Torah Series - Book of Genesis

B. Chapters 27:1-29:35 – From Isaac to Jacob

Genesis 27:1-4 – Isaac wants to bless Esau

- Isaac is now old, blind, approaching death. The time has come for patriarchal changing of the guard.
- Isaac asks for a "last meal" from Esau's game
- "**my soul may bless you**" - Hebrew '***nephesh***': the body is an animated **soul**. Life represents a connection to God who preserves life. Physical death: separation of body and soul. Spiritual death: separation of soul from God. This special spiritual connection to God will be given by Isaac (cf. Sacramental/means of grace)

Genesis 27:5-29 – A big fat 'hairy' deal!

- Rebekah schemes to usurp the blessing for Jacob
- Jacob is wise to the scheme and is worried that he will get a curse instead
- Rebekah assures him, and schemes to make Jacob hairy with goat hide and smell like Esau with his clothing
- Isaac is leary, Jacob straight up lies to him (vs. 24)
- Isaac smells Jacob and thinks it's Esau, and bestows upon him his blessing

Genesis 27:30-46 – Hijinks Revealed!

- Isaac, the patriarch of the family, has been played for a fool. He trembles violently because of the deceit
- Jacob "the cheater" cheats Esau bad. Esau weeps bitterly.
- Esau is upset that he got gypped, but also because of what has been done to humiliate his father - an act so vile it carried the death sentence later in the Torah (Ex 21:17, Lev 20:9).
- Isaac's 'blessing' to Esau is quite prophetic. It's talking about Esau's descendants.
- Jacob got the blessing of **the line of the Messiah**. Esau gets a general blessing.
- Esau's descendants will be at odds with Jacob's.
- Esau is ballistic and wants to **kill Jacob**, but will wait until Isaac has died
- Rebekah gets wise to this and tells Jacob to flee to uncle Laban, while hopefully Esau calms down
- Chapter ends with Rebekah goes to Isaac and plants the seed about Jacob leaving to "get a non-Hittite wife" elsewhere in Haran.

Genesis 28:1-5 – Jacob gets outta Dodge!

- Canaanites are practicing bad religion. Hence, go marry your cousin!
- Vs 4 The promises given to Abraham & Isaac now transfer to Jacob
- Jacob departs with Isaac's blessing

Genesis 28:6-9 – Esau also marries a cousin!

- If it's good enough for Jacob, it's good enough for me!
- Second cousin marriage doesn't really make up for his other Canaanite wives though. Issues still remain.

Genesis 28:10-22 – "I have a dream!"

- Jacob's "ladder" or "staircase." Literally "thing with steps." It's actually a **ziggurat** structure.
- These structures pre-date the Egyptian pyramids. Central American structures.
- Pyramid structures are artificial mountains, 'gods' always lived on mountains. The priest-king would climb to the top of the ziggurat and make contact with the god at the top.
- Jacob is seeing the **temple of God**, with angels.
- Jacob sees God (Yahweh) at the top. God (*logos/hypostasis*) extends the same promises to Jacob directly (not only through Isaac's blessing).
- Vs 15 "**I am with you and will keep you wherever you go**" - very key verse. "gods" in the OT are regional. The storm god of this region, the river god of that region, etc. Yahweh promises to go with Jacob no matter where he goes. Very different in the ancient world. We see this idea in Jonah when he tries to run away from God. Or Ezekiel to the people in exile "just because you're here doesn't mean that Marduk is a better/stronger god than Yahweh"
- Church Fathers: "*nous*" spiritual sensory organ to perceive the spiritual world (Cf. MT 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall **see God**" & 2 Kings 6:15–17 Elisha prays, Gehazi **sees** the Lord's hidden army)
- Ancient World: Dreams - *nous* was still active while you're asleep. Dreams were glimpses of the spiritual world. Cf. Joseph & Daniel with interpretation of dreams. Jacob wakes up from the dream & interprets it himself.
- Jacob realizes this place is the temple of God (Cf. Ziggurat concept).
- Rock Pillow - pillar with oil. Where God supernaturally encountered people was marked with a stone (cairn) and anointed with oil. The place would be revisited yearly on the date for commemoration with oil again. *Bethel* (The House of God) Not the same as an altar with a sacrifice.
- Jacob's vow - If God does this (protects/provides for me), I will do that (worship God with 10% tithes at this place).
- Josephus: this stone sank to the center of the earth and a spring came up for 7 days. Cf. Woman @ the well in JN 4. "Jacob's well"
- John 1:51 Jesus references this story as Himself/The Temple
- Mary: (*Theotokos*) her womb is the place where Heaven & Earth come together as the gate of God.

Genesis 29:1-30 – Get the banjo!

- Jacob arrives in the territory of Laban, there is a notable well in the area
- Sheepish discussion! Rachel the shepherdess arrives, Jacob rolls the stone away (impress her with feats of strength!) and waters her flocks.
- Loverboy Jacob kisses her and cries in front of her! Top notch way of meeting women for the first time! 😂 Basically: Love at first sight
- Laban offers hospitality to Jacob as family
- Jacob works for Laban for a month. Offers him payment
- Cousins: Leah (older) & Rachel (younger). Leah has weird eyes (big/bulging/watery - maybe a little homely). Rachel is a total hottie.
- Jacob pledges to work for Laban for **7 years** to marry Rachel. Concept: big families were needed for farm work. Cheaper than buying slaves or hiring workers. If a father

lets a daughter leave to contribute to another family, that's a big loss. Concept of the **bride price/dowry** comes from this (compensating other family for loss {not property}).
- What can Jacob offer to Laban? He has no money. So he works for no pay 7 years.
- Jacob: time's up! Let me consecrate! Feast is prepared.
- **Culture**: Bridal chamber was on site! Groom would emerge from the chamber with a bloody cloth (proof of virginity). Festivities lasted 7 days.
- Laban **tricks** Jacob and swaps in Leah for Rachel! 'Round here, you gotta marry the older before the younger.' Torah: deception is OK if it makes things correct/brings about justice/proper order. Laban deceives Jacob to make this correct. Rebekah & Jacob are kinda sketchy. Runs in the family. Jacob who bamboozled Esau now also gets bamboozled!
- **Servants**: Leah → Zilpah. Rachel → Bilhah.
- Jacob gets Rachel, consummates, **loves her more** than Leah. This is a **very bad** setup.
- Jacob works another 7 years for Laban.

Genesis 29:31-35 – Baby Battle Royale!
- **Poor Leah**. No say in any of this. Sisters married to the same guy, he **loves her sister more** ('*hated*' is a stupid translation). God Himself works to compensate Leah by giving her children whilst Rachel is barren.
- Despite Leah's appearance, Jacob is still making babies with her. Leah conceives and bears **Reuben** (Best sandwich ever! "*See, a son*"). Vs 32: "now my husband will love me" - very sad!
- She conceives again and bears **Simeon** ("*heard*") God has heard her plight and gives her another son.
- Again: **Levi** ("*attached*") & **Judah** ("*praise*").
- After these 4 sons, she ceases bearing children.
