

GENESIS 27:41-46

(THE BROTHER'S ANGER, A PICTURE OF CHURCH REFORMATION)

Introduction: Today we have just a few short verses to consider, but I believe that what's being seen in them is a picture of the true people of God within the church and even a picture of what necessitated the Protestant Reformation and many other breaking away actions in the church since then.

There always have been true believers, and those who profess faith but have none. This was true in Israel and this has been true since the founding of the church. I'll give two examples – one from the Old Testament and one from the New for you to consider.

The first is from Ezekiel 8. He has a vision and during that vision he's taken to Jerusalem and sees the pagan practices going on right in the temple, by those who are supposed to be the people of God –

Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

⁶ Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations." ⁷ So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. ⁸ Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

⁹ And He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there." ¹⁰ So I went in and saw, and there—every sort of creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed all around on the walls. ¹¹ And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. ¹² Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, 'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.'"

¹³ And He said to me, “Turn again, *and* you will see greater abominations that they are doing.” ¹⁴ So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD’s house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz.

¹⁵ Then He said to me, “Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these.” ¹⁶ So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD’s house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, *were* about twenty-five men with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping the sun toward the east.

¹⁷ And He said to me, “Have you seen *this*, O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. ¹⁸ Therefore I also will act in fury. My eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them.”

In the New Testament it is no different –

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4

As you can see, false worshippers fill the halls of history and reach both back before the cross and forward after it. If you noticed some of the similarities between both accounts and the Roman church, then you’ve been paying attention. I am not against Catholics, but I am against their church doctrine.

There is one Lord and He has given one word for the people of God. As we will see, this conflict between two brothers prefigures the conflict between these two ideologies.

Text Verse: ¹⁰ Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it before the king. ¹¹ Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 2 Kings 22

Good King Josiah was one of the great kings of Israel. When the Law of Moses, which had been forgotten for so long was found, it was read to him and he mourned over how God’s word had been neglected. He began great reforms in Israel to turn the people’s hearts back to the Lord.

In church history, this has happened as well on several occasions, most notably at the time of Martin Luther and the great protestant reformation. Man turns from God’s laws, but God brings in new men to restore the truth.

May we determine in our hearts to never stray from His good word to us. And so... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. The Elder’s Hatred

The last three sermons, all from Genesis 27, highlighted the way in which Jacob obtained the blessing from Isaac which Isaac had intended for Esau. Today we have just six verses left in chapter 27 and which form, as I said, a pattern realized in the Protestant Reformation of the Church as well as other church reorganizations.

The details of this chapter are happening when Jacob and Esau are 77 years old and Isaac is 136. Therefore, this is about the year 2245AM and its 61 years after Abraham died.

⁴¹ So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”

Esau is naturally upset at what happened between him and Jacob. Isaac asked him to go hunting and make a meal for him so that when he came

back he could bless him. While he was gone, Jacob deceptively obtained the blessing that he was promised.

There is room for anger in every person, particularly at sin. But there is no room for anger if it will allow the devil in. We saw this first when Cain slew Abel. The Lord told him at that time –

“So the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* for you, but you should rule over it.” Genesis 4:6, 7

Cain didn’t heed the lesson and it ended in murder. The same thing happened between two of David’s sons after he became King of Israel as 2 Samuel 13 records –

²⁸ “Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, “Watch now, when Amnon’s heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, ‘Strike Amnon!’ then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and valiant.” ²⁹ So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king’s sons arose, and each one got on his mule and fled.”

Amnon, half brother of Absalom, had forcefully slept with Absalom’s sister Tamar and then rejected her and Absalom held a grudge which again led to the murder of his brother.

David, Absalom’s father, may have been thinking of what happened when he wrote these words in the 4th Psalm –

⁴ “Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah ⁵ Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, And put your trust in the LORD.”

Paul built upon David’s words and said this to us in Ephesians 4 –

²⁶ “Be angry, and do not sin’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, ²⁷ nor give place to the devil.”

So getting back to Esau, it's possible that he actually thought about regaining the birthright, and thus the blessing, by killing Jacob. He said, "The days for mourning my father are at hand" meaning that his dad was old and he expected him to die soon.

He had already gotten married at the age of 40, but Jacob is 77 and still unmarried. If his brother were to die before he married, then the birthright and the blessing would ostensibly revert to him.

It would also be a slap at the God he had rejected because he would also defeat the oracle God had stated to Rebekah before they were born about the older serving the younger. This shows the profane mind of one who would attempt to cast off God's rule.

It also shows that he was probably afraid of his dad, even though he was old, blind, and stuck in bed. As the Geneva Bible says, "Hypocrites only abstain from doing evil for fear of men."

Unfortunately for Esau, he would fail on all accounts, Jacob discovered his intent and fled, and his father would live more than 40 more years, to the age of 180. During this time, Jacob will have two wives, 12 sons, and at least one daughter, maybe more. God's divine plan prevailed as it always will.

John Gill writes of another possibility concerning this entire scenario that I want to point out, even though I don't agree with it. One of his contemporaries named Schmidt looks at the passage in a completely different way than all other interpreters.

He sees "the days of my father's mourning are coming" not that his father would be mourned for, being dead, but that his father, being alive, would himself mourn for Jacob, being slain by Esau.

And so he renders the next clause, "for I will slay my brother Jacob" which will make Isaac mourn and maybe die of grief. If this is correct Esau is showing an ill will to Isaac for confirming Jacob's blessing and to Jacob because he got the blessing.

Either way, whether he intended to kill Jacob after his father was mourned for, or kill Jacob and thus make his father mourn, Esau intended to kill Jacob and throw off God's rule in the process. I believe this short account prefigures church reformation and the next verse is where we begin to see this...

⁴² And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you *by intending* to kill you.

Please try to follow my logic here. In the past, Rebekah has been a picture of the church, the people of God. If you didn't see the sermons on Genesis 24, you really need to watch them to understand, but nothing could be clearer.

There is strife between the two children which goes back to their time in the womb. There God spoke these words –

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. (23)

These words are fulfilled in the Israelites and the Edomites, but because she pictures the church, I believe they are also fulfilled in the Church. The Roman Catholic Church is what we might consider the "older brother" and the reformation is the younger.

But this is a "type" or picture of the true church and the false one, not specifically Roman Catholics. We need to remember that Jacob was chosen by God and he arrived at the same time as Esau. He is the true son of blessing and through whom the Messiah came.

The same is true with the church. The older came about at the same time as the younger. One is the bearer of the Messiah – the true people of God, and one gave up its birthright for works and idolatry. It also gave up its spiritual blessing through ritual.

In those Genesis 24 sermons, we spoke of Rebekah's wet nurse and lifelong companion, who was Deborah. She is, as I clearly demonstrated, a picture of the word of God. Genesis 35:8 says that she was with Jacob after returning from his 20 year stay in Haran when he fled from Esau.

Because he stayed there the entire time and she returned with him, then she must have left with him as well. Deborah, a picture of the word of God, went to Haran with Jacob. We know this is so.

In other words, from Rebekah, as a picture of the church, there is a portion of people who have always held to the word of God, having been promised in advance, having been raised with the word, and having carried that same word with them.

And then there is the other offspring which has been married to foreign and pagan wives. This is Esau as we will see in a few verses. Likewise, we saw in the passage from Ezekiel earlier those who had joined themselves to foreign and pagan idols right in the temple, and just as the Catholic church does through idol worship, the veneration of Mary and the saints, etc.

And this older, unspiritual son who failed to receive the birthright or the blessing threatened to kill the younger son. The pattern is true in ancient Israel where the priests killed the prophets and the people who held to the true God and His word.

It has also happened in Christianity as well. How many times throughout church history have we seen it. The Spanish Inquisition, the burning of martyrs like John Hus, the trials of Martin Luther, and on and on and on.

There is an enmity and a hatred within the church which even prompted the Catholic church to actually take a stand completely contrary to the precepts of the Bible. This happened at the Council of Trent in 1546.

At this council, they published a list of canons which at once and completely cut themselves off from the truth of the gospel and the word of God.

However, as we will see in chapter 33, Jacob and Esau eventually met and the hostility was dropped, but then they parted again and went their separate ways. This is the state of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches today. There is no longer a blood feud, but there is a complete division between the two.

And the pattern continues in the church. Not specifically between Rome and the other churches, but between the true son of promise who holds to the word of God, and the spiritually corrupt, pictured by Esau, who don't.

This isn't a Roman Catholic verses Protestant conflict, but a conflict where the dividing line is a spiritual verses a carnal heritage. The Protestant Reformation merely made the largest distinction between the two in the lives of the church.

Let's reread verse 42 again – “And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, “Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you *by intending* to kill you.”

The children of the church were conceived at the same time, but only one is the true spiritual church and the older shall serve the younger. And yes, the older has intended on killing the younger because of their heritage.

As Matthew Henry says about this verse, “The happiness of saints is the envy of sinners. Whom Heaven blesses, hell curses.”

II. Time for Healing

⁴³ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.

Rebekah seeing that disaster has been pronounced upon her beloved son tells Jacob to flee to Laban in Haran. Interestingly, Haran means "mountainous." In what seems to be a parallel thought from Isaiah chapter 40, those who carry the gospel message are told this –

O Zion, You who bring good tidings, Get up into the high mountain;
O Jerusalem, You who bring good tidings, Lift up your voice with strength,
Lift *it* up, be not afraid; Say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” Isaiah
40:9

The true church has held fast to the Bible and has proclaimed from the high mountain the gospel for 2000 years, exactly as the Lord has directed. The good tidings of the truth of God’s word are being shouted out with a loud voice and with strength.

At the same time as Jacob went to the mountains, Esau remained in Canaan and mixed first with pagan, idolatrous wives and later married two more women who were daughters of Ishmael – who pictures the law. He went from the bondage of idolatry and moved to the bondage of legalism and works-based religion.

⁴⁴ And stay with him a few days, until your brother’s fury turns away,

“A few days” is the term *yammim akhadim* and it turned out to be somewhere around 20 years. However long it was, there is no record in the Bible of Jacob ever seeing his mother again.

It’s an argument from silence to say it didn’t happen, but no matter what it was at least twenty years and maybe never again did their eyes alight upon each other. It was a high cost for Rebekah, but it was in fulfillment of God’s word and His plan.

And the pattern has been repeated many, many times throughout history. Those who are of the true spiritual line bearing the word of God have left home and family to carry the message of Christ around the world. Many have never returned home again.

In past times, missionaries even packed their few belongings into a casket, determining that when they returned it would be they who filled it. When they went, they went with God’s blessing and His word, and when they returned it was in a state of victory over the death that consumed them.

⁴⁵ until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there.

What is almost sad is what Rebekah says to Jacob, until Esau “forgets what you have done to him.” Deceiving Isaac was her idea in the first place and Jacob questioned the prudence of it from the start, but now she overlooks her own part in the whole thing.

Anyway, as I said earlier, Jacob and Esau eventually met again and the hostility was dropped, but then they divided and went their separate ways. This is how things are between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches today. There is no longer a blood feud, but there is a complete division between the two.

There is also nothing to preclude anyone who is in a bad church from coming to their senses and there is nothing which would lead us to believe the Esau remained defiant of God until his death. Either way though, the enmity subsided between the two.

⁴⁵ (cont') Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

What she is saying is that if Esau were to have killed Jacob, he could also have been killed. This custom, which was codified in the Law of Moses, was that a close relative had the right to kill another person who took the life of a family member.

Just because only Jacob and Esau are mentioned as Isaac's sons, there is no reason to believe he didn't have other sons as well. And in fact, the blessing that Isaac gave to Jacob in this same chapter uses the plural term “brothers.” Let me read it to you –

²⁹ Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Gen 27:29

Likewise, when talking to Esau afterwards, Isaac says this to him -

³⁷ Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?”

Gen 27:37

So Rebekah very well may fear that another one of her own sons, if there really are any, could legally take Esau’s life for what he planned to do to Jacob. Even if they were Isaac’s only two children there was still the law of God given to Noah in Genesis 9 –

⁵ From the hand of every man’s brother I will require the life of man. ⁶ “Whoever sheds man’s blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Whether by another of her sons or by someone executing the law in their place, either way in this she would lose two sons “in one day” just as she said.

These words of Rebekah have a parallel in Jesus’ words about those who are of the true spiritual line and those who aren’t. Listen to His parable and notice the similarities –

²⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵ but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. ²⁶ But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. ²⁷ So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ ²⁸ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ ²⁹ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. ³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.””

III. Weary of Evildoers

⁴⁶ And Rebekah said to Isaac, “I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these *who are* the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?”

In Genesis 26 we saw that Esau had married two women who were Hittites or local women from Canaan. Rebekah will use his marriages to get Jacob a passage out of the area.

Rather than hurting Isaac’s feelings by bringing up Esau’s intentions of killing Jacob, and of which Isaac may have had no idea at all about, Rebekah tells him about her weariness concerning the daughters of Heth that Esau had married.

She tells Isaac that she doesn’t want Jacob to have a wife from the area. Her intent is to send him to her own home, where she came from in Mesopotamia, to get a wife from there, and to allow space and time to heal Esau’s bitterness.

An interesting thing occurs in the Hebrew of this verse which has only happened 3 times so far in the Bible

The Hebrew word for “weary” – “I am weary of my life” is *qaz-ti*. It means to feel a loathing, abhorrence, or sickening dread. This particular word, in the original hand-written Hebrew has an unusually small letter quph or our “q.”

In all, there will be very few times in the entire Bible that such rare letters will be used – only 17 in the five books of Moses and a few others after them. God is giving us clues about Himself and His plan of redemption in these unusual sized letters.

Quph is the 19th letter of the Hebrew aleph-bet and its image, or the picture it makes, is the sun at the horizon. In this context, it can mean condense,

circle, or time. The 19th Psalm uses the name of the letter in one of its verses –

In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, ⁵ Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, *And* rejoices like a strong man to run its race. ⁶ Its rising *is* from one end of heaven, And its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

The word circuit is the word quph. What I think is being said by Rebekah is that the never-ending cycle of life, its weariness, is brought on by the “daughters of Heth” (their pagan practices.) The same word that she uses for “weary” is used in Leviticus and under the same concept –

"And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and therefore I abhor them."
Leviticus 20:23

The word “abhorred” is the same as Rebekah uses to say “weary.” So once again, I believe this obscure small letter in this one word is telling us that there is a true church and there is a false one.

According to Paul, we’re not to be unevenly yoked with non believers because they will pull us away from following the Lord with all our heart. This is what Rebekah is implying to Jacob and it is the lesson found time and time again in the Bible.

He wants us to not mingle our faith with false practices, such as idol worship, tarot cards, rosary beads, praying to saints or to Mary, horoscopes, or any other false religious practice. And He also asks us to not intermingle with those who follow those practices in marriage. I don’t think this is stretching this even one bit. This one small letter is there and it is given in the greater context of Jacob needing a wife, and keeping the purity of the line which leads to the Messiah and which springs from the Messiah... the people of God.
Esau already has two wives, both of which are pagans.

It's probably good to note that despite the turmoil between the descendants of Jacob and those of Esau, the line of Esau eventually was assimilated into the Israelite people and they became extinct as an individual group.

However, even until today, the people of Israel survive. In the same way, the people of the false church, the idolaters, the false worshippers, those who reject the word of God – all of them will also become extinct, but the name of Jesus and the people of His church will continue on forever.

We have no need to worry if this is so. God chose us before the foundation of the world and those who reject Him will suffer the consequences of their decision, just as Esau did – losing his birthright and his blessing and eventually disappearing into history.

Closing Verse: And He called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writer's inkhorn at his side; ⁴ and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it." ⁵ To the others He said in my hearing, "Go after him through the city and kill; do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. ⁶ Utterly slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and begin at My sanctuary." Ezekiel 9

Next Week: Genesis 28:1-9 (May God Almighty Bless You)

Holding Fast to God's Word

So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing
With which his father had blessed him in his tent
And Esau said in his heart as he was guessing
The time of his father's death and his life would be spent
The days of mourning for my father are at hand
And then I will kill my brother Jacob, won't it be grand!

And the words of Esau her older son were told
To Rebekah, so she sent and called for Jacob her son.
And she said to him, "Surely your brother Esau is quite bold
He comforts himself by killing you my precious one

Now therefore, my son, obey my voice
Arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran
And stay with him a while, there really is no choice
Until your brother's fury turns away and is gone

When he forgets what you to him have done
Then I will send and bring you from there
Why should I be bereaved of you also, my son
Both of you in one day, this I couldn't bear

And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life
Because of the daughters of this land, those of Heth
It would be terrible if from them Jacob got a wife
What good would life be to me... it seems worse than death.

In these verses we have lessons to learn
Concerning our affiliation with right living
It is our duty to all wicked things spurn
And only to the Lord should our allegiance we be giving

When our church departs from His word
It is our duty to remove ourselves hence
And stand fast by following the Lord
We need to always use the best common sense

He is our Lord and to Him alone is our allegiance due
And so let our eyes fix upon Him and our hearts be true

Great is the Lord and surely He is worthy of praise
And so shall we follow Him and glorify Him all of our days

Hallelujah and Amen...