

REFLECTION GUIDE

GENESIS 27:1-46 | THE MASQUERADE PARTY

KEY TERMS

Blessing - In Ancient Near Eastern culture, it was common to pronounce blessings or curses on others. These blessings/curses were not seen as mere wishful thinking but were believed to be influential ways to call upon God to act in a certain way towards an individual or a nation. This means that a father's blessing was an incredibly solemn and weighty moment that was believed to have lasting impact on his children's lives.

Dew of heaven/fatness of earth - *Dew of heaven* and *fatness of earth* (v. 28 & 39) are both ways to speak of the best of what heaven and earth have to offer. Issac's blessing upon Jacob is thus calling upon God to give Jacob both physical and spiritual health and prosperity. The blessing for Esau warns that he will not have the same physical and spiritual health.

BACKGROUND

As the story of Jacob continues, we learn that Issac is now *old* and *his eyes were dim*, and so he calls his eldest son Esau in order to bless him (vv. 1-4). Although it was typical for the oldest to receive blessing, Isaac and Rebekah were told *the older shall serve the younger* (Gen 25:23) so Isaac is going against God's words and choosing his own preference for Esau (see Gen 25:28). Rebekah, however, overhears the conversation between Isaac and Esau and, because of her preference for Jacob, she concocts a plan to trick Isaac into blessing Jacob instead (vv. 5-8). Following his mother's instructions, Jacob dresses in Esau's clothing and puts goat skins on his hands and neck in order to disguise himself as Esau (vv. 14-17). Jacob then goes to his father Issac with food that Rebekah had prepared and identifies himself as Esau (vv. 18-29). Isaac has some doubts—specifically that the food was prepared quickly even though Esau went out to hunt and that Jacob's voice does not sound like Esau—but he ultimately believes that Jacob is Esau (vv. 20-25). Isaac then proceeds to bless Jacob saying in part, *May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you* (vv. 27-29). Following the blessing upon Jacob, Esau comes to Isaac with his food prepared and ready for his blessing (vv. 30-31). Isaac is confused and becomes angry when he realizes what has taken place (vv. 32-33). Esau then asks for his own blessing, which Isaac provides, but the second blessing is far less favorable than the first. In the end, Jacob receives his father's blessing but the family is fractured and every family member has played a part—Isaac ignored God's word about Esau serving Jacob, Rebekah and Jacob deceived Isaac, and Esau, according to Hebrews 12:16-17, set himself up for this when he sold his birthright (Gen 25:29-34).

GOING DEEPER

Read Romans 9:10-13. Reflecting on Genesis 27, how was God sovereign over the situation? How does God's sovereignty affect our own lives? How should God's sovereignty comfort us?

DID YOU KNOW?

This isn't the only blessing Jacob will receive in his life. Many years later, Jacob receives a blessing—and a new name *Israel*—this time from God himself (Gen 22-32).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

GENESIS 27:1-46 | THE MASQUERADE PARTY

LEARNING THE WORD

1. Read Genesis 27:1-46. Summarize what happens and make a few quick observations.
2. When you consider the actions of each person in this family, where did each display an unwillingness to wait on God rooted in unbelief?
Isaac – _____
Rebekah – _____
Jacob – _____
Esau – _____
3. How are these people examples of ordinary people who carry out the normal foibles, flaws, and hangups of humanity? How are they a lot like we are today?
4. Considering all that happens in Genesis 27, what negative consequences occur because they grasp and strive to bring about their plans rather than leaning in faith upon God, his timing, and his plans?
5. In verse 33, what realization comes to Isaac as he begins to understand both (a) what Jacob did to obtain the blessing, and at the same time, (b) what God did to carry out his sovereign plans for the blessing? See also Hebrews 11:20.

LIVING THE WORD

6. When you discover that you were in the wrong in a situation and acted sinfully, is it difficult for you to admit your mistake and accept God's plans? Why or why not?
7. What is the value of confessing our sin? Why are we so stubborn and resistant to the idea of confessing our shortcomings and our need of grace?
8. How does God respond when we do confess our sin and need of forgiveness? Read Psalm 32:5 and 1 John 1:8-10.
9. How is God's will done even in the middle of this messy situation? Can you think of other biblical examples where God brings something good out of situations that are bad? How is Jesus' cross and empty tomb the ultimate example of God's being glorified in a messy, sinful situation?