

Despite Man's Sinfulness His Plan Will Prevail!

Gen 27:1-46 (text)

13 June 2021, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 16:30

(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)¹

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Looking at the world around us, it might seem as if Christianity is currently taking a backseat – yes, as if the Church of God is losing ground against enemies from *without*, and even against flaws from *within*!

And so, because of this, some Christians might begin to wonder whether God is real – and whether His church will survive until Christ's return.

Hostility from outside! Flaws from within!

But what's new?

For, look, does not our text show us how God is able to guide & uphold His church even despite hostility from without (Esau) and despite flaws from within (Jacob and his mother Rebecca)!?

Indeed, here is the message of our text:

“Are you downhearted by hostility from the outside and by sins that exist even among the members of God's church? Well, take heart! The Sovereign God's redemptive plan cannot be derailed! He can use even human deception to accomplish His eternal plan!”

The sermon has three points to make this clear...

- The Believer's Sin in God's Service
- The Believer's Sin within its Context
- Grievous Sin in God's Service

The Believer's Sin in God's Service

My brother & sister,

Look at the sins & flaws of God's people! Yes, at the sins/flaws of Rebekah, and of God's chosen one, *Jacob* – their deception!

See how Rebekah overheard what Isaac was saying to Esau!?

See how she then went and whispered behind her frail husband's back!?

See how she even makes her beloved son an accomplice in her cheating game!? Yes, this mother (this raiser of children) gives her own son sinful instructions – she commands him to cheat and deceive!

So, the two of them used:

- farm goats instead of deer!
- they would tell Isaac that the goats' meat is venison!
- They dressed *Jacob* in *Esau's* clothes so that he could get Esau's smell² (Yes, in those days, taking a bath/shower did not happen every day. So, clothes strongly carried its owner's “signature” smell).
- Then they put hairy goat skins on Jacob's smooth skin to cheat Isaac into believing that Jacob was hairy Esau.

¹ With much appreciation for the wonderful work of GREIDANUS, Sidney. 2007. Preaching Christ from Genesis: foundations for expository sermons. Grand Rapids, MI : William B Eerdmans. p. 263-279

² cf. v. 15 and v. 27b ***“Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son.”*** V. 27 ***“...and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, ‘See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed...’”***

See the sins of these two members of God's Old-Testament church? It's *deceit* from start to finish! Worse still: it's *premeditated* (highhanded/calculated) deceit!

And now their deceitful *actions* are also going over into deceitful *words*:

You see, when Father Isaac asked Jacob, "***Who are you, my son?***" Jacob answered, "***I am Esau your firstborn***" (v.19)!

And Jacob's deceit continues when he says: "***I have done as you told me. Get up, please sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me***" (19)!

My brother & sister, remember: Romans 9:13 tells us that Jacob was God's loved & chosen one! Yet, look at the climactic level to which his sin & deceit now rise:

You see, when his father asked him, "***How is it that you have it (the venison) so quickly, my son?***" Jacob starts to even drag *God's Name* into his lies! Said he, "***Because the LORD your God caused it to happen to me!***" (v. 20)

Wow! What blasphemy! What self-help abuse of God's Name!

Then (v.24), when Isaac asks him again, "***Are you really my son Esau?***" Jacob persists in his cheating, saying, "***I am!***"

And look at v.26!

You see, lastly, before Isaac blesses Jacob, he asks his son to come closer and *kiss* his father. Was that Isaac's last way of making sure there's no cheating? I mean, would Jacob even with a kiss deceive his father?

And, sure thing, this Jacob – this chosen one of God – did even *that*! Verse 27 says, "***So he (Jacob) came close and kissed him (Father Isaac).***"

Jacob sealed his cheating with a kiss!!!

How atrocious!

What deception!

What deception by the one whom *God* had *chosen* – yes, by Jacob, the one whom God loved!!³

See the sins & flaws within God's Old-Testament Church!?

Now, this begs the question: Did God approve of Rebekah & Jacob's deception?

No, He did not – and He never approves of sin or deception!

You see, although our text does not explicitly *say* it, the wider context describes how the LORD disciplined Rebekah and Jacob for their sin!

How?

Well, after this gross sin, Rebekah never again (in this life) saw her beloved Jacob.⁴

You see, she sent him to her brother Laban's family so that Jacob could find a godly wife, and so that Esau would not kill Jacob for what he did to him!

Indeed, at a time without cell phones and video calls, Rebekah never again saw her beloved son!

And Jacob? How did God discipline *him* for *his* gross sin – yes, for his deception of his father & brother?

Well, remember how Jacob got his own "medicine" back – yes, how his Uncle Laban *deceived* him; how Laban at first did not give him the bride of his heart's desire, but cheated him; yes, how, after seven tough years, Laban gave him *Leah* as bride – not Rachel!

³ cf. Rom 9:13 "***As it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'***"

⁴ cf. Greidanus (ibid:278)

Then Jacob had to work seven more years for Rachel!

So, what do we see?

Well, that God does visit His loved-ones for their sins!

I say “visit” – and not “punish” – because if you are a Christian, then *Jesus* was punished for your sins!⁵

Thus, God does not *punish* the sinning Christian! However, that does not mean that God does not, at times, *discipline* His loved ones! After all, God’s Word does tell us (in Heb.12:6), “***For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.***”⁶

True, not *every* hardship that befalls us is sent by God for a specific sin we have committed.⁷ Nevertheless, at times there is a connection between God’s loved ones’ sins and the discipline God sends them.

My brother & sister, just as God did not approve of Rebekah & Jacob’s sin & deception – and disciplined them for that – so does He, at times, also discipline the beloved members of His New-Testament Church (you & me) lest we should fall away from Him, if that were possible!

But here’s the next question: Was God able to *use* Rebekah & Jacob’s deception to accomplish His saving/redemptive plan?

Yes, He was – and He did! I mean, is He not the sovereign Lord of the universe!?

True, God is not the author of sin, and He does not approve of sin & deception. However, in His sovereignty and grace, He can use even human deception to accomplish His saving plan! Yes, even human sin and deception cannot derail God’s redemptive plan!

And don’t we see that when also *Esau*, later on, begged Isaac to give *him* a blessing? I mean, even though he so wished, Father Isaac simply *could not undo the blessing he had given to Jacob*. In fact, Father Isaac *said* (in v.33), “***I... blessed him (Jacob). Yes, and he shall be blessed!***”

And, then, even when Father Isaac tried his best to also *bless* Esau, out of Father Isaac’s mouth only came a *negative* blessing!⁸

Thus, God’s promise to Rebekah did get fulfilled: the older (Esau) did end up serving the younger (Jacob).

And, in the process, even the sins of God’s Old-Testament Church members served the purposes of the sovereign God!

Well, that was the first point – Deception.

Here is the second point...

⁵ I agree with Andrew A Cammenga. s.a. Facing faith’s challenges: defending the faith and answering life’s important questions. Chino, CA : First United Reformed Church. p.33

⁶ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Heb 12:6). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Also cf. Ps. 94:12 ***Blessed is the man whom you discipline, O Lord, and whom you teach out of your law.***

And Ps. 119:67 & 75 ***Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word... I know, O Lord, that your rules are righteous, and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.***

And Rev. 3:19 ***Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.***

⁷ See e.g., Job; also the man born blind (John 9); also Martha, Mary and Lazarus (John 11). In these cases, the hardship suffered by God’s loved ones was for His glory and for the advance of the Gospel.

⁸ cf. v. “***Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, And away from the dew of heaven from above. 40 “By your sword you shall live, And your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, That you will break his yoke from your neck.”*** (i.e. “You able be able to, at times, break free from your brother’s rule”).

The Believer's Sin within its Context

My brother & sister, it was not as if just *Rebekah* and her favourite son *Jacob* were familiar with the LORD's promise – that “*The older (Esau) will serve the younger (Jacob)*.”⁹

No, look, Father Isaac too would have known, because it would have been talked about in the family. Indeed, I will not be surprised if the two boys had often heard: “Boys, when you were still in mummy's tummy, the LORD made a promise that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob).”

And, indeed, at the time of our text, also Esau would have known that he had already moved in the direction of serving Jacob! After all, Esau had already sold his birth-right to Jacob (Gn 25:34).¹⁰

But Esau had already also, in another way, shown that he was not worthy of being in the line of the seed of the woman!

You see, we learn from Gen 26:34 that Esau had already married two Hittite women from among the Canaanites! And Esau's Hittite wives were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah (Gen 26:35).¹¹

Thus, Esau did exactly what his grandfather Abraham would never allow for Isaac (Esau's father), i.e., to marry a Canaanite woman!

So, Esau did an ungodly thing! He married into a people that would, in God's time, be dispossessed of the land Canaan!

Esau showed himself not worthy of the right of the firstborn – of the privilege to be in the line of the seed of the woman!

Indeed, Esau had already begun to disqualify himself for the Lord's blessing!

That's the wider context of Jacob's deception!

But not only *Esau* knew about the LORD's promise – no, also father *Isaac* knew that the older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob). And yet, although Isaac *knew* that, he still planned to give God's blessing to his firstborn Esau, instead of Jacob!

So, father Isaac worked against God's will in this.

He said to Esau (v.3-4), “...*go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. ⁴ Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die*” i.e., “I will give you the blessing which a father usually gives to the firstborn!”

See? Father Isaac was heading to go against God's will!

So, I don't want to downplay the sin of Rebekah & Jacob – I don't want to say that what they did was right – but their sin has to be seen within the wider context of the sin-marred reality in which the whole family lived.

You see, blind Isaac was showing that he was also spiritually blind! Indeed, he made himself ready to bless the wrong boy/son!

But the LORD – even using the sinfulness of Rebekah & Jacob – overruled the wrong decision/desire/plan of father Isaac!

Isaac, you're not going to succeed in blessing the wrong boy! You will not derail God's plans!

⁹ cf. Gen 25:23 “*And the Lord said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the older shall serve the younger.’”*

¹⁰ Yes, in godlessness Esau had already sold his inheritance: Heb 12:16 *See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.*

¹¹ Gen 25:34-35 “*When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. ³⁵ They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.*”

My brother & sister, that's the wider context in which Rebekah & Jacob's deception took place!

Do church members today – even you & I (like Isaac) – at times make decisions contrary to the Lord's will?

Well, it is possible!

But you know what?

In the LORD's sovereignty and almightiness – He can overrule such actions just as He overruled Isaac's wrong intention/plan, by using even the deception of Jacob!

What comfort to you & me and our Wainui church family – that, through all the current planning of our calling committee (and the whole calling process), God can use our "crooked stick" to hit a straight blow – yes, to get the right pastor for our church!

We say: God is not the author of sin. God does not condone Rebekah & Jacob's deception, but God is able to nevertheless *use their deception to accomplish His redemptive plan* and to, at the same time, *discipline them for what they did wrong*.

Well, perhaps you say, "But, preacher, you have given us only one Bible incident as an example of how God uses even human deception to accomplish His redemptive plan." "Is there yet another incident?"

Yes, there is – which brings us to point 3...

Grievous Sin in God's Service

My brother & sister,

If we thought that the sins of Rebekah & Jacob were bad, think of the sin & deception the Son of *God* was subjected to!

He knew all the time – He understood the deception, and saw it as deception – yet, He allowed for it to happen against Him.

Isaac & Esau did not know about the deception until it was happening, but Jesus knew up-front and all the time!

Look what Judas Iscariot (one from Christ's closest circle) did to the Son of God!

With gross human sin & deception, Judas came and tried to deceive our Lord!

Yes, thinking that he could fool Jesus, Judas came and did to Jesus what also Jacob did to Father Isaac – kissing Him right in the moment of betrayal/deception!

And so, Ps 41 (v.9) was *fulfilled*...

*Even my close friend, whom I trusted,
he who shared my bread,
has lifted up his heel against me.*¹²

The Son of God "deceived!"

Can God use man's deception for bringing about His redemptive/savings plan?

Indeed! He can! In fact, He did!

You see, knowing, and having decreed everything before time began, the Bible tells us, "...***the Lord (Yahweh) has laid on Him the iniquity of us all***" (Is 53:6).¹³

¹²Also cf. Jn 13:18 *I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the scripture: 'He who shares my bread has lifted up his heel against me.'*

¹³ You see, it was not just *Judas* who deceived the Son of God! No, the *Sanhedrin*, too – yes, the Jewish religious leaders – spread half-truths about Him,¹³ or truths out of context! So, again, the Son of God was submitted to human deception! Then, look at the deception by Pontius Pilate! I mean, Pilate knew that Jesus

Indeed, on Pentecost Day, Peter said, “***This man (Jesus) was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.***”¹⁴

See? It was *God’s* will! God is not the author of sin. But God decreed for it to happen the way it happened, for God knew the only way to save His loved ones was for His Son to be sacrificed in the manner that He was!

Does God approve of the deception of Judas – of the Sanhedrin, of Pontius Pilate!?

No! Just as He did not approve of the deception of Rebekah & Jacob, yet used it!

Lk 22:22 is clear proof of this: ***The Son of Man will go as it has been decreed, but woe to that man who betrays Him.***

So, God holds Judas liable – also the Sanhedrin & Pontius Pilate! They all stand guilty before God!

Indeed, God does not approve of their human deception!

My brother & sister, you & I, too, live at a time in which human sin & deception are rife! There’s persecution of Christ’s followers!

God’s Church (also you & I) is (are) experiencing hostilities from the outside, and sin & flaws from the inside!

Some ask, “Is Christianity losing ground?”

Are we at the stage described by Rev 11 – a stage at which it will appear as if the church is silent – dead, non-existent!?”¹⁵

If so, can God use all the attacks against His Church – and all the deception (and the schisms from within) – to still accomplish His redemptive plan?

Yes, He can – our text is proof of that!

Satan may seem to be winning several *battles*, but remember: he will not win the *war*!

Indeed, just as the sovereign Lord was able to use Rebekah & Jacob’s sin & deception – just as He used Judas’ deception and that of the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate – to accomplish His plan, so will He (and is He busy to) again use all the current hostilities from without and flaws from within to bringing to completion His redemptive/savings plan!

Stand firm! God calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of all His saints (Rev. 13:10d)!

AMEN (2513 words excluding footnotes)

was innocent – he acknowledged it himself! Yet, he crushed his own conscience deceiving himself – granting the Jews their request to have Jesus crucified! Human deception! Judas, the Sanhedrin and Pontius Pilate!

¹⁴ Acts 2:23

¹⁵ cf. Rev 11:7ff describing how the beast will kill God’s servants and rejoice for three and a half days (short God-allowed period). This means that, in the final days, the world of unbelief will rejoice over the Christian Church whose witness will have stopped! They will laugh at the Church and even send one another gifts! But what they will not know – because they didn’t want to know it – is that the church’s witness will have stopped not so much because they (the unbelievers & the antichrist) have stopped it, but because God allowed it to stop because Judgement Day is at hand for everyone who rejected Christ!