

Parashat Toldot / פרשת תולדות

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The Importance of Faith and Birthright!

This Weeks Reading List:

Torah: Genesis 25:19-28:9

Haftarah: Malachi 1:1-2:7

B'rit HaChadashah: Romans 9:1-31

Genesis 25:29-34

25:29 And Ya'akov cooked stew: and Esav came from the sadeh, and he was famished. 25:30 And Esav said to Ya'akov, Let me eat now some of the adom (red stew); for I am famished; therefore was shmo called Edom. 25:31 And Ya'akov said, First sell me today thy bechorah (birthright, right of the firstborn). 25:32 And Esav said, Hinei, I am at the point of death; and what profit shall this bechorah do to me? 25:33 And Ya'akov said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him; and he sold his bechorah unto Ya'akov. 25:34 Then Ya'akov gave Esav lechem and adashim (lentils) stew; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; thus Esav despised his bechorah. (OJB)

בראשית 25:29-32

29, 30 וַיֵּזֶד יַעֲקֹב נָגִיד וַיָּבֹא עֲשׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עֵיפָה׃ וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂו
אֶל־יַעֲקֹב הֲלֵעִיטֵנִי נָא מִן־הָאֲדָמָה הַזֹּאת כִּי עֵיפָה אֲנִכִי
עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמוֹ אֲדָוִם׃ וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב מַכְרָה כְּיוֹם אֶת־בְּכֹרְתֶךָ׃
לִי׃ וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂו הִנֵּה אֲנִכִי הוֹלֵךְ לָמוּת וְלָמָּה־זֶה לִּי בְּכֹרָה׃

In the beginning events of Parashat Toldot we see Esav selling his birthright to Ya'akov by saying: "hinei anochi holech lamut v'lama ze li bchora." This is a very powerful statement because Esav seems to have a lack of appreciation of his destiny and purpose as Yitzchak's son. Esav's ease of selling his birthright appears to me like he is living for the present, for the "here and now" and has no dreams or goals for the future, and certainly not with God in mind. We will see this as we move further on in the study.

Frequently the Bible presents characters whose personalities and roles confront those of others around them. The greatness of the Word of God (Bible) is God showing us the problems we face, including the choices we make in this world which fall between (i) the perfect and (ii) the less than perfect choices; even when it is Hashem's special people that are being exposed. The bible very realistically reveals the lives of people "warts and all"

which may in some situations appear less than pleasant to the reader but I believe this is for a special purpose. The purpose is that Hashem is showing us that he is looking for God-fearing men and women of faith that he can use to further his kingdom. In this week's parsha, I would like to look at some of the "warts and all" by outlining the following observations:

Outline – Interesting observations

1. The life of Ya'akov is filled with deception. (Note: we will see more of this in the following parsha's)
2. Does Ya'akov lie using the Shem (Name) of Elohim? Gen27:20 **וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק**
אֶל־בְּנוֹ מַה־זֶּה מַה־רִּבְתָּ לְמַצֵּא בְנֵי יַיִ אֹמְרֵי כִי הִקְרָה יְהוָה אֵלַי הֵיךְ לָפְנָי:
3. You don't hear Ya'akov's parents reprimanding him for his deception
 - a. Rivka encouraged the deception. Could Rivka have learned this from her father Lavan?
 - b. Yitzchak didn't get mad, he just kind of explained to Esav that you are out of luck, your brother is blessed and you are not.

To begin answering these observations, we need to first look at the pregnancy and birth of Ya'akov and Esav. In Genesis 25:20-22, Rivka can feel a struggle between the two babies that are growing within her. She seeks God for an explanation and God answers her in Genesis 25:23. Hashem told Rivka that two nations are in her womb, and that the older shall serve the younger. God is essentially giving Rivka a prophecy that the two boys within her will become two nations but that only one will be chosen. In the Talmud and Rashi's commentary, we can see the seriousness of the situation where Esav is given the label as being wicked and seeking idolatry, and Ya'akov is labeled as flawless and seeking to study Torah.

Rashi's commentary

ממעיד יפרדו מן המעים הם נפרדים זה לרשעו וזה לתמו.

From your insides shall be separated, from when they are still in the womb they are distinct, this one to his wickedness and this one to his flawlessness.

The Talmud says "זה פרש לבתי מדרשות" this one set out for the houses of Torah study and "זה פרש לעבודה זרה" the other one set out for idolatry. (Bereishis Rabbah 63:10)

So why all the deception in Ya'akov's life; Ya'akov does not appear to be a very confrontational man, he is a man that dwells in tents like his father. Esav on the other hand is a rough and tough man of the world and a hunter. Therefore, to understand why all the deception occurs in Ya'akov's life with respect to Esav we need to outline Esav's mentality.

Esav's mentality

1. Despised his birth right. (*Genesis 25:32*)
2. Did not have a heart for Elohim! – How can we tell? – The first born is to perform the sacrificial service for sin (*Talmud, Sanhedrin 22b*). Esav said: Gen25:32: הֲיֵשׁוּ הֵנָּה אֵן כִּי ה' וְלֹךְ לָמוֹת וְלָמָּה זֶה לִי בְּכֹרְתִי: “Look, I am going to die, so of what use to me is a birthright?” This verse testifies to the wickedness of Esav in that he finds nothing of value in his birthright, which includes the special calling God has placed upon Avraham, and Yitzkhak. Not to mention his responsibility as first born to perform the sacrificial service for sin.
3. Married a Hittite woman (*Genesis 26:34*) and a Canaanite woman (*Genesis 28:8-9*). Esav disregarded God's command not to marry the women in Canaan.

From this outline we can see the most significant problem Esav had was that he did not have a heart for Hashem. For example, Esav did not have to sell his birthright; he simply had had to say “NO, I will not sell my birthright” and then proceed to ask his brother to give him some food because he is family. I don't believe Ya'akov would have left his brother to die of starvation. Therefore, Esav had to have a deeper more serious spiritual problem, one which would cause him not to be chosen by Hashem to carry on His Name.

Being a man that dwelled in tents, Ya'akov probably saw his parents often. Ya'akov was very close to his mother, we can see this by their plot together. Rivka probably knew that Ya'akov had taken the birth right of his brother Esav. So Rivka moved forward boldly and devised a plan to ensure Ya'akov receives the proper blessing. Rivka instructed Ya'akov to get a young goat from the herd and that she would prepare it for Yitzchak in the way that he likes. After the preparation of the meal, Ya'akov takes the meal to Yitzchak in order to receive the blessing. At the surface it appears that Ya'akov uses the name of God to deceive Yitzchak.

בראשית 27:20

וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל-בְּנוֹ מַה-זֶּה מָה־רַתָּ לְמַצָּא אֶבְנֵי נִי אָמַר כִּי הִקְרָה יְהוָה אֵלַי הֵיךְ לָפָנַי:

Bereshit 27:20

27:20 vayomer yitskhak el-beno ma-ze miharta limtso beni vayomer ki hikra adonai eloheikha lefanai:

Genesis 27:20

27:20 And Yitzchak said unto bno, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, beni? And he said, Hashem Eloheicha worked it out for me. (OJB)

Could it be that Ya'akov truly believed it was the hand of Hashem that is leading him and directing him and working out for him all that he has done, (i) deceive his brother Esav taking the birthright and (ii) to take the blessing? Ya'akov's close relationship with his mother, it could be that Rivka revealed to him the prophetic message Hashem had given her prior to his birth thus leading to Ya'akov's belief that God had worked it out for him.

After Yitzchak blesses Ya'akov, Esav comes in with his meal so that he could receive the blessing but finds out Ya'akov again tricked him and stole the blessing.

Genesis 27:34-36

27:34 And when Esav heard the words of aviv, he cried with tzeakah gedolah umarah ad me'od (a great and exceeding bitter cry), and said unto aviv, Make a berakhah on me, even me also, O avi. 27:35 And he said, Achicha came with mirmah (deceit), and hath taken away thy berakhah. 27:36 And he said, Is not he rightly called shmo Ya'akov? for vaya'keveni (now he deceived/outwitted me) these two times he took away my bechorah (birthright); and, hinei, now he hath taken away my berakhah (blessing). And he asked, Hast thou not reserved a berakhah for me? (OJB)

The reason Yitzchak did not reprimand Ya'akov is because of what Esav said. Yitzchak found out that Ya'akov had taken the birthright and therefore had become the first born son. Therefore, the blessing went to Ya'akov as the first born son because Esav had given up his birthright as firstborn. There really was nothing Yitzchak or Esav could do.

I believe the reason for all the deception was because Esav was a dangerous man and I believe God allowed this to protect Ya'akov's life. After Esav had found out what Ya'akov had done, and after Yitzchak had blessed him he plotted within his heart to kill Ya'akov after his Father Yitzchak dies, see *Genesis 27:41*.

What can we take away from this study?

What we can take away from this study is (i) the importance of having a heart for Elohim and (ii) the importance of birthright. First, having a heart for Elohim, as you know, who can enter heaven if they do not love the Lord their God with all their "heart" their entire mind and all their soul. The scriptures are the inspired word of Elohim, a revelation from Himself to man. God is seeking men and women of faith. We can see this in Parashat Toldot because Esav did not have faith, despised his responsibilities, and God's command. Ya'akov loved the Lord God with all his heart, mind, and soul and became the one to carry on Hashem's Name.

Second, in the birthright, we can see a prophetic picture of Yeshua the Messiah in the lives of Ya'akov and Esav. How? Was there deception in Yeshua's life? In Yeshua's life directly there was no deception, however, speaking in parables, Yeshua fulfilled what is written prophetically that the people shall have eyes and not see, and have ears and not hear. There was a sort of blindness and deafness that occurred in order for God's plan to be fulfilled so the Messiah could lay down his life for ours. Also, Yeshua, begotten by the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit) is the firstborn. Therefore, Yeshua has the birthright to offer the sacrifice for our sins.

John 3:16

3:16 "For Hashem so had ahavah (agape) for the Olam Hazei that G-d gave the matanah (gift) [Yeshayah 9:5 (6)] of his Ben Yachid [Bereshis 22:12], so that whosoever has emunah in him may not be ne'evad (lost, perish, be ruined with destruction), but find Chayyei Olam. (OJB)

Yeshua is the first born of God, the responsibility that comes with the first born is the right to make the sin offering, to make atonement for our sins. Furthermore, through His sacrifice, each individual person, whether they are from Israel, or from one of the nations of the earth, have the opportunity to become a descendent of God by faith. The apostle Shaul (Paul) understood this that the true seed of Avraham are those who are men and women of faith.

Romans 9:4-8

9:4 the people of Isra'el! They were made God's children, the Sh'khinah has been with them, the covenants are theirs, likewise the giving of the Torah, the Temple service and the promises; 9:5 the Patriarchs are theirs; and from them, as far as his physical descent is concerned, came the Messiah, who is over all. Praised be ADONAI forever! Amen. 9:6 But the present condition of Isra'el does not mean that the Word of God has failed. For not everyone from Isra'el is truly part of Isra'el; 9:7 indeed, not all the descendants are seed of Avraham; rather, "What is to be called your 'seed' will be in Yitz'chak." 9:8 In other words, it is not the physical children who are children of God, but the children the promise refers to who are considered seed. (CJB)

Romans 9:22-25

9:22 Now what if God, even though he was quite willing to demonstrate his anger and make known his power, patiently put up with people who deserved punishment and were ripe for destruction? 9:23 What if he did this in order to make known the riches of his glory to those who are the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory - 9:24 that is, to us, whom he called not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles? 9:25 As indeed he says in Hoshea, "Those who were not my people I will call my people; her who was not loved I will call loved; (CJB)

What a wonderful and awesome God we serve. This story of two brothers, Ya'akov and Esav, is a classic example of that dilemma and how Hashem faces it in determining who shall carry on the Avrahamic line that will serve His purposes in the development of a society to be a model for the world. Today, God is continuing the process of carrying on the Avrahamic line by bringing in both Jew and Gentile into the family of God by faith. Faith is such an important property of our life and relationship with God. So I leave you with one question. Have you placed your faith in God's Messiah yet to become a man or woman of faith? If not, what are you waiting for?

Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:

Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,
"Yeshua" King Messiah for ever and ever