

GROUNDS OF FAITH CAFÉ: “Genesis” (Subtitled: Is there a snake in your Garden too?) Further subtitled: Lessons from the Garden! Lesson 21. (Gen 27 & 28). For lesson copies, go to <http://www.montgomerychurch.org/resources8.html>

Overview: Genesis chapters 25 – 36 are composed in a literary structure called “ring composition” that point out a fairly stark contrast in Jacob’s walk with God. First, we see deceit; second, we find reconciliation! Note the chapter construction; then read the texts in chapters 27 and 28 for discussion.

- (A) Prologue (25:19-24)
- (B) Isaac and the Canaanites: Conflict and Covenant (26)
- (C) JACOB AND ESAU: DECEPTION (27)
- (D) Bethel: Departure from promised land (28:10-22)
- (E) Jacob and Laban: Deception and Reconciliation (29-31)**
- (D) Mananaim: Return to promised land (32:1-2)
- (C) JACOB AND ESAU: RECONCILIATION (32-33)
- (B) Jacob and the Canaanites: Deception and Enmity (34)
- (A) The Edomites (36)

Read chapter 27 completely through. Chapter 26 was the only detailed narrative that placed Isaac on center stage. This chapter begins the transition from Abraham through Isaac to Isaac’s *younger* son, per God’s decree (25:23), of God’s covenant promise of land & descendants. Recall: Jacob’s stew secured the “birthright” from his brother Esau (25:27-34). In this chapter, his mother’s stew will secure the blessing.

- **Re-scan 27:1-29.** This is a story of deceit and consequences. The key question is: what can we learn from it and the Scriptures that follow.
 - By what means does Esau gain the blessing of his father Isaac, and what, if anything, do you make of this depiction? Discuss.
 - Re-read 27:28-29. This is the first of Isaac’s blessings to Jacob – a blessing intended for peace upon peoples. What do you learn about Isaac’s understanding of God and the impact God has upon His creation? Briefly discuss.
- **Re-scan 27:30-46.** Now we read of some of the consequences of Jacob’s deceptive actions.
 - What are some of the immediate consequences of Jacob’s “successful” wresting of the blessing from his father? Briefly discuss the effects on:
 - Esau (verses 39-41 – the reverse blessing on Esau)
 - And the immediate effect on Jacob (verses 42-45).

Read chapter 28 completely through. Note this theological meat of the Jacob cycle as we observe one of the key pivotal episodes in Jacob’s life. Jacob flees for survival (or at least that is his perception), but God will appear to him at a truly strategic point in his flight (the juncture or crossroad at which Jacob departs God’s “promised land” to journey back to Haran where God first issued His call to Abraham). This begins Jacob’s transition on a couple of levels. Like Abraham, Jacob must release his past (including his deceptive ways). More importantly, Jacob must learn that this is not a journey simply for survival, but a journey toward faith – a journey he will not take alone. For the God of his grandfather, Abraham, who called Abraham out of Haran, is the God who will escort him back to Haran where He promises His continued *Presence* and *Protection* (note 28:15!!!). He will then meet him again on his return to the promised land in chapter 32!

- **Re-read 28:1-7.** Isaac offers a second blessing to Jacob. What are some of the key elements in light of God’s promise to Abraham of land and descendants (12:1-3)? Briefly discuss.
- **Re-read 28:8-9.** Previously, Esau’s choices of wives “*from the daughters of the land (Canaan)*” (27:46) were unfavorable to his parents. Now (maybe in a desperate attempt to regain Isaac’s blessing?) he makes another choice with regard to marriage. What does he determine to do and what, if anything, is the result?
- **Re-read 28:10-17.** On his journey for survival, the God of Jacob’s forefathers meets him in a vision. Two aspects of this meeting seem to stand out:
 - What visual aspects of Jacob’s dream strike you as significant and in what way? Discuss.
 - What specifically does God promise Jacob in the dream? What parts of this seem similar to God’s promises in His Gospel message to Christians (note Matt 28:20)? Discuss.
- **Re-read 28:18-22.** Jacob reacts to the promises of God.
 - How does Jacob react to God’s Promises, i.e., what specific actions does he take?
 - Do you think he is manifesting full trust at this point, or perhaps conditional trust? Cite specifics to back up your thoughts.
 - Now: how do you relate to Jacob’s reaction? To his credit, when God revealed Himself, Jacob listened and acted. What about you? What are your responses? Discuss.