

Have you ever known someone who seemed to get all the breaks whether they deserved it or not? That person was my father. Have you ever known someone who seemed to get all bad breaks whether they deserved it or not? That person was me. I am Esau, son of Isaac, son of Abraham.

What do you know about the things my father did? Isaac had two sons, Jacob and me. Other than that, what do you know? If you are a good Bible student you probably know two stories, both of which do not show my father in a good light. Before I tell you those stories, let me tell you how my father and mother became husband and wife.

My grandfather was Abraham. In his old age, he learned that his brother, who had stayed back in Chaldea, had many sons and daughters. As Abraham aged, he obsessed over the likelihood that his son, Isaac, would probably marry a local Canaanite girl. Abraham made his senior servant swear that he would make sure that Isaac married someone from Chaldea and from his family. He made the servant swear that he would not take Isaac back to Chaldea, but would personally go and bring back a woman for him.

The servant took ten camels loaded with valuable presents and went back to Abraham's country of origin. As the servant reached the town named after Abraham's brother, he had the camels kneel near the city well. Near evening, it was time for the women to draw water from the well.

The servant prayed to God to be kind to his master by providing a wife for Isaac. He specifically prayed for a woman who would offer to give him water and water his camels, too. Before he had finished praying, a young woman came and did exactly. The woman was beautiful. The servant put a gold ring in her nose and put two gold bracelets on her arms.

Turns out she was a perfect candidate. Her name was Rebekah, and she was the daughter of Abraham's brother. She offered the servant one of the family rooms to spend the night. Of course, the servant praised God for answering his prayers. The servant should have also prayed for patience for what came next.

Rebekah had a greedy brother named Laban. When he saw the expensive gold jewelry, he rushed to find the stranger and bring him and the camels to the house. After the camels were fed and watered, and the stranger's feet were washed, food was offered. The stranger vowed not to eat until he told his story.

“I am the servant of Abraham, your relative” he said. Then repeated the whole story from start to finish, not leaving out any detail. He hoped to get a good reception by making it clear that Abraham was rich. Very rich. Obviously, the servant had not learned to negotiate well!

At the end of his story, the servant asked if Rebekah was the right woman for Isaac. The smarmy Laban answered that the situation must be from the Lord. For the servant to take Rebekah back to Isaac for his wife. The servant was overjoyed. He showered presents on Rebekah, her brother and mother. Then, they all had a big party.

The next morning, the servant was anxious to be on his way with Rebekah. Laban and his mother asked for them to stay ten more days, hoping to cajole more gifts from Abraham’s servant, who still had much treasure left. When the servant protested, they took the problem to Rebekah, who agreed that she should go without delay. So, they blessed Rebekah, and sent them on their way. You can be sure that Laban regretted his inability to get more gifts.

On return to Abraham, the servant met Isaac on the way. He told Isaac everything that happened, and Isaac took Rebekah as his wife. And he loved her.

Through none of his own efforts, my father ended up with a gorgeous wife that he loved. At forty years old, he gets his beautiful bride.

For twenty years, Rebekah could not get pregnant. So, Isaac prayed on behalf of his wife... and... she became pregnant. With twins, no less. Easy, peasy for Isaac.

Not so much for his wife. The twins fought within her. When she inquired of the Lord what was happening, he revealed that two nations would come from her twins. One would be stronger. The older twin would serve the younger.

The first twin to come out was red. Covered with hair, hairy as a garment. They named him Esau. That's me. I was destined to be ruled over by my brother, even though I didn't deserve it.

My twin was holding onto my heel as I was born, so they named him Jacob which means “heel grabber.” Destined to rule over me, even though he didn't deserve it.

I grew up to be a skilled hunter. My father, who loved wild game, loved me. Jacob was content to stay in the tents, and our mother loved him. One day I came in famished from a long hunt. I told Jacob to give me some stew before I died of hunger, but he required me to give him my birthright for the stew. Thinking I would die, and the birthright would be worthless, I traded my birthright for the stew. It was good stew. Decent, anyway.

In hindsight, I treated my birthright as worthless, when it was far from that. The firstborn had the right to take over authority over the entire family, and to receive a double portion of the inheritance. I gave up something hugely valuable for something of temporary worth... I hope you have never done that. I hope you never will.

Now, for the two stories that tell of about the only two things my father did that are in the Bible.

There was another severe famine in our land. The Lord instructed Isaac to stay in Canaan and not go to Egypt as Abraham had done. Isaac went to Abimelek, king of the Philistines in Gerar. Like his father in Egypt, Isaac feared for his life because his wife was so beautiful. Like his father, he pretended that his wife was his sister. Like his father, the king found out and was royally upset. Like his father, the king put Isaac in a position to be fabulously wealthy. He became so wealthy that the Philistines required him to move away, and they made a treaty with him because he had become so powerful.

Even though he behaved dishonestly, Isaac became fabulously wealthy. "He came out smelling like a rose." I believe is the saying.

Now, the second story. It is a sad, sad story. At least to me. My father was very old and nearly blind. He asked me to go kill some wild game, prepare him his favorite food, and receive my blessing from him before he died. We loved each other, and I couldn't wait to do what he asked.

Unfortunately, my mother overheard our conversation. She conspired with my brother to take my blessing, and have it bestowed on him. They killed a goat and seasoned it to taste like wild game. She had Jacob put on some of my clothes so he would smell like me. And, she put goatskins on his arms and neck so he would feel hairy like me.

Jacob did just as she said. When he went to my father, my father was suspicious. Jacob lied that God had given him favor to find the wild game quickly. My father recognized the voice as not being mine, but felt his arms and was deceived. At last, he just flat out asked. "Are you really my son, Esau?" Jacob, the lying rat just said, "I am."

Jacob fed him the fake game and brought him wine. When my father smelled my clothes, he was convinced. He... gave... Jacob... MY... blessing. A blessing that meant he would be successful and I would bow down to him.

Jacob barely left the tent before I returned, game in hand. My father began to tremble violently, he realized Jacob had deceived him. I broke down, wept bitterly. It was the second time Jacob had stolen from me – my birthright and now my blessing. I begged for my father's blessing, but there was not much left for me. Jacob had taken it all. My father could only bless me that at some point I would throw off the yoke of serving my brother.

That day, I swore that I would kill my brother when my father died.

My mother was told about my oath. She sent Jacob far away.

To spite her, I married several Hittite and Canaanite women that she hated. She desperately wanted her sons to marry somebody from her own clan. Well, at least she wanted her *favorite*, Jacob, to do that.

So that's it. That's about all the Bible has to say about Isaac. A fairly inconspicuous life compared to his father, Abraham, or his two sons. He died at one hundred and eighty years and was buried with his family. And that's about all it says about me. I loved my father. And he loved me. But I was the one who could never catch a break.