off the king's head. The same fate befell two attendants of Nimrod, who had, however, by their cries for help, brought the royal suite to the spot. Esau took to his heels, but carried off the garments of Nimrod — which were those of Adam (Targ. Pseudo-Jon. to Gen. 27:15) — and concealed them in his father's house. It was when exhausted from running that he chanced upon Jacob, who cunningly took up a casual remark of his about the uselessness of the birthright, and trapped him into selling the latter as well as his share in the field of Machpelah, making and keeping a properly witnessed and sealed record of the transaction ("Sefer ha-Yashar," vi.).

According to Targ. Pseudo-Jon. to Gen. xxv. 29 and Pirke R. El. xxxv., the sale of the birthright took place while Jacob was preparing for his father the dish of lentils which was the usual meal offered to mourners, and over which words of comfort used to be said Esau requested to eat thereof, and then sold his birthright; indulging in blasphemous speeches (Gen. R. lxiii.; Pes. 22b) and in denials of immortality (Targ. Pseudo-Jon. l.c.) and of God and the resurrection; so that he figures in tradition as one of the three great atheists (Tan., Toledot, 24; Sanh. 101b). Jacob's conduct toward his brother is accounted for by the fact that Esau had always refused to share his sumptuous repasts with him (Pirke R. El. l.c.).

Jacob Steals the blessing

Genesis 27:9-10 - “Go now to the flock, and fetch me from there two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for your father, such as he loves, And you shall bring it to your father, that he may eat, and that he may bless you before his death.”

Did Rebekah have the right to do this?

The Jewish writers say in her dowry or matrimonial contract, Isaac had allowed her to take two kids of the goats every day.(Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 57. 4. Jarchi in loc.)

What’s with the goat’s hair disguise?

In hot countries the coats of animals are far less thick and coarse than in cold climates, and some species of Oriental goats are famous for their soft, silky wool. "It is the camel-goat of the East, whose black, silk-like hair was used even by the Romans as a

substitute for human hair. (see Martial xii. 46.) In Song of Solomon 4:1 Solomon's hair is compared to that of a flock of goats. [See 1 Samuel 19:13 for another disguise using goat's hair]

Some sages say God had made Isaac blind so that Jacob would receive the blessings. God wanted Jacob to receive these blessings in this way. The Book of Jubilees says - "he discerned him not, because it was a dispensation from heaven to remove his power of perception."

Jacob almost gave himself away because he spoke gently to his father. As the Sages point out, unlike Esau who later says "My father should get up" (v. 31), Jacob said "Please get up" (v. 19), and he attributes his quick arrival (after allegedly catching his hunt) because "the Lord your God chanced [the prey] before me (v. 20) He acknowledged that God was behind his success - something Esau would never do. And Isaac's suspicions were immediately aroused. This did not sound like the harsh and uncouth Esau.

Voice of Jacob,, Hands of Esau

Genesis 27:22 - "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

The voice was that of Jacob: Voice can represent spiritual content. When God made Adam a "living soul," Targum Onkelos says that means "a speaking soul." Speech is uniquely human. Animals may communicate, but they cannot speak or communicate abstract ideas. Speech is therefore representative of spirituality and intellect, prayer and praise.

The hands were those of Esau: That can mean action, labor or skill. Morally it can refer to trying to achieve righteousness through "works" as Cain did, as opposed to "grace" from sacrifice.

Our senses deceive us

Sight, touch, smell, taste, hearing are all engaged here by Isaac - Our natural senses are limited and distorted, like Isaac's, and will always deceive us and respond to the "hands of Esau" - righteousness by works - rather than the voice of Jacob - atonement through sacrificial grace - unless God's revelation intervenes.

One interpretation has it that by receiving the blessing, Jacob would then himself possess the "hands of Esau," yet still speak with the voice of Jacob. I.e., Jacob would take over and transform Esau's role of "action figure," including taking up arms as a warrior against his enemies - this combined role that would be perfectly realized in Messiah.

<http://www.aish.com/jl/b/eb/kbc/Jacob-vs-Esau-Part-I-The-Two-Roles.html>

"The voice is the voice of Jacob" – no prayer is effective unless the seed of Jacob has a

part in it.

“The hands are the hands of Esau”- no war is successful unless the seed of Esau has a share in it.” - Talmud

‘I am your firstborn’

“I am your firstborn, Esau” - Jacob really was the firstborn now, because Esau had forfeited his birthright to him. (**Genesis 25:33**)

“SANCTIFY UNTO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN (Exodus 13:2). R. Nathan said: The Holy One, blessed be He, told Moses: ‘Just as I have made Jacob a firstborn, for it says: Israel is My son, My firstborn (Ex. 4:22) so will I make the King Messiah a firstborn, as it says: I also will appoint him firstborn (Ps. 89:28).’ (Exodus Rabbah 14:7)

“God is in a way called first, as it says: ‘I am the first, and I am the last (Isa. 44:6)’; Zion is called first, as it says: ‘Your throne of glory, on high from the first, your place of our sanctuary (Jer. 17:12): Esau was called first, for it says: ‘And the first came forth ruddy (Gen. 25:25)’, and Messiah is called first, for it says: ‘The first unto Zion will I give: Behold, behold them (Isa. 41:27).’ God who is called the first will come and build the Temple which is also called first, and will exact retribution from Esau, also called first. Then will Messiah who is called first come in the first month, as it is said: THIS MONTH SHALL BE UNTO YOU THE BEGINNING OF MONTHS.” (Exodus Rabbah 15:1)

This speaks of the month Nisan, but there are two “first” months, and Christ was born on Rosh Hashanah in Tishri, the alternate first month. (Or, another interpretation could be that his “coming” refer to his death and resurrection, which occurred in Nisan.)

In fact, the Targum of Jonathan says it was the fourteenth of Nisan (Passover) when Isaac called Esau to him and discovered he had already blessed Jacob.

“Jacob will never let Esau be victorious and trap forever the souls waiting for rectification. He will grab hold of Esau and eventually remove those souls from his grip.”
- Rebbe Nachman

Christ concealed within Esau

The letter denoting “red” appears in the biblical text only twice. First describing Esau:

“The first came out red all over, like a hairy garment. They named him Esau.” (**Genesis 25:25**)

The second reference is in 1 Samuel, referring to David:

“He sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy (admoni), and with a beautiful face, and goodly to look on. The Lord said, ‘Arise, anoint him, for this is he.’” (**1 Samuel 16:12**)

When [the prophet] Samuel saw that David was red, he said, “Perhaps he is a shedder of blood, like Esau!” Therefore, that verse goes on to say, עם יפה עינים with fair eyes, i.e. whatever he does is with the agreement of the members of Sanhedrin (High Court) who are called “eyes”- as it is said, If from the eyes of the assembly (**Numbers 15:24**).

Therefore, David the King (a type of Messiah) is like Jacob cloaked in the appearance of Esau. “My beloved is white and ruddy.” (**Song of Solomon 5:10**)

Messiah is concealed in the garments of Esau, but his voice is the voice of Jacob.

“And Esau said to Jacob: ‘Let me swallow, I pray you, some of this red, red pottage; for I am faint.’ Therefore was his name called Edom.” (**Genesis 25:30**)

Interestingly, Adam, whose name shares the root with Edom, also forfeited his inheritance through “eating,” thus losing access to the Tree of Life.

Esau’s Garments

Genesis 27:15 - “And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her oldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son:”

In fact, the Targums say these were the miraculous garments that God made for Adam, somehow obtained in the past by Nimrod. And Esau, desiring them, slew Nimrod and took them. In that case, it’s one more example of Jacob concealed within the appearance of Adam. (Targum Jon. in loc. Bereshit Rabba, sect. 65. fol. 58. 1. Pirke Eliezer, c. 24. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 3. 1.)

The Temple sacrifices served as a “covering over” of sin until Christ finished it once and for all.

‘The smell of a field’ = The Temple

The Talmud comments on **Genesis 27:27** - “the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed” as referring to the Temple.

“This teaches that that the Holy One, blessed be he, showed him the house of the sanctuary as it was built in all its beauty (“a sweet smell to me shall you observe,” **Numbers 28:2**), wiped out (Zion shall be plowed like a field,” **Micah 3:12**), and built once more (“For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forevermore,” **Psalms 133:3**). - Genesis Rabbah

Jesus referred to his body as the Temple. Compare **John 2:19** - “Jesus answered, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again.’”

In Jesus, the Messiah is concealed within the form of Esau/Adam.

Another way of viewing it: From a distance, Messiah appears to be part of Edom/Rome, but he is actually on the outside of its gates (not part of the world system), waiting for Israel to be ready. Isaiah speaks of this day: “Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this who is glorious in his clothing, marching in the greatness of his strength? It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” (**Isaiah 63:1**)

The gematria (numerological value) of the name “Esau” (376) is equal to that of “peace.”

“Rabbi Jose the Galilean said: “The name of the Messiah is Peace, for it is said, ‘Everlasting Father, Prince Peace.’” “For to us a child is born. To us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:5-6)

“The Lord sees not as man sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (**1 Samuel 16:7**)

The Messiah is cloaked in the sins of humankind, but his name is actually “Peace.”

The goat skins Jacob uses to disguise himself as Esau also point to the Yom Kippur sacrifice for sin, which brings peace between God and man. (**Leviticus 16**) Christ “put on” our sins so that we could “put on” his righteousness.

<https://ladderofjacob.com/2015/11/13/voice/>