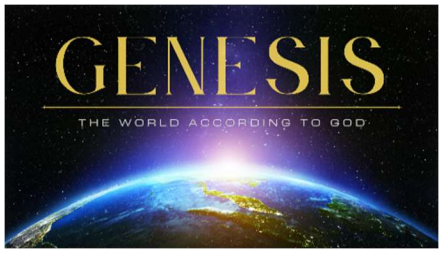

Genesis 26:34-28:9

THE BLESSING ACCORDING TO GOD

*The Hebrew root **bârak** occurs 327x verbally in the OT. Its highest concentrations occur in Genesis, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Psalms… It must be stressed that nothing was more important than securing the blessing of God in one's life or nation… A blessed life was the ideal; a life without God's blessing was the ultimate nightmare. Real success was impossible without the much-coveted blessing. "Where modern man talks of success, OT man talked of blessing" (Wenham)… God's blessing is his formative, empowering word, often with overtones of appointing destiny. It is not an empty pronouncement or simply an expression of wish or goodwill, nor is it a bare command… Rather, the blessing of God has content; it actualizes and enables… That which is blessed functions and produces at the optimum level, fulfilling its divinely designated purpose.* —Michael L. Brown, *The Dictionary of OT Theology & Exegesis*

In Genesis 26, Isaac is recognized as the "blessed of the Lord" (26:29). God's blessing on Abraham has been poured out on him (26:3,12,24). Now the time has come for Isaac to pass that blessing on to his sons. But Isaac's heart is not in line with God's revealed will (25:23).

A Esau's sinful marriages (26:34-35)
- **B** Isaac's intention to bless his son, Esau (27:1-4)
  - **C** Rebekah intervenes on behalf of her son, Jacob (27:5-17)
    - **D** Isaac bestows his blessing on Jacob (27:18-29)
      - **E** ***Blessed be those who bless you!*** (27:29)
    - **D** Isaac bestows an anti-blessing on Esau (27:30-40)
  - **C** Rebekah intervenes on behalf of her son, Jacob (27:41-46)
- **B** Isaac's submission in blessing his son, Jacob (28:1-5)

A Esau's sinful marriages (28:6-9)

SCENE ONE: ISAAC'S DARKNESS (26:34-27:4)

Isaac is 137 years old at this time (cf. 30:25; 41:46; 45:11; 47:9). His older brother, Ishmael, died at this age (25:17). His mother, Sarah, had died 100 years earlier (23:1). Isaac would live to be 180 (35:28).

- He is _____ blind.
- He is _____ blind.

SCENE TWO: REBEKAH'S DETERMINATION (27:5-17)

- She keeps a _____ on Isaac.
- She speaks _____ to Jacob.

Bless. Hebrew, *barak,* "to kneel." It is the posture of one receiving a blessing or of giving adoration. "Bless" and "blessing" (*berâkâh*) are used 28x in 27:1-28:9.

Love. Hebrew, *ahav*, "to love; to desire, delight in, breath after." Used for the first time outside of human relationships in 27:4, 9, 14.

The family members are paired in seven dialogues: 1) Isaac-Esau, 2) Rebekah-Jacob, 3) Isaac-Jacob under the guise of Esau, 4) Isaac-Esau 5) Rebekah-Jacob, 6) Rebekah-Isaac, and 7) Isaac-Jacob. Jacob and Esau never meet, and Rebekah and Isaac only briefly… The number of separate meetings and their manner imply intentional exclusion and reflect the deep division within the family.
—Bruce K. Waltke

It is normal for a dying man to summon all his close male relatives and to bless them publicly... It is, to say the least, irregular for Isaac to summon merely one of his sons, especially since Jacob and Esau were twins.
—Gordon J. Wenham

- She seeks to _____ the whole situation.

Both Isaac and Rebekah fail—in their marriage, in their parenting, and in their relationship to God. While Isaac stubbornly resists God's will, Rebekah selfishly relies on her own devices to make it happen. One struggles to submit; the other to wait and trust God.

SCENE THREE: JACOB'S DISGUISE (27:18-29)

- What is the blessing?
- Why does Jacob want it?
- How does he seek to get it?

Jacob experiences the closeness, joy, and blessing of his father but only as a charade. He achieves his goal, but fails to satisfy his soul.

SCENE FOUR: ESAU'S DESPAIR (27:30-40)

- Isaac "trembled with great trembling exceedingly."
- Esau "cried out with a great and exceedingly bitter cry."

Isaac's *anti-blessing* on Esau spoke primarily of his descendants, the Edomites, who would occupy a less fertile land than Israel, be at enmity against them, and subjugated to them for most of their history (Num. 20:14-21; 2 Kings 8:20-22; Ps. 137:7; Obadiah 10-14). As for Esau, he would "comfort himself" by thinking of ways to kill Jacob (27:42).

SCENE FIVE: JACOB'S DEPARTURE (27:41-28:9)

This final scene shows the impact of the deception on each person:

- Rebekah's manipulation separates her from Jacob.
- Isaac's humiliation causes him to bless Jacob…in faith.
- Esau's desperation leads him to anger and bitterness.
- Jacob's deception sends him away from home…alone and empty. He has the blessing but he is not able to enjoy it.

In v 6 Jacob is called "her son" whereas in v 5 Esau is called "his son," thus reminding us of the rift that divides the family.
—Gordon Wenham

People used the black, silk-like hair of the camel-goat of the East (v. 16) as a substitute for human hair as late as the Roman period.
—Carl Keil & Franz Delitzsch

An oral blessing was as legally binding as a written will in the ancient Near East. —John J. Davis

Both the birthright and the blessing pertain to the firstborn's inheritance rights—the birthright to property; the blessing to divine potency, prosperity, & dominion… For this family, it also means bearing God's promises into the next generation. —Bruce K. Waltke

Throughout Scripture, the blessing always included five key elements: 1) meaningful touch, 2) a spoken message, 3) attaching high value to the person, 4) picturing a special future, and 5) an active commitment. —John Trent

Every person needs to feel significant. We want our lives to count. We yearn to believe that in some way we are important and that hunger for significance—a drive as intense as our need for oxygen—does not come from pride or ego. It comes from God because he wants each of us to understand how important we are.
—R. C. Sproul

This chapter [27] offers one of the most singular instances of God's overruling providence controlling the affairs of sinful men.
—H. C. Leupold