

Case Study: Isaac – Moved By Flesh

Description

1 WHEN ISAAC was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called
2 He said, See here now; I am old, I do not know when I may die.
3 So now, I pray you, take your weapons, your [arrows in a] quiver and your bow
4 And prepare me appetizing meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may
20 And Isaac said to his son, How is it that you have found the game so quickly?
21 But Isaac said to Jacob, Come close to me, I beg of you, that I may feel you
22 So Jacob went near to Isaac, and his father felt him and said, The voice is
23 He could not identify him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau.
24 But he said, Are you really my son Esau? He answered, I am.
25 Then [Isaac] said, Bring it to me and I will eat of my son's game, that I may
26 Then his father Isaac said, Come near and kiss me, my son.
27 So he came near and kissed him; and [Isaac] smelled his clothing and blessed him.

Genesis 27:20-27 AMPC

Isaac in my opinion is an often overlooked and almost forgotten patriarch of the Bible. It is easy to overlook Isaac as a gap in between Abraham and Jacob/Israel, or even just relegate him to being a trust fund kid, but I believe people would benefit from a deeper look at his life and actions. Isaac was the only son of Abraham and Sarah's relationship, a child of promise from God, and the father of Jacob/Israel who ultimately gave birth to the 12 tribes of Israel, but he was also the father of Esau. I won't get into the nature of Esau and Jacob in this post, but hopefully through a healthy study of Isaac, the Holy Spirit may provide some revelation and insight into how they developed into the people they became.

- I don't know when I'm going to die (v1-2) – I want to combine these 2 verses to make a single point, that Isaac, due to his declining physical condition, is trying to bring about a spiritual blessing prematurely. Isaac is experiencing the physical changes normally brought about with old age, in weakening vision, weakening hearing, possibly forgetfulness. Isaac's age isn't given, which really isn't important because what we can clearly see is that Isaac believes because he isn't operating like he used to, that he must be on his way out of this world. These thoughts cause Isaac to act almost impulsively, and call upon Esau to provide a blessing to him that is not following God's timing. Because Isaac doesn't understand God's timing, or appear to seek God's direction, he prematurely arranges a blessing that only God can ordain.
- prepare me appetizing meat, in exchange for your blessing before I die (v4) – again we see Isaac reference death, as if he is rushing to defeat or outwit the inevitable. What I really want to draw your attention to is Isaac's desire and proposal to Esau. Give me appetizing meat, and I'll give you the blessing. For those of you that may not be familiar with Bible passages, or the story of Esau, but previously in Genesis chapter 25, Esau sold his firstborn birthright to Jacob in exchange for a bowl of soup/lentils. Esau's words to Jacob were, "what good is this birthright to me if I'm dead (paraphrase)?" Fast forward to the verses above, and we see Isaac, Esau's father in a similar position, where he feels that his death is near, and all he wants is for a well prepared dish of his favorite meal from his firstborn son, and then he will give him his blessing as the

firstborn son. Now some of you may be seeing that I'm reaching here, but I want you to consider the saying, "the fruit don't fall that far from the tree." Isaac appears to be having almost a spiritual/faith crisis that he needs to speed the hand of God and move ahead to ensure that Esau receives something that Isaac is not in a place to give. God u

- The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau, so he blessed him (v22-23) – I'm the youngest of 3 sons, and my brother who is 2 years older than me also has a name that starts with the letter J. When we were younger, many people thought that we were twins, and even after we were adults, folks who didn't know us commented on how much we looked alike. People who would call our home would confuse our voices for one another, and oftentimes even our family members would find it hard to distinguish us by voice alone. What I'm saying is that I can understand for Isaac, is that at his old age, voice alone would be difficult to distinguish his sons if they sounded alike. The part that becomes problematic in Isaac's situation is that to me it would appear that as mentioned earlier he didn't consult God before determining to bless Esau that day, so he was left to use his fleshly senses to interpret God's divine will. Isaac uses 2 simple, yet insufficient tests; touch and hearing. His impatience AND lack of faith caused him to even bypass an alarm when he interpreted the voice of Jacob. We see something similar in Jacob later in Genesis when he marries and consummates the marriage with Leah, somehow without ever raising her veil to see her face, hearing her voice throughout the wedding day, or even observing her physique throughout that day. I believe that Isaac STILL chose to bless Jacob in spite of the inconsistencies because he was more focused on bringing about his plan rather than following the direction of God.
- The scent of my son is as the odor of the field (v27) – here we see that Isaac incorporated a 3rd sense with using smell. Now some may say that using hearing, touch, and smell should be sufficient in a vetting process. I would disagree and say that isn't enough when we get to the area of covenant, blessings, and God's will. What Isaac actually reveals about himself is that it is quite possible he never really KNEW or developed a deep relationship with either of his sons. He wasn't familiar enough with their voice or word pronunciation/cadence to distinguish them, he could feel differences in hairiness, yet possibly ignored wounds, skin texture or uniqueness about that them that could've been identifying, and here he uses the smell of Esau's clothes to identify him which could imply that Isaac was more familiar with his son's traits/activities than who his sons actually were.

Each of Isaac's tests in the passage involve superficial measures of standard, which I believe were reflective of a man who like his parents before his birth, lost faith in God, and grew impatient. The moment in the passage above was Isaac attempting to produce an Ishmael through fleshly means. Isaac wanted to ensure that he did his fatherly duty which was pass on the first-born son inheritance to Esau while he could. What Isaac was unaware of is the promise that God had given Rebekah regarding Esau and Jacob/Israel in Genesis chapter 25, and he was unaware of God's timing. What Isaac represents to me is a man who possibly didn't develop and maintain communication with God, which was reflected in his actions and failures above. If Isaac had stopped and allowed himself to be led by God, he would not have fell victim to Rebekah and Jacob's scheme, and most likely would not have attempted to bless Esau when God didn't intend to do that.

Reflection Time

Do you really know those around you? Are you aware of the intimate details, uniqueness, value, and contributions of the people you love? Can you think back to a time in your life where you used your

natural senses to make a spiritual decision? What was the outcome, and did you make any changes as a result? I don't want you to judge Isaac, because we all are Isaac. Each of us act out things passed down from our parents that we may have never witnessed them do, and like Isaac we can move outside the will of God when looking solely through natural eyes and understanding. What do you value or like so much that you would bypass natural warning indicators to carry out? What have you traded God's will for, and what was the result? Are you humble enough to submit to God to correct that which you have mismanaged?

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