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ДИСЕРТАЦІЯ
**ВЗАЄМОЗВ'ЯЗОК МІЖ ПАРАДИГМОЮ ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ Й
ЕПІСТЕМОЛОГІЄЮ БІБЛІЙНИХ НАРАТИВІВ: ЯКІВ – ДОСКОНАЛА
ЛЮДИНА**

041 – богослов'я

Подається на здобуття наукового ступеня кандидата філософських наук.
Дисертація містить результати власних досліджень. Використання ідей,
результатів і текстів інших авторів мають посилання на відповідне джерело.

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професор

Київ – 2021

DEDICATION

*This work is entirely dedicated to the glory of the Lord God of
Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.*

“MAY THE LORD ANSWER YOU WHEN YOU ARE IN DISTRESS;
MAY THE NAME OF THE GOD OF JACOB PROTECT YOU”
(PSALM 20:1 NIV).

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This research could not have been done without the well-minded contribution of my beloved family. For that reason, I want to thank my dear

Mother - Hanna G. Tsymbalyuk, and

Dad - Michael E. Tsymbalyuk, for their kindness and support.

I am especially grateful to my adorable wife Victoria G. and children Lily, Sergey, Olga, Billy, Juliya, Mitchell, and youngest blessed son Oleg Victor for their help, comfort, and love.

ANNOTATION

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Tsymbalyuk O. M. The connection between the paradigm of interpretation and the epistemology of the biblical narratives: Jacob – a perfect man. – Manuscript.

Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Philosophical Sciences in the specialty 09.00.14 – Theology. – National Pedagogical Dragomanov University of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine – Kyiv, 2021.

The dissertation is devoted to the study of positive, traditional, and negative, Reformed, paradigms of interpretation of the image of the Patriarch Jacob and their influence on the formation of objective knowledge of the biblical narrative. The author argues that in Christian theology until the middle of the XVI century formed the image of Jacob as a perfect man. This perception was based on a biblical story that distinctively presented Jacob as a perfect man.

It is established that the positive image of Jacob was formed by contrasting the image of Esau and the allusions contained in the biblical stories, as well as the facts of the life of the brothers: 1) like Adam and Eve, Esau did not pass the food test; 2) Cain and Abel are the prototypes of the confrontation between Esau and Jacob – the elder unrighteous and the younger righteous brothers; 3) the negative image of Esau is consonant with the figure of the ungodly hunter Nimrod; 4) Jacob, like his father Isaac, was not the firstborn, but received the blessing of the birthright as opposed to his brothers Ishmael and Esau; 5) Rebekah received God's foreknowledge of Esau and Jacob. The Holy Bible uses the adjective “perfect” to describe Patriarch Jacob and mentions his name more often than any other name of all biblical hero.

It is established that a positive view of Jacob was developed on the basis of

Jewish teaching, hermeneutic and apologetic methods of interpretation of the Bible by the Church Fathers, and supported by thinkers of the Middle Ages and the Reformation. Aurelius, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and others saw Patriarch Jacob as a pious man. This affected early translations of the Bible.

It is determined that the perception of the figure of Jacob is enhanced by the image of his mother Rebekah, who in the traditional paradigm of interpretation appears as a spiritual example. In the biblical narrative, Rebekah is the first woman in the Bible to whom God spoke directly. Therefore, Jewish literature portrays her as an important figure in Jewish history who played an important role in strengthening Abraham's family. The writings of the Church Fathers, medieval Christian thinkers, and many reformers define Rebekah's life as an exemplary act of obedience to God.

The works of Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages and the Reformation define the life of Rebekah as an exemplary act of obedience to God.

It was found that in the days of the Reformation there was also developed an alternative vision of the figure of James, which interpreted his life and character negatively – as a deceiver. The reason for the emergence of an alternative interpretation of the image of Jacob was the controversy of his actions in the struggle for birthright. The emergence and development of the Reformed interpretation of Jacob's life and character were facilitated by a number of factors: an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament, substitution theology, anti-Semitism, and Calvin's doctrine of predestination. Jacob's negative assessment was developed by his successors – Matthew Henry, Charles Mackintosh, Friedrich Dillman, and, especially, Samuel R. Driver. The latter, in particular, gave a visible scientific basis for the meaning of Jacob's name as a “deceiver” and influenced the formation of his negative image in latest Bible translations.

The author discovered that the negative hermeneutics of the image of Jacob had the greatest effect on the superficial perception of the biblical narrative, modern translations of the Bible, in which the negative vision of the patriarch is formed by interpreting the name of Jacob as a “deceiver” and led to increased anti-Semitism.

A comparative analysis of the traditional and reformed paradigms of interpretation of the image of Jacob revealed a number of shortcomings of the latter. The author of the dissertation argued that the negative perception of Patriarch Jacob was based on superficial linguistic and textual analysis, double hermeneutic standards, interpretation of the biblical text outside the historical context, and contrary to the orthodox teachings of the church.

On the example of the interpretation of the image of Patriarch Jacob, the dissertation author proved that to achieve reliable epistemology of the biblical story it is necessary to thoroughly use all exegetical, hermeneutic, and apologetic methods of Bible study in deep conjunction with historical and cultural circumstances in which the text was written.

Keywords: hermeneutics, patristic biblical interpretation, Patriarch Jacob, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Reformation, Reformed theology, John Calvin, Samuel R. Driver, Jacob - the perfect man.

АНОТАЦІЯ

.....

ЦИМБАЛЮК О. М. Взаємозв'язок між парадигмою інтерпретації й епістемологією біблійних наративів: Яків – досконала людина. – Рукопис (англійською мовою).

Дисертація на здобуття наукового ступеня кандидата філософських наук за спеціальністю 09.00.14 – богослов'я. Національний педагогічний університет імені М. П. Драгоманова Міністерства освіти і науки України, Київ, 2021.

Дана дисертація присвячена дослідженню позитивної, традиційної, і негативної, реформатської, парадигм тлумачення образу патріарха Якова та їхнього впливу на формування об'єктивного знання біблійного наративу. Автор доводить, що у християнському богослов'ї до XVI ст. сформувався образ Якова як досконалої людини. Це сприйняття базувалось на біблійній історії, яка яскраво представляла Якова як досконалу людину.

Встановлено, що позитивний образ Якова сформувався через протиставлення образу Ісава та натяків, що містяться в біблійних сюжетах, а також фактів із життя братів: 1) як Адам та Єва, Ісав не витримав випробування їжею; 2) Каїн та Авель є прототипами протистояння Ісава та Якова - старших неправедних та молодших праведних братів; 3) негативний образ Ісава співзвучний фігурі безбожного мисливця Німрода; 4) Яків, як і його батько Ісаак, не був первістком, але отримав благословення первородства на відміну від своїх братів Ізмаїла та Ісава; 5) Ревека отримала заздалегідь божественне одкровення про Ісава та Якова. Свята Біблія використовує прикметник

“досконалий” для опису патріарха Якова і згадує його ім’я частіше, ніж будь-яке інше ім’я всіх біблійних героїв.

Встановлено, що позитивний погляд стосовно Якова був розроблений на основі вчення ранньої єврейської громади, герменевтичних та апологетичних методів тлумачення Біблії отцями Церкви та підтриманий мислителями Середньовіччя та Реформації. Позитивний погляд на життя Якова автор виявив у працях Йосипа Флавія, Філона Александрійського, Тертуліана, Євсевія Кесарійського, Амвросія Медіоланського, Августина, Іоанна Златоуста, Томи Аквінського, Джона Вікліфа, Ульріха Цвінглі, Мартіна Лютера, Джона Веслі, Вільяма Тіндейла, Джона Роджерса, Рабейну Шломо Іцхакі (Раши), Крістіни Гарсайд Аллен, Вільяма Ніколлса, Майкл Брюнінга, Наума Серни, Вільяма Л. Лейна, Р. Кента Х’юза, Клауса Вестерманна, Джеймса Л. Кугеля, Герхарда фон Рада, Джона Х. Волтона, та Віктора П. Гамільтона. Це позначилося на ранніх перекладах Біблії.

Визначено, що сприйняття фігури Якова посилюється образом його матері Ребеки, яка в традиційній парадигмі тлумачення постає духовним прикладом. У біблійному переказі Ребека є першою жінкою в Біблії, до якої Бог звернувся безпосередньо. Тому єврейська література змальовує її як важливу фігуру єврейської історії, яка зіграла важливу роль у зміцненні сім’ї Авраама. Писання Отців Церкви, середньовічних християнських мислителів та багатьох реформаторів визначають життя Ребеки як зразковий акт послуху Богові. Твори християнських мислителів середньовіччя та Реформації визначають життя Ребеки як зразковий акт послуху Богові.

Було виявлено, що за часів Реформації також було розроблено альтернативне бачення фігури Якова, яке трактувало його життя і характер негативно - як обманщика. Причиною появи альтернативної інтерпретації образу Якова стала суперечливість його вчинків у боротьбі за первородство.

Виникненню та розвитку реформатської інтерпретації життя та характеру Якова сприяли ряд факторів: алегоричне тлумачення Старого Завіту, теологія заміщення, антисемітизм та вчення Кальвіна про приречення. Негативну оцінку Якова розробили його наступники - Метью Генрі, Чарльз Макінтош, Фрідріх Діллман і, особливо, Семюель Роллес Драйвер. Останній, зокрема, дав видиму наукову основу для значення імені Якова як “обманщика” і вплинув на формування його негативного іміджу в останніх перекладах Біблії.

Автор виявив, що негативна герменевтика образу Якова найбільше вплинула на поверхневе сприйняття біблійного переказу, сучасних перекладів Біблії, в якому негативне бачення патріарха формується шляхом інтерпретації імені Якова як “обманщик” і призвело до посилення антисемітизму.

Порівняльний аналіз традиційної та реформованої парадигм інтерпретації образу Якова виявив низку недоліків останнього. Автор дисертації стверджував, що негативне сприйняття патріарха Якова ґрунтувалося на поверхневому лінгвістичному та текстовому аналізі, подвійних герменевтичних стандартах, інтерпретації біблійного тексту поза історичним контекстом і всупереч ортодоксальному вченню Церкви.

На прикладі інтерпретації образу Патріарха Якова автор дисертації довів, що для досягнення надійної епістемології біблійної історії необхідно ґрунтовно використовувати всі екзегетичні, герменевтичні та апологетичні методи вивчення Біблії у глибокому поєднанні з історико-культурними обставинами, за яких був написаний текст.

Ключові слова: герменевтика, патристична біблійна інтерпретація, патріарх Яків, Ісак, Ревека, Ісав, Реформація, реформатське богослов'я, Жан Кальвін, Самуель Драйвер.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS FOR THE THEME OF THE THESIS

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 2. Tsybalyuk Oleg M. & Melnik, V. V. *Rediscovering the ancient hermeneutic of Rebekah's character*. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 76(1), a5526. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v76i1.5526>
 3. Tsybalyuk Oleg M. *THE MINDSET OF THE PATRIARCH JACOB AND HIS ANTIPODE BROTHER ESAU*. Visnik of the Lviv University. Series Philos.-Political Studies. Issue 28, 2020, 83-89. Accessed July 27, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.30970/2307-1664.2020.28.11>
 4. Tsybalyuk Oleg M. *SAMUEL ROLLES DRIVER AND HIS IMPACT ON THE REFORMED VIEW OF THE PATRIARCH JACOB AND THE MEANING OF HIS NAME*. *New College Notes*, the Oxford journal Notes & Queries. (Issue 13) 2020. <https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/new-college-notes>
 5. Tsybalyuk Oleg M. *A MODERN LOOK AT THE ANCIENT HERMENEUTICS OF THE BIBLICAL ESAU AND JACOB*. *PHILOSOPHICAL HORIZONS: Scientific and theoretical journal*. Poltava (Issue 43) 2020. <http://philosobr.pnpu.edu.ua/>
 6. Tsybalyuk Oleg M. *THE CHURCH SHOULD TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN SCHOLARLY, SOCIAL AND SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE*. *The European Journal of Theology*. (Issue 29.2) 2020.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASV	–	American Standard Version
BB	–	The Bishops' Bible
ERV	–	English Revised Version
ESV	–	English Standard Version
GV	–	Geneva Bible [<i>Breeches Bible</i>]
HCSB	–	Holman Christian Standard Bible
JSB	–	The Holy Bible: Containing The Old And New Testaments
JSB	–	The Jewish Study Bible
JUB	–	Jubilee Bible 2000
KJV	–	King James Version
LEB	–	Lexham English Bible
MV	–	Thomas Matthew Bible
NASB	–	New American Standard Bible
NIV	–	New International Version
NKJV	–	New King James Version
NLT	–	New Living Translation
RSVCE	–	Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition
TGB	–	The Great Bible (The Cromwell Bible)
TGB	–	The Geneva Bible
TO	–	The Jewish Aramaic translation of the Torah: Targum Onkelos
TB	–	The Five Books of Moses
UKR	–	Ukrainian Bible
Vulgate	–	Latin translation of the Holy Bible
WYC	–	Wycliffe Bible (Containing the Old and New Testaments)

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INTRODUCTION

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This analytical investigation aims to depict how the paradigm shift in interpreting biblical narrative will change the trajectory of personal convictions and the meaning of the biblical story. The vibrant life of the Patriarch Jacob serves as the basis for demonstrating this epistemological truth.

According to the Encyclopædia Britannica, even in our postmodern secular era, the Holy Bible is the most popular book in the World and is still fundamental to Christians' faith and life, their interfaith with others, and social relations in general. It is the main source of Christian doctrine and the basis for the formation of a whole cultural and ideological layer. Given this defining role of Scripture, approaches to the interpretation of biblical texts have been and remain extremely relevant. Scholars believe that differences in the interpretation of the Bible form the basis of different worldviews - a person's perception of himself, others, the Lord God, his purpose, moral values, and also lead to the emergence of a variety of Christian denominations. At the same time, excellent approaches to interpretation strongly stimulate hermeneutical research. This makes hermeneutics an increasingly relevant science that expands its boundaries, and discussions about the feasibility and effectiveness of its methods continue to this day.

Theologians claim that each paradigm of biblical interpretation is based on a certain historical and social experience, due to the established traditions of understanding and intellectual achievements of the era. Various approaches have been applied to the interpretation of the image of the Patriarch Jacob, one of the key figures in the Holy Bible, including those that offered the opposite view of his life and character. One of them - the traditional approach - presents Jacob as a perfect

man whose life serves as an example of godliness for believers of all times. The second - the Reformed approach - proposes to perceive him as a sinner who has achieved something only by the grace of the Lord God. However, as is well known, historical-critical exegesis strongly insists on the thesis of a single meaning, according to which the text of the Bible cannot have several different (opposing) meanings at the same time.

Historical data and well-preserved ancient writings clearly show that ancient philosophers, historians, Jewish and Muslim communities, the Church Fathers, and many other Christian thinkers considered the biblical Jacob to be a model of piety. They came to these conclusions using the historical-critical hermeneutic method. At the same time, during the Reformation, an interpretation of the figure of Jacob appeared, who, according to John Calvin, “was not worthy to imitate his life. And the fact that he is considered the father of the church was given to him not as a reward, but solely by God's grace.” For the last few hundred years, the Reformed view has dominated the Western Christian tradition and strongly influenced Bible translations, portraying Jacob as a “deceiver.”

On the other hand, tremendous contemporary archaeological and linguistic discoveries have challenged the Reformed approach of biblical interpretation and, as a result, strengthened the theologians' interest in revising such an interpretation of the image of the Patriarch Jacob encouraged scholars to study different methodology for interpreting relevant biblical texts. It seems important to clarify the ancient apostolic hermeneutics and to reveal the substantial connection between the paradigm of interpretation and the true epistemology of biblical narratives, as well as to establish exemplary methodological principles for reading and interpreting any biblical text.

For that reason, **the object of this research** study is fully focused on the paradigms of interpretation of the biblical image of the Patriarch Jacob.

Accordingly, **the subject of this study** is directed on methodological approaches, factors, and features of interpretation of the image of the Patriarch Jacob and their influence on the epistemology of the biblical narrative.

The purpose of the research is to make a comparative analysis of traditional and Reformed paradigms of interpretation of the image of the Patriarch Jacob and their influence on the epistemology of the biblical narrative.

According to the set goal the following tasks are defined:

- to study the biblical narrative about the Patriarch Jacob;
- to determine the grounds and method of forming a positive image of Jacob in traditional hermeneutics;
- to find out the relationship between the interpretation of the images of Jacob and Rebekah;
- to reveal the essence and factors of negative hermeneutics of the image of Jacob in Reformed theology;
- to trace the consequences of the negative interpretation of the figure of Jacob in the Christian tradition;
- to identify the problems of the reformist paradigm of interpretation and to find out how justified both methodological approaches are;
- to establish an exemplary methodological principle of reading and interpretation of the biblical text.

It should be noted that this dissertation was performed within the research work of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of the Faculty of Philosophical Education and Science of the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University in accordance with the scientific topic “Development of academic theology in educational transformations in Ukraine” (U 0117U004903). In addition, the work was performed within the integrated educational and research program of the Center for the Study of Religion National Pedagogical Dragomanov University

“Modern Protestant Theology”, developed and implemented jointly with the Euro-Asian Theological Association in accordance with the additional agreement #1 to the agreement on cooperation between the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University and the public organization “Euro-Asian Theological Association” dated December 19, 2015.

Theoretical and methodological principles of the study. The research is interdisciplinary and carried out on the border of theology, philosophy, linguistics, history, and religion. The author adhered to general scientific principles - objectivity, non-confessionalism, historicity, and ideological pluralism, implemented in the study through the use of general scientific (analysis and synthesis, systematization, problem, comparative, etc.) and theological methods. The research uses the method of textual analysis of theological works, hermeneutic methods in elucidating interpretive approaches to the image of Jacob.

The scientific novelty of this work is that on the basis of the biblical text, theological and non-biblical works and linguistic discoveries for the first time revealed the influence of traditional and Reformed paradigms of interpretation of the life and character of the Patriarch Jacob on the epistemology of the ancient biblical narrative.

For the first time:

- it was found that until the middle of the XVI century philosophers, historians, theologians and authors of non-biblical literature portrayed the biblical Jacob and his mother Rebekah in a very positive way, seeing in them a model of spirituality;

- it is established that the formation of a positive image of Jacob in the Bible is due to his definitions of “perfect”, “he whom God loved”, the most frequent mention in the Bible of his name (Jacob / Israel), the presence of Jacob's name in the definition of God;

- The name of Jacob has a theophoric nature, the one that contains or includes the name of God.

- it was found that the image of Rebekah was closely connected with the interpretation of the figure of Jacob and strengthened his positive perception in the traditional, or negative - in the latest Reformed paradigm of interpretation.

- an alternative view of Patriarch Jacob in the works of famous Reformed theologians of the XVI-XXI centuries is analyzed and found that for the first time the integrity of the character of Jacob was categorically questioned by the reformer John Calvin, and the most devastating blow to Jacob's reputation was dealt by the Anglican Church scholar and clergyman Samuel Driver, who gave a visible scientific basis for Jacob's name negative image in Bible translations;

- methodological, theological and ideological factors of appearance and development of negative hermeneutics of the image of the Patriarch Jacob are revealed.

- a comparison of traditional and modern Reformed hermeneutic approaches to the interpretation of the life and character of Jacob and Rebekah and identified the shortcomings of the latter; it has been proved that the Reformed hermeneutic approach to the interpretation of Jacob's character is an anti-Semitic form of biblical eisegesis.

The following were supplementary clarified:

- understanding the linguistic analysis of the biblical text as an integral part of hermeneutics, in particular the conclusions about the meaning of the name Jacob, which in contrast to the Reformed interpretation “deceiver” comes from the Hebrew word Ya'aqov-el and literally means “may God protect [you]”;

- conclusions about the biblical story, which contains facts and allusions that form a positive perception of the image of Jacob and a negative - his antipode Esau.

Gained further development:

- the position that the traditional paradigm of interpretation of the image of Jacob is based on the generally accepted historical-critical method of interpretation, which is supported by fundamental exegetical and hermeneutic principles;

- argumentation that the paradigm shift in the interpretation of the biblical narrative by Calvinists led to its unreliable understanding.

The outcome of this research will serve as a catalyst for Christian scholars and clergy in their quest to embrace the patristic exegetical and hermeneutic principles of biblical interpretation, to distinguish the latest attractive but illusory interpretive ideas from orthodox theological interpretations, and to form the correct methodological interpretation of any biblical text. The conclusions and main theses of the dissertation can be used for further philosophical and historical-theological research, in the teaching of theology, homiletics, church history, philosophy, and hermeneutics.

1. A DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

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1.1. Methodological Bases of This Research

Contemporary philologists and theologians recognize that the biblical narrative convincingly discloses that the Creator of the universe habitually refers to himself throughout the Holy Bible as “the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” (Genesis 50:24; Acts 7:32 NIV).¹ Speaking explicitly of the Patriarch Jacob and his descendants, the Lord God declares: “I have loved Jacob” (Malachi 1:2). The Bible also represents Jacob as a man of faith with whom God made an everlasting covenant (Genesis 28; Psalm 105:7–11; Hebrews 11:21). These vivid biblical passages may well be the main reason why ancient historians, philosophers, and theologians of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities, as well as the authors of non-biblical secular and religious literature, highly admired and praised the Patriarch Jacob as an iconic example of true godliness and faithfulness.² There is also impressive evidence that the early Christians began their daily prayer with the following words: “O God of our holy and blameless fathers, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, Thy faithful servants; Thou, O God, who art powerful, faithful, and true, and without deceit in Thy promises.”³ Ancient exegetes, sages and commentators likewise believe that

¹ Barker, Kenneth L, and Donald W Burdick. *The NIV Study Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A.: Zondervan Bible, 1985. See also, Laansma, Jon. *The Letter to the Hebrews: a Commentary for Preaching, Teaching, and Bible Study*. Eugene, Or: Cascade Books, an imprint of Wipf and Stock publishers, 2017.

² Jeffrey, David Lyle, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). 656.

³ Roberts, Alexander, and James Donaldson, eds. *Ante-Nicene Christian Library: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers Down to A.D. 325*. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867, 188.

Jacob's life was permanently guided by the Lord God Almighty and that "the name Jacob derives from the Hebrew word יַעֲקֹב [Ya'aqov - el] 'y-`-k-b-`-l,'" which literally means, "May God protect [you]."⁴

On the other hand, since the Protestant Reformation (1517–1648 CE), the innovative idea arose that Jacob as a human being has absolutely no traits worthy of praise. Thus, the followers of this reformed view argue that Jacob's position, as "the father of the church was not given as a reward, but only as a pure result of God's grace."⁵ Soon after this assertion, the other pioneering exegetical opinion was adopted that the name of Jacob means "deceiver."⁶ For a long time, the supporters of this innovative understanding depicted the Patriarch Jacob as a quiet "mama's boy" who mainly stayed at home, and a sneaky opportunist-manipulator who tricked the people around him.⁷ Some current followers of this reformed view even support the idea of Jacob as "*The Divine Deceiver*."⁸ John E. Anderson correspondingly points out that "Jacob remains the problematic trickster with whom scholarship has struggled so long."⁹

⁴ Jewish Publication Society. The Jewish Study Bible. 49.

⁵ Calvin, Jean. *Genesis*. Crossway Classic Commentaries. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 224.

⁶ Berry, Lloyd E, and William Whittingham. *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

⁷ Jeffrey, David Lyle, and Gregory Maillet. *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice*. 120.

⁸ Anderson, John Edward. *Jacob and the Divine Trickster: A Theology of Deception and Yhwh's Fidelity to the Ancestral Promise in the Jacob Cycle*. Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, 5. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011, 51.

⁹ Anderson, John Edward. 2011, 51.

It is clear that these two opposing and incompatible views of the biblical Jacob do not complement each other but mutually exclude each other. For this reason, when contemporary people read the same biblical description of Jacob's life using one of these hermeneutical paradigms of interpretation, they obviously come to two completely different conclusions, because **the paradigm shift in interpreting any biblical narrative will change the trajectory of man's conviction** and the correct meaning of the biblical story. For that reason, an open-minded person will naturally ask the question: how can we find out which of these two methodological approaches is true?

The author provides evidence that the Patriarch Jacob left a remarkable legacy, and his character was never criticized by any philosopher, theologian, or biblical commentator until the mid–16th century.¹⁰ Therefore, this study will track the decline and increase of Jacob's reputation and the correct meaning of his name. An equally important aim is to understand why the name and character of the Patriarch Jacob began to be interpreted differently during the Protestant Reformation, and thus to determine the reasons for such a conceptual paradigm shift in explaining this significant biblical character. Such an approach of study will help establish the correct methodological principle for reading and interpreting any ancient text, including the infallible Bible. Finally, the study aims to raise the awareness of the entire Christian family (clergy and laity) about this issue and encourage the Christian scientific community to address these critical matters impartially.¹¹

¹⁰ Jeffrey, David Lyle, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). Authors. 656–657.

¹¹ <https://www.studylight.org/language-studies /difficult-sayings.html?article=483>;

https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi_on_Genesis.25.26.2-3?lang=bi

1.1. Healthy Unity of Reason and Faith: The Need for Healthy Criticism

In consideration of this weighty analytical investigation, it is essential to note that the Holy Scriptures, like any other ancient manuscript, can be misunderstood by ordinary people and even professional theologians; nevertheless, in essence, the biblical text is an infallible and absolutely not anti-scientific book, as modern atheists habitually say.¹² More than that, it is frankly remarkable that many years before the Common Era, and the time where current science was established the Bible stated that man's "zeal [*assurance, belief, confidence, enthusiasm, or conviction*] is not good without [*truthful*] knowledge, and the one who acts hastily sins [*make mistakes*]" (Proverbs 19:2 HCSB).¹³ In other words, the Bible insistently teaches that people must permanently use their reason and recognize that in order to avoid a devastating mistake and gain access to development and progress that is desirable for all of humanity, the conviction of any person or the whole of society must be firmly grounded in accurate knowledge of the subject.

On the other hand, known history contains many colorful examples of philosophical, and scholarly concepts that at one time were completely accepted by society and the intellectual community but have since been sincerely challenged based on the newest reliable discoveries, and later fully disproved as a categorically incorrect conviction. As a result of those often very complicated and extended processes, the truth may be established and the pathway to desirable progress cleared. For example, at the present time, we know for sure that the Earth is not the

¹² Pinnock, Clark H. *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility*. The Tyndale Lecture in Biblical Theology, 1966. Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub, 1967, 30–31.

¹³ *The Holman Student Bible: [Holman Christian Standard Bible]*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible, 2007.

center of the macrocosm; nevertheless, this incorrect conviction was once overwhelmingly promoted by the well-respected astronomers, mathematicians, and philosophers.

In light of this historical fact, it is important to reiterate that since 150 CE, the Ptolemaic geocentric astronomical system had been completely accepted as a certain view of reality and intensely supported by intellectuals, astronomers, mathematicians, and later even the Church clergy.¹⁴ According to this astronomical system, the Earth is stationary and at the center of the universe and all heavenly bodies, including the Sun, the Moon, the planets, and stars, travel in a given prescribed orbit around the Earth.¹⁵

In contrast, the Polish dispassionate astronomer and bright mathematician Nicolaus Copernicus (1475–1543) had courage to allow himself to doubt the correctness of this dominant conviction. Therefore, through a long period of time, he carefully studied movements of heavenly bodies and thoughtfully re-evaluated the geocentric astronomical system of Ptolemy. As a deeply devoted Christian scholar, Nicolaus Copernicus unpretentiously stated that his highly influential truth-finding study was done “with the help of [*the Lord*] God [*Almighty*], without whom we can do nothing.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Woodbridge, John D., and Frank A. James III. *Church History, Volume Two: From Pre-Reformation to the Present Day: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*. Zondervan, 2013.

¹⁵ Galilei, Galileo, and Stillman Drake. *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems, Ptolemaic and Copernican*. Modern Library Science Series. New York: Modern Library, 2001, 542–543.

¹⁶ Kuehn, Kerry. *A Student's Guide through the Great Physics Texts*. Undergraduate Lecture Notes in Physics. Cham: Springer, 2015, 136.

In the present day, Nicolaus Copernicus is mainly known as a great man who formulated the new heliocentric model of the universe, which demonstrated that the Sun rather than the Earth lies in the center of the universe (the Solar System). During the last year of his colorful life, Copernicus depicted this innovative model in his a small number of books published under the title *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*.¹⁷ In a relatively short period of time, this scholarly publication had a tremendous impact on the scientific and religious European communities, as well as the ordinary people. For that reason, the influential Christian scientists of that historical time, Paolo Antonio Foscarini (1565–1616) and Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) passionately supported and popularized Copernicus’ heliocentric astronomical model of the universe, despite the fact that both of these scholars were considered heretics for their opinions and were bitterly persecuted by the authoritative Roman Inquisition.

The reliable historical data reveals, that Copernicus’ pioneering worldview, which was after all proven correct, sharply opposed the usual perception of people and scientists of the early modern period about the structure of the known universe. Moreover, Copernicus’ discovery was considered by the Catholic theologians and priesthood to be contrary to the literal sense of the biblical narratives. For that reason, the leadership of the Catholic Church viewed this affirmation as “an extremely dangerous thing [*opinion*], not only by irritating all the philosophers and scholastic theologians, but also by injuring our holy faith and rendering the Holy Scriptures false.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Vollmann, William T. *Uncentering the Earth: Copernicus and the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*. 1st ed. Great Discoveries. New York: Norton, 2006.

¹⁸ Carroll, William E. "Galileo and the Inquisition." *Journal of Religion & Society* 1 (1999), 186.

During that historical time, a respected cardinal and Jesuit theologian San Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621) was a legendary consultor of the Vatican Holy Office and the man about whom the Pope Clement VIII (1536–1605) said: “The Church of God has not his equal in learning.”¹⁹ Most likely, because of his brilliant mind and high respect among the scientific community and the aristocracy, the cardinal Robert Bellarmine was appointed to take a prominent part in the very first examination of Copernicus' ground-breaking theory of heliocentricity.²⁰ In his new capacity, Robert Bellarmine discussed this matter with two famous supporters of this idea, Christian scientists Paolo Antonio Foscarini and Galileo Galilei. Thus, in one of his letters to Paolo Foscarini, the cardinal wrote:

“I say that if there were a true demonstration that the sun was in the center of the universe and the earth in the third sphere, and that the sun did not travel around the earth but the earth circled the sun, then it would be necessary to proceed with great caution in explaining the passages of [*the Holy*] Scripture which seemed contrary, and we would rather have to say that we did not understand them than to say that something was false which has been demonstrated. But I do not believe that there is any such demonstration; none has been shown to me.”²¹

At first glance, San Robert Bellarmine completely rejected Copernicus' heliocentric model of the universe as that which lacked methodical confirmation. However, in reality, the cardinal actually took a much more balanced position on the

¹⁹ Craughwell, Thomas J. *Saints Preserved: An Encyclopedia of Relics*. 1st Ed. New York: Image Books, 2011, 256–257.

²⁰ Bellarmine, S. J., ST. Robert. *On the Marks of the Church*. Place of Publication Not Identified: LULU COM, 2015.

²¹ Spielvogel, Jackson J. *Western Civilization*. 8th ed. Vol. Volume 2 /. Cengage Advantage Books. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2011, 557.

subject and as mentioned above openly stated that if the conclusive evidence is provided “it would be necessary to proceed with great caution in explaining the passages of [*the Holy*] Scripture which seemed contrary, and we would rather have to say that we did not understand them than to say that something was false which has been demonstrated.” It is absolutely clear that the cardinal Bellarmine, as a well-respected theologian, strongly believed in the infallibility of the biblical text, but at the same time, he absolutely allowed the idea that the Holy Scripture could potentially be misinterpreted even by philosophers, clerics, and professional theologians.

Since Nicolaus Copernicus’ publication it took some time, nonetheless after all, the heliocentric astronomical model of the universe was methodically proven and accepted by the scholarly community as the correct one. Likewise, the theologians were forced to acknowledge that they had previously misunderstood some biblical passages because they interpreted these passages through the prism of Ptolemy’s geocentric astronomical misconceptions. In light of this conversation, it is essential to admit the fact that the Church did not invent nor introduce into the public mind this incorrect opinion; yet, the Christian community only mistakenly accepted the view that was strongly promoted by astronomers, philosophers, mathematicians, and scholars of that historical time.

In the present day, we are certain that the Sun rather than the Earth lies in the center of the Solar System. However, we should never forget that it is the case because of the sharp mind and deep desire of Nicolaus Copernicus to find the truth, the self-sacrifice of Paolo Antonio Foscarini and Galileo Galilei in propagating the truth, and openness of people like the cardinal Robert Bellarmine in accepting incontestable facts (of course if such facts are indeed provided). Contemporary historians have strong confidence that all these influential people had been devout Christians who deeply believe that the book of Nature and the book of the Holy

Scripture cannot contradict one another. For that reason, it is absolutely correct to point out that it was up to the Christian astronomers, mathematicians, scientists, and professional theologians who discovered the truth, to submissively acknowledge the prior [*own*] mistake and spread the truth in the world.²²

What should we learn from this amazing story? First, an objective present-day individual, scholar, and theologian must always remember the biblical statement that man's "zeal [*belief, assurance, confidence, enthusiasm, or conviction*] is not good without [*truthful*] knowledge, and the one who acts hastily sins [*make mistakes*]" (Proverbs 19:2); therefore he or she should have the courage thoughtfully to re-evaluate the correctness of any conviction, belief, or opinion based on the most reliable discoveries. Second, an impartial modern person, scientist or philosopher has to learn a lesson from the lives of respected intellects of the past in order to be steadily searching for the truth, openly accepting the outcome of thorough new studies (even if it may sharply contradict the well-established general opinion), and selflessly spreading the truth among the general population.

Similarly to comparing geocentric and heliocentric astronomical models of the universe, this study presents an analytical cross-assessment of traditional and reformed hermeneutic approaches to Jacob's character and his significant legacy. The author also argues that sound criticism, rethinking, and scrupulous comparison of both hermeneutical approaches through massive ancient theological and philosophical works will benefit the contemporary field of theology, reveal the harmony of reason and biblical faith, and potentially begin the process of restoring Jacob's legacy from undeserved condemnation and criticism.

²² Morris, Henry M. *Men of Science, Men of God: Great Scientists of the Past Who Believed the Bible*. Rev. ed. El Cajon, Calif.: Master Books, 1988, 21–30.

1.1.2. The Structure and Methodological Approach of This Study

The authenticity of the modern biblical text is established on numerous archaeological discoveries, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and many other ancient biblical manuscripts.²³ For this reason, the Bible is one of the most reliable ancient documents.²⁴ On the other hand, as already shown, there are several historical facts of the biblical narrative that have been misinterpreted in the past. As a result, the subject of this study and its research processes resemble a lawsuit aimed at establishing the truth based on extensive well-known empirical evidence.

This understanding is fully supported by biblical teaching. For example, Moses, the author of the Pentateuch, pointed out: “Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to [the Lord] God” (Deuteronomy 1:16–17).²⁵ That is also precisely what Nicodemus, a respected member of the first-century Jewish ruling council, states when he notes that the Law of Moses does not condemn a person without first hearing his point of view (John 3:1; 7:50–51). Additionally, it is essential to emphasize that according to the biblical teaching, “One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any

²³ Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature. International Symposium (12th: 2008: Hebrew University of Jerusalem), and International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira (5th: 2008: Hebrew University of Jerusalem). *Hebrew in the Second Temple Period*: Brill, 2013.

²⁴ Sherrard, Michael C. *Relational Apologetics: Defending the Christian Faith with Holiness, Respect, and Truth*. Seconded. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2015, 124.

²⁵ Edelman, Diana Vikander. *Opening the Books of Moses*. Bibleworld. Sheffield: Equinox Pub, 2012.

crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Deuteronomy 19:15).

For the objectivity and accuracy of the results of this study, the author will first illustrate how the ancient Hebrew and Christian believers saw and interpreted the book of Genesis. Then, both conventional and reformed hermeneutic approaches to the character of Jacob will be presented, correspondingly, and then cross-examined to find out which point of view is correct. It is a fact that after the Protestant Reformation, the Patriarch Jacob began to be portrayed negatively in conjunction with his beloved mother Rebekah, and vice versa. For that reason, this study focuses on how the ancient theologies and philosophers looked at the heritage of Rebekah. Such an objective approach will help us to see the true character of the second biblical Matriarch and better understand her attitude, motive, and decisive role in Jacob's life.

Modern philosophers maintain the view that reason surpasses any human affirmation as a judge.²⁶ Therefore, the current analytical investigation is established based on one pragmatic (scientific) assumption: that any accurate epistemological knowledge, statement, or conviction should always be validated by empirical and theological evidence. In the case of this study, it means that the correct hermeneutical interpretation of Jacob's character will be able to withstand the continuity and consistency of all **biblical criticism**.²⁷ In light of this discussion, it is practical to

²⁶ Campbell-Jack, Walter Campbell, Gavin McGrath, C. Stephen Evans, Bruce Ellis Benson, Henri Blocher, E. David Cook, David Bruce Fletcher, et al. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. IVP Reference Collection. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006, 36.

²⁷ Porter, Stanley E. *Dictionary Of Biblical Criticism And Interpretation*. London: Routledge, 2007.

briefly outline these main types of biblical criticism that will be addressed in the research study:

1. LITERARY – single-mindedness on the various literary genres embedded in the text.
2. HISTORICAL – seeks to interpret biblical writings in the context of their historical settings.
3. REDACTION – studies how the documents (biblical text) were assembled.
4. RHETORICAL – studies how arguments have been built to drive home a certain point the author or speaker intended to make.
5. TRADITIONAL – attempts to trace the development of the given belief.
6. PHILOLOGICAL – the study of the biblical languages for accurate knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

In addition, to uncover the exact meaning of any given biblical passage, the author also should interpret the biblical text in a manner consistent with the fundamental linguistic rules. Classically, correct **exegesis** always begins with a precise examination of the text by defining the original literal meaning of each word. For that reason, biblical scholars have confidence that to achieve a correct interpretation, it is important for a reader to establish a grammatically accurate syntax analysis of the text. For example, Robert H. Stein, in his book *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* states, “The value of a precise vocabulary is that it helps us obtain a clear picture of what is involved in the process of interpretation.”²⁸

Consequently, the author will use also **textual criticism**, which is the science of studying ancient manuscripts to lay the foundations for the accurate literary and historical evaluation of the biblical text. This investigation will draw from the

²⁸ Robert H. Stein. *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible*. Baker Academic, 2011, 30–31.

knowledge of experts on the original manuscripts of the Hebrew language such as Dr. Julian Morgenstern, Dr. James L. Kugel, and Dr. David Noel Freedman.

The story about Jacob's life is presented in the book of Genesis, which is the first book of the Holy Bible. Historically, both Jews and Christian communities maintain the view that the book of Genesis is constructed in such a way that each individual story is related to the one that precedes it and the one that follows.²⁹ Its interrelated structure allows the reader to see each individual story as an important and integral part of the much bigger picture. As so, it is critically important to study every biblical text through the lens of the whole context of the book to which it belongs, as well as **the entire Canon** of the Bible.³⁰

Biblical scholars consider various aspects of the original writing such as religious, social, or historical context. Linguists all over the world claim that the writer of the Holy text followed a logical line of thought when he put pen to paper. What he said in the previous chapters or verses, and what he said in the ones that follow will both help the modern reader to appropriately understand any given portion of the entire Scriptures.

It is obvious that the Holy Bible sometimes uses figurative or **metaphorical language**. Nonetheless, it is essential to read the biblical text for its plain and obvious meaning, which can be established through context and well-respected commentaries of ancient Hebrew and Christian communities. In conjunction, the author completely recognizes that for deeper insight to the meaning of the biblical

²⁹ Evans, Craig A, Joel N Lohr, and David L Petersen. *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*. Supplements to Vetus Testamentum; the Formation and Interpretation of Old Testament Literature, Volume 152. 6. Leiden: Brill, 2012, 83–104.

³⁰ Gallagher, Edmon L, and John D Meade. *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis*. Firsted. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2017.

text, it is imperative to identify its genre (narrative, prophecy, history, poetry, or expository), because **the various genres** of literature present their message in differing styles and structure. Therefore, the author highlights that this investigation will methodically treat each individual passage based on its **plain and obvious meaning**, and avoid over spiritualizing or allegorizing the biblical text.³¹

In addition, this study will regularly try to distinguish **the intentions of the writer** at the time the work was composed. This is essential in light of the fact that a book by any author can include thoughts and conversations of many other persons, and not just the author's own ideas. Therefore, during the reading of the biblical text, it is important to separate the voice of the author and his own intentions from the other voices that may be present.³² It is obvious that the value of any statement arises from the one who is speaking and their given circumstances. Thus, for the sake of this investigation and an impartial interpretation of any portion of the biblical text, the author will permanently separate the statement or the voice of any man from the statement of Moses or the Lord God Almighty.

Richard N. Soulen, in his book *Sacred Scripture*, convincingly argues that both Jewish and Christian scholars firmly hold on to the idea that the Holy Scripture must interpret itself, and the author absolutely agrees with this intellectual approach.³³ Therefore, for the sake of this investigation, the research will use an authoritative key principle of biblical hermeneutics that is known by scholars as “**the**

³¹ Laurence W. Wood. *Theology as History and Hermeneutics: A Post-critical Conversation with Contemporary Theology*. Emeth Press, 2005, 106.

³² Michael Carasik. *The Bible's many voices*. Jewish Publication Society Book, 2014, 275.

³³ Richard N. Soulen. *Sacred Scripture: A Short History of Interpretation*. Westminster John Knox Press, 2009, 62–75.

analogy of Scripture.³⁴ This principle is firmly grounded on the sound biblical teaching that all Scripture has been inspired by the Lord God Almighty, and therefore one portion of the Bible should not contradict another. Based on this principle, the author will discuss the biblical passages that are clearly talking about the same idea. Then from well-understood passages, we can shed light on a passage that is difficult to understand.

It is a fact that every contemporary reader is separated by time, culture, and way of life from the people to whom the Bible was first written and by whom it was written. Subsequently, their context is very different than our modern one. For that reason, this investigation will be shaped by a historical principle that focuses on interpreting the ancient biblical text within its **original setting**. This takes into deep consideration the geographical location, time, and the original audience. In addition, it will be concentrated on the socio-cultural principle that seeks to understand the ancient society and culture in which any given biblical passage took place.³⁵

To gather this information, this investigation will systematically use works of well-known scholars, historians, archeologists, and social scientists. Their profound understanding of the matter will give this research an extra-biblical knowledge of the historical background, ancient culture, social life, religion, values, morality, and geography. Such knowledge is undoubtedly necessary for an accurate understanding and interpretation of the original biblical text in the right historical setting, conveying what the narrator intended to say as much as possible.

³⁴ Chance, J. Bradley. "American Scripture and Christian Scripture: The Use of Analogy to Introduce the Critical Study of the Bible." *Teaching Theology & Religion* 3, no. 3 (October 2000): 157–163.

³⁵ Larkin, William J, and Wheaton College (Ill.). Authors. *Culture and Biblical Hermeneutics: Interpreting and Applying the Authoritative Word in a Relativistic Age*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988, 305–307.

To achieve the objective goal of this research, the author likewise plans to use several **analytical techniques** that allow for examining complex relationships and differences between both the ancient traditions and the newest reformed hermeneutical approaches of Jacob's character. The first analytical technique is the hierarchical linear modeling, which is frequently used whenever complicated data is embedded and supported by a large group of people.³⁶ This method will help us determine the influence of characteristics for each level of embedded data through history. Second, the grouping method identifies characteristics that differ or distinguish groups of opinions. This process will help us to see the differences between these two opposing views and to find out how theologians of the past viewed the characters of Jacob and Rebekah. Thirdly, a path analysis method explores each opinion from a different perspective and helps determine the causes and results of each hermeneutical approach. In our case, this method will help us pinpoint the relative importance of each causal path.

Speaking of biblical hermeneutics, which is the source of the correct theological point of view, it is significant to note that present-day scholars argue: “Theology is ‘faith seeking understanding’, and apologetics is the rational defense of the faith.”³⁷ What is more, scholars accept that “indeed, theology and apologetics are not so much two separate specializations as they are two moments or stages in the lifelong witness of the Christian disciple... Theology sees apologetics as a vital aspect of its martyrology, of the study of its ongoing mission to bear witness to the

³⁶ Stephen W. Raudenbush, Anthony S. Bryk. *Hierarchical Linear Models Applications and Data Analysis Methods*. Sage Publications, Inc., 2002, 16–40.

³⁷ Campbell-Jack, Walter Campbell, Gavin McGrath, C. Stephen Evans, Bruce Ellis Benson, Henri Blocher, E. David Cook, David Bruce Fletcher, et al. *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. IVP Reference Collection. Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006, 35.

truth, goodness and beauty of the wisdom of God and the cross of Christ.”³⁸ For that reason, let us talk briefly about theological apologetics that will be abundantly used in this research study.

The term **apologetics** derived from the Greek word ἀπολογία [*apologia*], which means, “speaking in defense of someone or some idea.”³⁹ In our day, apologetics is known as a branch of philosophy, as well as the religious discipline of defending religious doctrine through systematic discourse and argumentation. The tradition of contemporary Christian apologetics has a long history that extends from the very first days of the Church when the apostle Peter intelligently defended the action of the Holy Spirit and the distinctive behavior of believers on the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem (Acts 2:12–27) to the more recent works of C. S. Lewis, Ravi Zacharias, William Lane Craig, John Lennox, and many others. Since ancient times, Christian apologetics has evolved organically because, as a reaction to new challenges, the Christian community has been constantly looking for innovative, complementary ways and methods of protecting the ancient Patristic biblical teachings from criticism of her numerous opponents.⁴⁰

In his latest book, Kevin Jon Vanhoozer argues that “Theology exists to make the faith comprehensible; apologetics to make it plausible.”⁴¹ In light of this discussion, it is essential to emphasize that the fundamental principles of apologetics are also often used in the inner Christian circle to crystallize biblical doctrines, to

³⁸ *New Dictionary of Christian Apologetics*. 2006, 42–43.

³⁹ Groothuis, Douglas R. *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011, 26–27.

⁴⁰ Piderit, John J, and Melanie M Morey. *Teaching the Tradition: Catholic Themes in Academic Disciplines*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 67–76.

⁴¹ Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Pictures at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church's Worship, Witness, and Wisdom*. Downers Grove: Inter–Varsity Press, 2016, 233.

eliminate erroneous opinions, and destroy false teachings. For example, according to the Epistle to the Galatians:

When Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law, because by works of the law shall no one be justified (Galatians 2:11–16 RSVCE).

It is important to emphasize that even two Christian giants, the apostle Saul (Paul) and Cephas (Peter), had a disagreement with each other and an opposing view, in this case, on the process of justification. However, they were able to resolve this difference through open discussion and biblical reasoning, taking into account all the canonical teachings.⁴² Because of this respectful disagreement, the early Church developed a clear and unambiguous teaching on this issue (Acts 15). We can

⁴² Keener, Craig S. *Galatians*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 173–177. See also, Barclay, William. *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*. Rev. ed. The Daily Study Bible Series -- Rev. Ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976, 19–25.

conclude that the open differences that were resolved peacefully and biblically always had a positive result for the Christian community.

For that reason, the first Ecumenical Councils of the Church used the same main principles of theological apologetics to correct and crystallize Christian doctrines and protect the ancient biblical Orthodoxy within of the Christian Community.⁴³ Through history, a balanced apologetic approach to biblical interpretation constantly helps the Christian community to crystallize her teaching and correct her own mistakes. For example, the early Protestant Church, and then the Catholic Church, based on generally accepted apologetic principles, rejected the previous erroneous Catholic doctrine of indulgences.⁴⁴

Nowadays, my former professor, Kevin J. Vanhoozer maintains the view that “apologetics has everything to do with universal truth, accessible to reason... [*and*] the primary task of Christian apologetics is to defend the truth of what is in Christ [*Jesus*].”⁴⁵ Nevertheless, in recent times, innovative apologetic schools have emerged that offer reformist non-patristic methods and approaches to the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures that spread misconceptions.⁴⁶ For that reason, contemporary well-respected biblical scholars recommend all seekers of truth be

⁴³ Ferguson, Everett. *Church History: The Rise and Growth of the Church in Its Cultural, Intellectual, and Political Context*. Seconded. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013, 555–267.

⁴⁴ Michael S. Carter. A “TRAITEROUS RELIGION”: INDULGENCES AND THE ANTI-CATHOLIC IMAGINATION IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY NEW ENGLAND. *The Catholic Historical Review*. Vol. 99, No 1. Catholic University of America Press (January 2013), 52–77.

⁴⁵ Vanhoozer, Kevin J. *Pictures at a Theological Exhibition*. 235–239.

⁴⁶ Martin Walter; Ravi Zscharias, general editor. *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Revised, and Expanded. Baker Publishing Group, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2003, 173.

careful with their methodological approach because Christian “apologetics stands or falls in the question of the method.”⁴⁷

Speaking of the proper apologetic method, it is essential to point to the most recent apologetic handbook called *Faith Has Its Reasons*, where Boa Kenneth and Robert M. Bowman depict timeless critical approaches for the correct biblical interpretation. “Each of these approaches to apologetics, though it had precursors in earlier periods of church history, emerged as a distinct approach to apologetics grounded in an explicit epistemology in the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.”⁴⁸ For a balanced study of the topic of this research, the author intends to use three of these fundamental apologetic methods.

Classical Apologetic: It Stands to Reason – emphasizes the use of the argumentative measure in “two-step.” First, it rationalizes the monotheistic worldview and then presents the evidence of God’s personal revelation to humanity through the infallible biblical text. This apologetic method was actively used by one of the most famous theologians of the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas, who is also known as the *Doctor Angelicus*.⁴⁹

Evidentialism Apologetic: Just the Facts – an apology method that contemporary scholars often characterize as a “one-step” approach. This tactic charmingly utilizes both empirical historical and philosophical argumentation to defend the validity of biblical teaching. The followers of this method argue that a such approach is similar to the modern systematic method of testing any scientific

⁴⁷ Dulles, Avery. *A History of Apologetics*. Theological Resources. New York: Corpus, 1971, 246.

⁴⁸ Boa, Kenneth, and Robert M Bowman. *Faith Has Its Reasons: An Integrative Approach to Defending Christianity: An Apologetics Handbook*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: Nav-Press, 2001, 33–38.

⁴⁹ Boa, Kenneth, and Robert M Bowman. 49–136.

hypothesis, which, perhaps, does not offer complete confirmation, but provides a high degree of reliability of probability.⁵⁰

Reformed apologetics: God Said It – argues that rational faith does not need any rationalistic evidence because it is established based on the Word of God. Reformed theologians believe that John Calvin was “right that human being are born with an innate *sensus divinations* (sense of the divine), then people may rightly and rationally come to have a belief in God immediately without the aid of evidence.”⁵¹ In light of that, it is important to emphasize that Reformed apologetics does not reject rationalistic arguments. However, followers of this method argue that the human mind, which has fallen into sin, is not able to employ reason and interpret the divine revelation.⁵²

Finally, all the data collected will be organized, processed, and structured to establish the correct **hypothesis and analyze** various past historical events. This tactic is the unity of the four-stage cyclic process, which begins with raising leading questions regarding any particular event. This step is followed by analyzing a specific event for all available sources to establish empirical data. Then the author will build a line of argument that seeks to answer the main question, and, finally, formulate a preliminary conclusion based on the available data.

1.2. Analysis of Sources

⁵⁰ Boa, Kenneth, and Robert M Bowman. 139–218.

⁵¹ Cowan, Steven B, William Lane Craig, John M Frame, Kelly James Clark, and Paul D Feinberg. *Five Views on Apologetics*. Counterpoints. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 2000, 20.

⁵² Boa, Kenneth, and Robert M Bowman. 221–334.

This analytical study of the biblical Jacob and his family is based on the writings of the historian Titus Flavius Josephus, the philosopher Philo of Alexandria, and several ancient non-biblical secular and religious literature that considered Jacob a model of godliness. The research is also largely constructed on the well-respected work of many outstanding Christian scholars, theologians, commentators, the writings of the Church Fathers, as well as the writings of the Muslim community.

Christianity is not a new phenomenon or religious innovation but the continuation and the climax of the story of Israel. It means that the entire Old Testament is an organic part of the Christian teaching. Therefore, Nicholas Perrin explains that “Christianity began, of course, with Jesus, who was himself a Jewish rabbi (teacher) who accepted the authority of the Torah, and possibly other sacred Jewish books...”⁵³ For that reason, I am open to discovering what my Jewish brothers are thinking, especially about the life of their ancestor, the Patriarch Jacob – Israel. Thus, to extend the horizon of this study and come to a correct, unbiased conclusion, this investigation will include, the ancient as well as the numerous contemporary Jewish writings on this topic that are fully accepted by the modern scholarly community. In addition, the author will conduct an analytical analysis of groundbreaking archaeological and linguistic discoveries that have recently shed much light on this topic. As a result, this approach reflects a variety of opposing perspectives on the subject matter.

The traditional paradigm of biblical interpretation, which represents Jacob as a perfect man, is depicted and analyzed through the writings of Saint Jerome, John Chrysostom, Augustine of Hippo, Quodvultdeus, Ephrem the Syrian, Aurelius Ambrosius, Thomas Aquinas, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and

⁵³ Perrin, Nicholas. *Lost in Transmission: What We Can Know About the Words of Jesus*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007, 65.

many other contemporary scholars. The study found that Jerome was the first Christian apologet to portray Jacob as an innocent man through his monumental work, to which the Christian community holded on monolithically through generations.⁵⁴ The author will pay special attention to the work of Saint Augustine, who gives the Patriarch an extremely positive characterization and further strengthened the traditional view of Jacob for many generations to come.

However, knowing that there may be uneducated people who can be confused by some Jacob's actions Augustine wrote: "this trick on the part of Jacob may easily be mistaken for fraudulent guile, if we fail to see in it the mysterious intimation of a great reality. That is why the [*Holy*] Scripture prepares us by the word: 'Esau became a skillful hunter, and a husband-man; but Jacob a simple man living at home [*the tabernacle*].'" Then, Augustine added: "Some translators have 'guileless' in place of 'simple.' But, whether we say 'guileless' or 'simple' or 'without pretense' for the Greek *áplastos* there can be no real guile in getting this blessing, since the man [*Jacob*] himself is guileless."⁵⁵

An alternative - reformed - view of the Patriarch Jacob began with the outstanding work of John Calvin, who was the first person to openly question the integrity of Jacob's character. The study will pay special attention to Calvin's commentary on the book of Genesis, in which the scholar judgmentally claims that "Jacob should have willingly satisfied his brother's hunger. But when being asked, he refuses to do so: *who would not condemn him for his inhumanity?*"⁵⁶ Then the

⁵⁴ Edgar, Swift, Angela M Kinney, and Dumbarton Oaks. *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 1. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010.

⁵⁵ *The City of God, Books Viii–Xvi*. 16.37.

⁵⁶ CALVIN, JOHN. *Commentaries of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. DEVOTED Publishing, 2018, 278.

reformed view will be farther depicted and analysed throughout the massive work of Matthew Henry, Charles Henry Mackintosh, Friedrich August Dillman. Specific attention will be paid to the substantial work of Samuel R. Driver, who provided a visible scientific basis for the negative interpretation of the personal name of Jacob. Consequently Driver claims that Jacob's name philologically means a deceiver: "being explained from 'àkéb, 'heel,' just before. The verb 'àkéb means properly *to follow at the heel*."⁵⁷

Then Driver elegantly implements an idea that the Patriarch Jacob acted wrongly because "truthfulness was not observed by the normal Israelite with the strictness demanded by a Christian standard."⁵⁸ James Hastings goes even further and stated: "Jacob is the typical Jew. His life is the epitome of that wonderful people, who are found in every country and belong to none; who supply us with our loftiest religious literature, and are yet a byword for their craft, their scheming, and their love of money."⁵⁹ Of particular importance for the dissertation were the works of Albertus Pieters, and the relatively modern continuation of Jeffrey, David Lyle, Janzen, J. Gerald, Reno, Russell R, Aalders, G. Charles, Kim, Mitchell M, Lane T Dennis, and Dane C Ortlund.

The Hebrew view of the Patriarch Jacob is going to be represented and analysed by the use of the Talmud, the Midrash (Genesis Rabbah, Haggadic Midrash on Song of Songs, Midrash Tanhuma, Pesikta de Rab Kahana), the Jewish Aramaic translation of the Torah called Targum Onkelos, Rabbinic writing, work of Rashi - Shlomo Yitzchaki, and *Genesis, A New Translation With A Commentary*

⁵⁷ Driver, S. R. *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes. Westminster Commentaries.* New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1909, 255.

⁵⁸ Driver, S. R. 1909, 255.

⁵⁹ Hastings, James. *The Greater Men And Women of the Bible.* New York, 1913, 405–406.

Anthologized From Talmudic (Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources). The Hebrew view will also be presented through the work of modern scholars such as Meir Sternberg, Samuel L. Michael, Menorah Rothenberg, Deborah A. Green, Zornberg G. Aviva, William Broad, Israel J. Kapstein, Jordan Hillman, Jay Hillman, Allen J. Clifton, and Christine G. Allen, whose work was extremely useful for this study. The general view of the Muslim community on the life of Jacob will be depicted as it is presented in the Qur'an and the Encyclopedia of Islam.

For the objectivity of this study, the author will use the innovative archaeological and linguistic discoveries of a secular scholar C. J. Gadd, the results of which were published by the British Institute for the Study of Iraq. In addition, the author takes into account the findings of Stephen D. Simmons, published in *the Journal of Cuneiform Studies*. The methodological basis for the study was the work of leading researchers at various stages of theology John Edward Anderson, Stanley E. Porter, Robert H. Stein, Richard N. Soulen, Stephen W. Raudenbush, Anthony S. Bryk, Martin Walter, and Ravi Zacharias.

To gather this information, the investigation will systematically use works of well-known scholars, historians, archeologists, and social scientists. Their profound understanding of the matter will give this research an extra-biblical knowledge of the historical background, ancient culture, social life, religion, values, morality, and geography. Such knowledge is undoubtedly necessary for an accurate understanding and interpretation of the original biblical text in the right historical setting, conveying what the narrator intended to say as much as possible. Of particular importance for the dissertation were the work of a Catholic scholar Donald Senior, and the commentary of a Protestant scholar Claus Westermann.

This study will use textual criticism, which is the science of studying ancient manuscripts to lay the foundations for the accurate literary and historical evaluation of the biblical text. For that reason, the investigation will draw from the knowledge

of experts on the original manuscripts of the Hebrew language such as Dr. Julian Morgenstern, Dr. James L. Kugel, and Dr. David Noel Freedman.

In its form, this investigation has a deep apologetic character, the purpose of which is to defend the truth and a correct understanding of the biblical narrative. The tradition of contemporary Christian apologetics has a long history that extends from the biblical day of Pentecost to the more recent works of C. S. Lewis, Ravi Zacharias, William Lane Craig, John Lennox, James White, J. Warner Wallace, and Kevin Jon Vanhoozer. Speaking of the proper apologetic method, it is essential to point to the most recent apologetic handbook called *Faith Has Its Reasons*, where Boa Kenneth and Robert M. Bowman depict timeless critical approaches for the correct biblical interpretation.

2. THE FORMATION OF THE IMAGE OF JACOB AS A PERFECT MAN

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2.1. The Narrative of Jacob: How the Ancient Saw the Book of Genesis

It is merely a fact that all modern readers, including us, are separated by time, culture, and lifestyle from the people to whom and by whom the Bible, and the book of Genesis in particular, was originally written. Thus, for an objective approach and the correct result of this study, it is vital to illustrate how the ancient Hebrew and Christian communities saw and interpreted the book of Genesis. This process will be carried out using a general review of the biblical text and a detailed study of the life of biblical characters through an analysis of ancient philosophical, extra-biblical, and theological writings. This methodological approach will help us correctly understand the main topics of the book of Genesis, the social order of that time, the spiritual background, the historical situation, and the author's intention in each particular passage, as far as possible.⁶⁰

In this subsection, the author demonstrates that the book of Genesis contains revealing allusions to the image of Jacob and his antipode brother Esau, and thus, pre-forming the reader's opinion of these biblical individuals. In particular, the dissertation identifies five aspects that can be traced in the Old Testament story to the very appearance of the figure of Jacob: 1) testing people with food; 2) confrontation between the elder, the unrighteous, and the younger, the righteous, brothers, which leads to alienation; 3) a negative image of the hunter; 4) loss by the older brother of the right of birthright due to his sinfulness; 5) the prophecy given by God to Rebekah concerning Esau and Jacob.

Contemporary scholars and theologians believe that Moses, the narrator of the book of Genesis, presented his listeners with a unique monotheistic worldview.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Arnold, Bill T. *Encountering the Book of Genesis*. Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998.

⁶¹ Armstrong, Karen. *A History of God: The 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994, 43.

According to this view, there is only one Supreme God who created the entire universe from nothing by the power of his spoken word – Loros.⁶² Adam and Eve, the historical parents of the entire human race, were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27).⁶³ Living in the ideal world Adam and Eve had a profound personal relationship with the Lord, who gave them only one instruction: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Genesis 2:16–17). Like most trials, this simple order, ‘you must not eat,’ was created to determine if they would be faithful and obedient to the Lord God. According to rabbinical exegesis, this instruction likewise emphasizes the fact that having free will, people can choose their actions or behavior, and as a result, they predetermine their own future.⁶⁴

Then the book of Genesis depicts that the first people, deceived by the serpent [*devil*], did not obey the command of the Lord God Almighty and they ate a fruit from the forbidden tree. Consequently, Adam and Eve must be held accountable for their actions (Genesis 3:1–8). The first family learned the hard way that sin and disobedience has harmful and far-reaching consequences. Thus, sin made Adam and

⁶² Bryant, Jacob, and Philo. *The Sentiments of Philo Judeus Concerning the Logos, or Word of God: Together with Large Extracts from His Writings Compared with the Scriptures on Many Other Particular and Essential Doctrines of the Christian Religion.* By Jacob Bryant. Ecco. Cambridge: Printed by John Burges printer to the University, 1797.

⁶³ Barker, Kenneth L, and Donald W Burdick. *The NIV Study Bible, New International Version.* Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A.: Zondervan Bible, 1985.

⁶⁴ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources.* 2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 192.

Eve run away from the presence of God, brought a curse on the Earth, and introduced death to the human body. According to the biblical narrative, immediately after the fall of the first people, the Creator of the universe spoke with Adam, Eve, and the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:9–14). Quoting the words of God, the narrator of Genesis assures his listeners that Adam and Eve undoubtedly heard what the Lord said when he told the serpent he would “put enmity between [*the serpent*] and the woman, and between [*the serpent’s*] seed and her seed; he shall bruise [*the serpent*] on the head, and [*the serpent*] shall bruise him on the heel” (Genesis 3:15). Traditionally, Judaism and Christianity understand the serpent as the embodiment of the demonic power of evil.⁶⁵

Constructed on this observation, the enmity between the serpent’s seed and the woman’s seed was described by ancient believers as the struggle of the sinful people with the righteous people. The enmity between the serpent and the woman had been explained as the struggle between the devil and humanity.⁶⁶ In addition, Judaism interprets Genesis 3:15 as a messianic prediction. Similarly, the exegesis of the early church saw in this passage the protoevangelium that refers to the final victory of the woman’s seed over the seed of the serpent.⁶⁷ In the midst of the fall, this promise of God gives hope to humanity and points to the unique biological descendant of the woman who would one day crush the head of the snake–deceiver [*devil*] and restore the envisioned order of creation.

⁶⁵ Page, Sydney H. T. *Powers of Evil: A Biblical Study of Satan and Demons*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1995, 14.

⁶⁶ Johnston, Robert K, and Wheaton College (Ill.). Authors. *The Use of the Bible in Theology: Evangelical Options*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985, 87–88.

⁶⁷ Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*. Continental Commentaries. Minneapolis: Augsburg Pub. House, 1984, 260. See also, Walter Wifall. *GEN 3:15—A PROTEVANGELIUM?* The Catholic Biblical Quarterly. Vol. 36, No. 3 (JULY 1974), 361–365.

Adam and Eve definitely realized that the serpent and his enormous evil forces from that time forward would try to destroy every righteous seed of woman as a potential victor over the devil. In addition, ancient believers regularly noted that according to the biblical teaching, each person is also a seed – a child of God or the evil one. Therefore, even talking to the exclusively biological descendants of the Patriarch Abraham Jesus Christ said, “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires” (John 8:44). Based on the teachings of the apostles, early Christians believed that “this is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God’s child” (1 John 3:10).

According to the Bible, the expanded genealogy of Adam starts with a description of the birth of Cain and Abel, the two well-known sons of Adam and Eve. Ancient believers suggest that Cain and Abel, like later Esau and Jacob, were twin brothers. For instance, John Calvin, based on an ancient view, taught that “although Moses does not [*openly*] state that Cain and Abel were twins, it seems to me probable that they were so.”⁶⁸ Likewise, John Skinner supplements this view by saying “the omission of the Hebrew verb אָדָם is not to be pressed as implying that the brothers were twins, although that may very well be the meaning.”⁶⁹

Similarly, Claus Westermann draws a strong parallel between the birth, occupation, and life of Cain and Esau, as well as Abel and Jacob.⁷⁰ It can also be observed with great sadness that the narrative shows Cain and Abel as the antipode

⁶⁸ Calvin, John. *Commentaries of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Devoted Publishing, 2018, 278.

⁶⁹ Skinner, John. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910, 103–104.

⁷⁰ Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary*. 292.

of each other by indicating that they had different occupations, positions to deal with sin, and attitudes toward God. These differences were reflected in their different offerings to the Lord. According to the Holy Bible, the Lord God only had respect for Abel's offering, brought by faith, and did not accept Cain's offering (Genesis 4:4–5; Hebrews 11:4).

On the other hand, out of equal care for both brothers, the Lord told Cain, who was saddened by his own sin, why his offering was not accepted and provided insight into how to solve this problem. “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it,” said the Lord God (Genesis 4:6–7). It should be indicated that Cain had a unique chance to take the right step forward and be fully accepted by the Lord. Nonetheless, in his anger, Cain rejected God's instructions and did not want to turn away from his sinful desires. Instead, Cain blamed his righteous younger brother Abel. As a result of his wickedness, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Based on the biological dimension, both brothers had the same parents. However, based on the spiritual measurement, Cain was the seed of the serpent, and Abel the righteous seed of God.⁷¹ For this reason, the Holy Scripture teaches that “Cain was of the evil one and slew his brother [*Abel*]. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's deeds were righteous” (1 John 3:12).

Having been corrupted by his own sinful desires, Cain ran away from his parents and the presence of the Lord God to the land of Nod. The Hebrew ארץ נוד (*eretz-Nod*) literally means the land of wandering. There, carnal Cain began the

⁷¹ Satterthwaite, P. E, Richard S Hess, Gordon J Wenham, and Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical Research. Old Testament Study Group. *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*. Tyndale House Studies. Eugene, 2011, 31–32.

family of godless humankind on which sin had its strong sway (Genesis 4:8–16). The family tree of Cainites represents the first urban society that wanted to immortalize its own name through the creation of hands.⁷² Therefore, “Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch” (Genesis 4:17). It was also the first morally corrupt society of murderers and polygamists (Genesis 4:8, 19). Finally, the narrator highlights that Cainites were well advanced in business, art, and new technologies. However, God’s moral righteous regulations and his holy name were not ever mentioned among the descendants of Cain, the first murderer of his youngest brother (Genesis 4:20–22).

The biblical context then reveals that after the death of righteous Abel, Adam and Eve had another son, Seth, who becomes the father of the chosen line (Genesis 4:25). Ancient believers regularly pointed out that Seth also names his first born son Enoch. However, in contrast to Cain, Seth did not try to immortalize his name through any visible objects or the works of his own hands. Instead, upright Seth taught his household how to call on the name of the Lord. Therefore, the Holy Bible tells its readers that “Seth also had a son, and he named him Enoch. At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26). By indicating that each household had different values, goals, and attitudes toward the Creator, the author represents carnal Cain as the antipode of righteousness.⁷³

During the lifetime of Noah, the righteous offspring of Seth, sin had deeply corrupted human minds, causing every inclination of their thoughts and hearts to

⁷² Flanagan, James W, D. M. Gunn, and Paula M McNutt. *Imagining Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series, 359. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, 48–50.

⁷³ Meyer, F. B. Kulakowski, Editor Rev Terry. *Our Daily Walk*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Reformed Church Publicati, 2015, 238.

become evil, contending with the Spirit of God. When the Lord God saw this great wickedness he decided to wipe humanity from the face of the Earth (Genesis 6:5–7). The ancients rightly believed that the righteous Creator of the universe had the moral right to correct and punish his disobedient creation and prevent the destruction of the whole world.⁷⁴ Although sad, the narrative gives hope to readers of the Bible by describing that life on the Earth was preserved by the mercy of God and the blameless seed – Noah and his family.

Therefore, theologians consistently point out that according to God’s standards “Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God” (Genesis 6:9). Later, based on God’s revelation, Noah built the Ark in which his family and other living creatures were protected from the flood. For that reason, Hebrew and Christian scholars emphasize that in the middle of the human fall, Noah is an important ring in the living human chain that points to the biological descendant of a woman who one day will crush the head of the deceiver serpent and restore the temporary broken creation order.⁷⁵

After the flood, the Earth was repopulated through Noah’s sons Shem, Ham and Japheth. At that time, all people lived as one community that had the same language. In the fourth generation, the new society became technologically advanced enough to build large cities. During that time, a descendant of Ham named Nimrod - the Hebrew נִמְרוֹד (tsayid) - established his kingdom centered in Babylon (Genesis 10:8–11). The biblical narrator characterizes Nimrod as the first mighty hunter.

⁷⁴ God's Servant. *Giver of Truth Biblical Commentary - Vol 3: New Testament*. Xlibris Us, 2015, 518.

⁷⁵ Hamilton, James M. *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2010, 76.

According to Hebrew tradition, the hunter Nimrod was ‘mighty’ in causing the whole world to rebel against the Lord God Almighty.⁷⁶

Under the leadership of this mighty carnal hunter, the people of his kingdom said to each other: “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves [*for our glory*]; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4). This selfish human-centered idea brought great disrespect to God. For that reason, the Creator came and confused their language and scattered people over all the Earth (Genesis 11:5–9). Based on textual analysis, biblical scholars argue that the narrative accurately connects the very first urban kingdom of the [*treacherous*] hunter Nimrod with a generation of Cainites. Similarly, to the evil Cainites, the mighty hunter Nimrod and his dominion wanted to immortalize their own name through the creation of their hands and did not even consider glorifying the Lord God.⁷⁷

Next, the narrative draws the reader’s attention to the story of Shem, through whom the righteous generation was preserved. A man named Abraham is depicted as another essential ring in the chain of righteous people, indicating a unique biological descendant of a woman through whom the broken order of creation would be restored. For that reason, the remaining focus of the entire book of Genesis is

⁷⁶ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 317.

⁷⁷ Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Wherein Each Chapter Is Summed Up in Its Contents: The Sacred Text Inserted at Large in Distinct Paragraphs; Each Paragraph Reduced to Its Proper Heads: The Sense Given, and Largely Illustrated with Practical Remarks and Observations*. New Modern ed. Val. I. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991, 62.

Abraham and his family preserving the purity of the line of righteous people.⁷⁸ When God appears to Abraham he reveals some of his Everlasting Covenantal promises to the 75 years old patriarch. Then, the Lord God Almighty said to Abram, “Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing [*source of blessing for others*]” (Genesis 12:1).

The expression “The Lord had said to Abraham” strongly emphasizes God’s verbal communication with the Patriarch Abraham. This information would have been extremely significant to the original audience because the Lord God created the entire world out of nothing by the power of His spoken word. According to the narrative, the last time God spoke was in communication with Noah, the man through whom life on earth was preserved. Now, ten generations after Noah, God takes the initiative and talks to Abraham, a man through whom the entire world must be blessed (Genesis 12:3).⁷⁹ In light of this conversation, it is essential to emphasize the critical role of the Abrahamic family in restoring a disturbed world order and salvation of humanity.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Bea, Augustin Cardinal, and Roland Edmund Murphy. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Compiled by Raymond E Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer, and Roland E Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice–Hall, 1968, 18–19.

⁷⁹ Grüneberg Keith N. *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context*. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Bd. 332. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003, 85.

⁸⁰ Bird, Michael F. *The Saving Righteousness of God: Studies on Paul, Justification and the New Perspective*. Paternoster Biblical Monographs. Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock, 2007, 32–33. See also, Stephenson, J. M. *God's Plan of Salvation: Or, His Purpose Concerning Man and Earth*. Chicago: Thomas Wilson, 1877, 186; 237.

After his calling from the Lord, Abraham lived a hundred more years full of sufferings, dramas, conflicts, victories, and miracles. However, the most outstanding parts of Abraham's life are evidenced in the Lord's fulfillment of his covenantal promises. As a result, Abraham, the old and childless man, miraculously becomes the father of many. According to the Holy Scriptures, his firstborn child is Ishmael and his following child is Isaac. Theoretically, as it was the custom of the firstborn at that historical time, Ishmael should have received his father's blessings and prolonged the line of godly people.

On the other hand, the firstborn Ishmael was a vicious man. To illustrate his evil, the narrator, Moses, depicts Ishmael mocking his younger brother Isaac. The ancient Christian community believed that "in mocking Isaac he [*Ishmael*] mocked Christ [*who came out of Isaac's loins*]." ⁸¹ This is yet another example showing the older ungodly brother struggling with his younger righteous brother. Therefore, when Sarah, the mother of Isaac, learned about this terrible incident she spoke with her husband Abraham and asked him, "directed by the providence of God," to get rid of Ishmael. ⁸² This request deeply distressed Abraham because it concerned his own [*primogenital*] son and he did not want to comply (Genesis 21:10–11).

Nevertheless, the Lord God spoke to the Patriarch Abraham and said: "Do not be so distressed about the boy [*Ishmael*]... Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned" (Genesis 21:12). It is clear that God held carnal Ishmael accountable for his wrong behavior toward his

⁸¹ Phillips, John. *Exploring Genesis: An Expository Commentary*. The John Phillips Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, Minn.: Kregel Publications, 2001, 173.

⁸² Calvin, Jean, William Pringle, John Owen, Henry Beveridge, Thomas Myers, Charles William Bingham, James Anderson, John King, Incumbent of Christ Church, Hull., and Calvin Translation Society. *Calvin's Commentaries*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Val. 1. Baker Books, 1999, 543.

youngest brother – Isaac. For that reason, carnal Ishmael lost his firstborn rights, and, just like carnal Cain, he went away from his father’s home.⁸³ Altogether, Ishmael lived a hundred and thirty-seven years and became the father of twelve tribes who lived in hostility to others, thus fully displaying the true genetics and internal character of their ancestor Ishmael (Genesis 25:12–18).

The biblical description emphasizes Ishmael's disrespectful behavior and oral revelation from the Lord God to Abraham, on the basis of which Abraham's youngest son, Isaac, inherited the blessing of the first-born. For this reason, Isaac replaced Ishmael as the next important link in the chain of people who point towards the unique biological descendant of a woman who will one day crush the deceiver serpent – the devil. Thus, from this point on, the narrator switches his attention mainly to the story of Isaac and his family.

2.1.2 The Struggle of Two Antipodes Giants

The biblical narrative indicates that at the age of forty, the Patriarch Isaac married Rebekah by the providence of the Lord God. Rebekah (*Rivkah* / רִבְקָה) was his relative from Mesopotamia (Genesis 24:1–5). According to the Scriptures, she was a very beautiful, respectful, hardworking, and generous woman. The narrator, concerned much more about the moral standard of Isaac’s future lineage, highlights that Rebekah was a virgin who had never slept with a man (Genesis 24:16–25). Through all the rabbinic literature, Rebekah is regularly represented as an honorable, righteous woman who was well suited for her exceptional assignment as the next

⁸³ Gaebelein, Frank E, J. D Douglas, Dick Polcyn, Frank Ely Gaebelein, Arthur W Rupprecht, Alan F Johnson, Carl Edwin Armerding, John Sailhamer, Walter C Kaiser, Herbert Wolf, Richard Duane Patterson, Richard N Longenecker, W. Harold Mare, Donald W Burdick, Glenn W Barker, and Wheaton College (Ill.). Authors. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: With the New International Version of the Holy Bible*. Volume 2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1990, 165.

matriarch of a faithful people.⁸⁴ Similarly, the ancient Christian community understood the mother Rebekah as a metaphorical representation of the Church, and her husband Isaac as a representation of the Lord Jesus Christ.⁸⁵ Some contemporary theologians likewise believe that the narrator portrays the righteous matriarch Rebekah as yet another “Abraham,” called by the Lord God to leave her home, separate from godless relatives, and become an important vessel of God in the process of bringing blessings to all of humanity through her offspring.⁸⁶

During her much desired pregnancy, Rebekah learns that “[her] babies jostled each other within her [womb], and she wonders, ‘Why is this happening to me?’” (Genesis 25:22)? The Hebrew word רָצַצָ (ratsats), a close equivalent to the English word “struggled,” represents the idea that the children had been constantly fighting in the mother’s womb until the day of their birth. The early Church read and interpreted this struggle in Rebekah’s womb as the conflict between evil and good. In this case Rebekah “represents the Church, and the infants depict the struggles of the righteous and the wicked within the Church [of Christ].”⁸⁷ The unceasing fight occurring within Rebekah was not easy to endure. In order to seek relief, the Matriarch Rebekah inquired of the Lord God under whose blessing she was able to conceive. And so, the Lord revealed to Rebekah that “two [antagonistic] nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will

⁸⁴ Rothenberg, Menorah. *A Portrait of Rebekah. The Devolution of a Matriarch into a Patriarch.* Conservative Judaism 54, no.2 (Winter 2002), 46.

⁸⁵ Oden, Thomas C, and Mark Sheridan. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture.* Vol. 2, Old Testament. Genesis 12–50. Downers Grove, Ill: Inter Varsity Press, 2002, 137, 147.

⁸⁶ Mathews, K. A. *Genesis.* The New American Commentary, V. 1b. Nashville, Tenn.: B & H, 1996, 334, 340.

⁸⁷ Mathews, K. A. *Genesis.* 380.

be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.” (Genesis 25:23 NIV).

According to the Midrash Rabbah, carnal Esau was the one who stretched out against his youngest brother Jacob, wanting to kill him even while still in the mother’s womb. Esau acted in the same way as his first spiritual prototype, Cain, who also wanted to kill his younger righteous brother.⁸⁸ When describing the evil nature of Esau the psalmist proclaims “the wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent” (Psalm 58:3–4).⁸⁹ In addition, Hebrew sages and commentators argue that the Lord God foresaw the future and revealed to Rebekah that her youngest son Jacob and his offspring would serve the Creator of the universe and that Esau and his descendants would worship idols.⁹⁰

Many ancient Christian believers were sure that the Matriarch Rebekah fully understood the oracle of God, and in light of this revelation, she also understood her role in maintaining the unique line of righteous people through which the Messiah would come. For example, Saint Ambrose (340–397 CE) praised Rebekah's obedience and faithfulness to God's revelation.⁹¹ Similarly, Quodvultdeus (?–450

⁸⁸ Flanagan, James W, D. M Gunn, and Paula M McNutt. *Imagining Biblical Worlds: Studies in Spatial, Social, and Historical Constructs in Honor of James W. Flanagan*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series, 359. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002, 49.

⁸⁹ Midrash Rabbah. *Genesis In Two Volumes*. Translated by Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman The Soncino Press, London, 1961, 569.

⁹⁰ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 1055.

⁹¹ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 149.

CE), Bishop of Carthage, taught that Rebekah’s behavior was “divinely-inspired.”⁹² At the beginning of his colorful career, John Calvin (1509–1564 CE) also maintained the view that “Rebekah chiefly in earnest respecting the blessing of God, the conjecture is probable, that she had been induced, by divine authority, to prefer the younger to the first-born.”⁹³

When Rebekah gave birth to two twin boys, the first child to come out was red and his parents named him Esau (Hebrew: עֵשָׂו / ‘Ēśáv) because his whole body was like a hairy garment (Genesis 25:25). In his outstanding philosophical works, Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–50 CE) presents an ancient understanding that “the ruddy body and the hairy hide are a sign of a savage man who rages furiously in the manner of a wild beast.”⁹⁴ Similarly, according to early Jewish tradition, “Esau [*insistently*] identifies more specifically with the evil serpent (*hivya’ bisha*), who is the most cunning of all [*creatures*] beasts.”⁹⁵ For that reason, even the latest comments on the book of Genesis undoubtedly indicate that “Esau’s hairiness symbolizes his wild nature.”⁹⁶

⁹² Sheridan, Mark, and Thomas C Oden. *Genesis 12–50*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Old Testament, 2. Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter–Varsity Press, 2002, 169.

⁹³ Calvin, Jean, and John King. *Genesis*. The Geneva Series of Commentaries. Edinburgh Scotland: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965, 50–51.

⁹⁴ Marcus, Ralph. *Philo: Questions and Answers on Genesis*. Loeb Classical Library, 380. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979, 446.

⁹⁵ Yerushalmi, Yosef Hayim, Elisheva Carlebach, John M Efron, and David N Myers. *Jewish History and Jewish Memory: Essays in Honor of Yosef Hayim*. The Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series, 29. Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 1998, 218.

⁹⁶ Waltke, Bruce K, and Cathi J Fredricks. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001, 358–359.

At their birth, “the twin brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; therefore his name was called Jacob” (Genesis 25:26). Considering how the babies previously jostled each other within their mother's womb, the author is deeply convinced that Esau, while fighting Jacob, acted like a chick of a common cuckoo, which always kills other eggs or chicks in the nest to monopolize all dominion.⁹⁷ Due to this serious threat, Jacob had a clear deontological right and obligation to protect himself; or, using Immanuel Kant’s words, it can be said that Jacob had “*a good will*.”⁹⁸ Jacob grabbed Esau’s heel to avoid a deadly strike from his own brother. On this matter, Philo of Alexandria maintains the ancient traditional view that to be able to seize and hold Esau's heel shows the strength and moral excellence of Jacob's character, as well as the weak character of him who is seized.⁹⁹

Consequently, when the parents saw that the succeeding baby came out holding Esau’s heel they started to understand the much deeper spiritual and social levels of God's forewarning to Rebekah. “Two [*antagonistic*] nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23). In conjunction with the foregoing revelation, both Isaac and Rebekah certainly remembered how the older brother Cain killed his younger brother Abel during the fight that he [*Cain*] started because of his evilness, and how the oldest Ishmael (Abraham's first son) mocked his younger brother. For that reason, Isaac named his

⁹⁷ General Editor, W. Gunther Plaut; General Editor, Revised Edition, David E.S. Stein, W. Gunther Plaut, and David E. S Stein. תורה: *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Rev. Ed. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005, 173.

⁹⁸ Insole, Christopher J. *Kant and the Divine: From Contemplation to the Moral Law* (version First edition.). Firsted. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2020, 21–22.

⁹⁹ Marcus, Ralph. *Philo: Questions and Answers on Genesis*. 448.

youngest son Jacob - the Hebrew יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'akov*). It is a shortened form of the theophoric name יַעֲקֹב־אֱלֹהִים (*Ya'akov-el*), which means "May God Protect (You)".

Throughout the past centuries the Hebrew community has upheld an exceedingly respectful view of the Patriarch Jacob and his personal name without any shadow of negativism. Therefore, adhering to tradition, modern *The Jewish Study Bible* emphasizes that “the name Jacob derives from ‘y-`-k-b-`-l,’” which means “may God protect.”¹⁰⁰ Likewise according to *The JPS Torah Commentary*, “Hebrew *ya`akov* stems from a Semitic root `-k-v, ‘to protect.’ It is an abbreviation from a fuller form with a divine name or epithet as its subject. *Ya`akov-`el*, ‘May El protect,’ is a divine name that has turned up several times in cuneiform texts over a wide area.”¹⁰¹

It is notable that the biblical text says nothing about the childhood of Esau and Jacob. Nevertheless, ancient believers reasonably assumed that both children had equal opportunity and access to food, clothing, shelter, moral support, and education. The Midrash Rabbah supports this view by highlighting the fundamental rabbinic affirmation that Esau and Jacob had identical chances to succeed and for the first thirteen years of their life both of them went to school (the tent[s] of study).¹⁰² Regarding education, it is likewise essential to address that during the first fifteen years of their life both Esau and Jacob had exceptional opportunities to play, walk,

¹⁰⁰ Jewish Publication Society, and Oxford Cartographers Ltd. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Edited by Adele Berlin, Marc Zvi Brettler, and Michael Fishbane. Oxford England: Oxford University Press, 2004, 49.

¹⁰¹ Potok, Chaim, Nahum M Sarna, Jacob Milgrom, Jeffrey H Tigay, and Jewish Publication Society. *The Jps Torah Commentary: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New Jps Translation*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989, 180.

¹⁰² Midrash Rabbah. *Genesis In Two Volumes*. 565–566.

and learn directly from their great grandfather Abraham, the man who was called “God’s friend” (Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23).

Knowing the faithfulness of Abraham, it can be supposed with certainty that the old Patriarch taught Esau and Jacob the whole truth about God, the creation of the world, the fall of the first people because they preferred earthly food to God’s obedience, and the promise of restoration of the creation order through the righteous offspring of the Abrahamic family, which would bring blessings upon every human tribe. “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” the Lord said to Abraham (Genesis 12:2–3). Knowing the unique calling of their own family and their unique covenantal relationship with the Lord God through the ceremonial circumcision that was previously revealed to Abraham’s family (Genesis 17:1–27), both Esau and Jacob should have stepped into adulthood with a completely clear understanding of God’s will and discernment between right and wrong.

Based on collective historical data, scholars and theologians agree that the expression ‘the boys grew’ - the Hebrew word גָּדַל נְעָר (na`ar gadal) literally means that Esau and Jacob had been welcomed into the world of Jewish adulthood through the ceremony of the Bar Mitzvah (Genesis 25:27). The term ‘Bar Mitzvah’ means “son of the mitzvah,” or one who is morally obligated to observe Torah, God’s Law - Hebrew: תּוֹרָה (Instruction). According to ancient Jewish custom, at the age of thirteen each boy is completely responsible to fulfill God’s commandments as a duty. For that reason, *The Bar Mitzvah Book* emphasizes that when an individual “has entered the adult world where, as a Jew, a specific code of behavior must govern

his actions, actions which give him a great responsibility and for which he himself is now answerable.”¹⁰³

Taking this information into consideration, the ancient reader understood that the colorful depictions of the inner beings of Esau and Jacob in verses 27 and 28 are separated by many years from verse 26, which mainly talks about their birth. As a consequence, following verse 27, the biblical narrator describes two grown adults who are completely responsible for their actions and behaviors. Then, the author (Moses) differentiates their inner characters and unique desires in life by saying that “Esau was a cunning [*tricky*] hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was an upright [*perfect*] man, remaining in the tents” (Genesis 25:27 JUB). It was evident to ancient believers that, through this elegantly concise narrative, the author began to deeply identify the characters of Esau and Jacob and their exact direction of life.¹⁰⁴

The biblical text highlights that Esau was ‘a cunning hunter’ – the Hebrew *יָדָא׳* (*yada`*), and one who would live by the sword (Genesis 25:27; 27:40). In other words, Esau was a well-advanced and skillful hunter who knew how to trap his prey. Just as every [*treacherous*] hunter, the cunning Esau knew how to deceive his victim by pretending to be a peaceful and harmless man. Nevertheless, Esau’s inner desire was always to kill his target, and the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation* supports the ancient view that “people had also been among his [*Esau’s*] prey.”¹⁰⁵ The Christian community likewise supported this view. For example, Martin Luther

¹⁰³ Paterson, Moira, I. Babel’, and I. Babel. *The Bar Mitzvah Book*. New York: Praeger, 1975, 25–26.

¹⁰⁴ Onkelos, Alexander Sperber, Moses Aberbach, Bernard Grossfeld, and Onkelos. *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text: (based on A. Sperber’s Edition)*. New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1982, 152–153.

¹⁰⁵ Kasher, Menahem. *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation, a Millennial Anthology*. V.4. New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1959, 12.

taught that Esau had been full of pride and idolatry, and therefore as a grown man, he occupied himself in the fields with hunting and waging war.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, David E. Pratte reasons, “Esau’s interests and occupation show a lack of interest in productive work and spirituality.”¹⁰⁷

In this regard, it is significant to note that the Abrahamic “family did not need game for meat, since Isaac had great flocks and herds; neither did they need protection from wild animals, as Esau had to be a ‘cunning’ hunter to find any to slay. He [*Esau*] was simply a carnal, profane, licentious playboy,” said Luther¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, the New Testament writer (traditionally, Paul the Apostle was thought to be the author) of the book of Hebrews fully supports the view that Esau was a godless and sinful individual. For that reason, the writer warns the young Christian community to “see to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 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” (Hebrews 12:15–16).

In light of this conversation, it is noteworthy to reiterate that the book of Genesis spoke only about two hunters and Esau is one of them. The first carnal hunter, Nimrod, the distinctive evil prototype of Esau, did not care about the Lord God at all and made the whole world rebel against the Creator.¹⁰⁹ Speaking of this

¹⁰⁶ Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. Vol. Volume 4. Luther's Works. Saint Louis: Concordia, 1964, 380–381.

¹⁰⁷ David E Pratte. *Commentary on the book of Genesis: Bible study notes and comments*. LULU COM, 2018, 233.

¹⁰⁸ Morris, Henry M. *The New Defender's Study Bible: King James Version*. Nashville, Tenn.: World Pub, 2006, 80.

¹⁰⁹ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*.

man, the Bible says: “Cush was the father of Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior on the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord; that is why it is said, 'Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the Lord.' The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad, and Kalneh, in Shinar” (Genesis 10:8–10). Therefore, James L. Kugel states that the biblical text revealed that Esau was a wicked, irreligious, and a licentious man who cared much for his game and the wild-freedom, which makes him accountable to no one except himself.¹¹⁰

On the other hand, Esau was unsympathetic to the Lord God and he had no even desire or capacity for transcendent things. Arthur S. Peake summarized the ancient description of carnal Esau this way: “Esau was a man with no depth of nature and no outlook into the eternal. He was not a man of faith who postpones present gratification for future good, but one who lived like an animal ‘tame in earth’s paddock as her prize’ with no spiritual horizon.”¹¹¹ It should also be noted that Jewish sages and commentators argue that Esau [*the ancestor of Rome*] bears a resemblance of a wild swine.¹¹²

2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 317.

¹¹⁰ Kugel, James L. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998, 354–55.

¹¹¹ Grieve, A. J. *A Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Arthur S Peake. New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1920, 156.

¹¹² Feuer, Avrohom Chaim, Nosson Scherman, and Meir Zlotowitz. [*tehillim*] = *Tehillim: Tehillim: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources / Tehillim = ספר תהלים: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and Rabbinic Sources*. 2 v. ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1985, 1020–1023.

In contrast to Esau, the Holy Scripture describes Jacob as “an upright [*perfect*] man, remaining in the tents” (Genesis 25:27 JUB). Gerhard Von Rad elaborates that “the [*Hebrew*] adjective (תָּם / *tâm*) means actually belonging to the solidarity of [*godly*] community life with its moral regulations, a solidarity that the carnal hunter [*Esau*] does not know because he is much more dependent on himself.”¹¹³ An ancient philosopher Philo of Alexandria also contends that Jacob was a man with excellent [*exceptional*] moral character.¹¹⁴ Equally, Saint Augustine of Hippo, states that Jacob was “a guileless man.”¹¹⁵ Based on the linguistic analyses of the biblical text, the ancient believers claim that the Patriarch Jacob, in God's evaluation, was a perfect man whose heart was right with the Lord, and who earnestly sought the will of God in his life. Therefore, the text describes Jacob with the adjective ‘perfect.’¹¹⁶

In the last part of this descriptive sentence, the narrator makes it known that Jacob was “remaining in the tents” (Genesis 25:27 JUB). Historically, Hebrew theologians, rabbis, and sages firmly hold the view that the original Hebrew word אֹהֶל (*ohel*), which is an equivalent of English word “tents,” means both the household and the sacred tents where Jacob constantly worshiped and studied the truth about the Lord God and his will. Modern scholar B. Barry Levy argues that

¹¹³ Rad, Gerhard Von. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Translated by John H Marks. Rev. Ed. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972, 266.

¹¹⁴ Marcus, Ralph. *Philo: Questions and Answers on Genesis*. 448.

¹¹⁵ Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint, Gerald G Walsh, and Grace Monahan. *The City of God, Books Viii-Xvi*. The Fathers of the Church, a New Translation, V. 14. Washington D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1981, 16.37.

¹¹⁶ Wigram, George V. *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub, 2001.

this view is absolutely accepted philologically, because the Hebrew word *אֹהֶל* ('*ohel*') is frequently taken as 'school.' The Aramaic version of this word is also associated with 'school' or 'academy.'¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Midrash Rabbah highlights that the Patriarch Jacob, as a mature man, was "dwelling in tents [=schools] – the academy of Shem and the academy of Eber."¹¹⁸ In the same way, *Bereishis* strongly emphasizes, "The intent of the plural is that Jacob studied with every sage he encountered, this being his sole desire; and he was simple – free of any deviousness [or *deceitfulness*]."¹¹⁹

In light of this conversation, it is important to give emphasis to the fact that the ancient Christian community completely supported this view of their Jewish brothers. For example, Nicolaus of Lyra, a Catholic Franciscan teacher, enthusiastically endorses the rabbinic interpretation of this passage in the line with his church. In his teaching referring to the writing of Nicolaus of Lyra, Martin Luther said: "Lyra tells what the Jews thought about the tents. I am in complete accord with what he has to say, because it is taken from the fathers [*spiritual leaders of the past*]. They say that tents not only for households but also for the churches are meat."¹²⁰ A well-known English theologian John Wesley (the Methodist leader) also supported this view when he stated "Jacob was a plain man - an honest man that [*always*] dealt

¹¹⁷ Levy, B. Barry. *Targum Neophyti 1: A Textual Study*. Studies in Judaism. Lanham: University Press of America, 1987, 174.

¹¹⁸ Midrash Rabbah. *Genesis In Two Volumes*. 566.

¹¹⁹ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 1064.

¹²⁰ Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. 383–384.

fairly. And dwelt in tents... either, as a shepherd... or as a student, he frequented the tents of Melchizedek or Heber, as some understand it, to be taught by them divine things.”¹²¹

The foregoing resources demonstrate that respected Jewish and Christian theologians of the past agreed that in the Holy Bible, Esau, as a carnal hunter, is presented as a one greatly concerned with earthly and material objects and perishable food. Esau acted in the same way as his both spiritual prototypes cunning Cain and deceitful hunter Nimrod. On the other hand, the Patriarch Jacob occupied with work and schooling, is passionate in his pursuit of spiritual knowledge.¹²² These differences between lascivious Esau and upright Jacob show that one cares for the temporary, and one cares for the eternal.

2.1.3 Rediscover the Character of Isaac and Esau

In his commentary on the book of Genesis, Harold G. Stigers points out the fact that sometimes chapter 26 “finds little elucidation in various expositions.”¹²³ Nevertheless, the majority of respected biblical scholars admit that this chapter is an important organic part of Genesis that heavily increases the reader’s deeper understanding of the previous narrative, and contributes valuable data that helps to more clearly see the development of the narrative of Abrahamic family. As a result, we should briefly discuss the essential themes and information that has been contained in this chapter. In the very beginning, it is important to highlight that the

¹²¹ Wesley, John. *Wesley's Notes on the Bible - the Old Testament: Genesis - Ruth*. Place of Publication Not Identified: Devoted Publishing, 2017, 53.

¹²² Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. 387.

¹²³ Harold G. Stigers. *A Commentary On Genesis*. Zondervan, 1981, 211.

text informs its readers how the three main characters of this chapter Isaac, Abimelech, and Esau behaved and each made a fatal decision during crucial circumstances. Therefore, we will look at these three people through the textual analysis one by one in a chronological order presented by the biblical narrator.

First, the context informs us that when Abraham passed away his son Isaac encountered a devastating famine, which could strongly damage or even potentially destroy the entire community of the chosen people (Genesis 25:7–8; 26:1). As the responsible head of the family, Isaac had been forced by the horrible circumstances of life to come up with a possible solution for his significant household. Therefore, he made a decision to go down to Egypt, and live there until the famine ceased in the Promised Land. On his way down to Egypt, Isaac stops and settles down near Gerar, one of the largest Philistine cities and the stronghold of the king Abimelech. It was a place around hundred years ago where the Patriarch Abraham used to live, and struggled for his life because the people of that community did not fear the Lord God. Thus, “Abimelech asked Abraham, “What was your reason for doing this? Abraham replied, “I said to myself, ‘There is surely no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife’” (Genesis 20:10–11). During his lifetime, in the surrounding area of the city Gerar, Abraham had dug many wells that everybody could use for their own benefit (Genesis 26:18).

Here and now, the Scriptures reveal that it was also an awful place for the Patriarch Isaac to live because the Philistines envied him, stopped up all his wells by filling them with earth, and constantly quarreled with his servants (Genesis 26:14, 15, 20).¹²⁴ In his latest conversation with the king Abimelech, Isaac would point out that the leadership of Gerar “were hostile” to him and forced his household to move

¹²⁴ David E Pratte. Commentary on the book of Genesis: Bible study notes and comments. LULU COM, 2018, 240.

away” (Genesis 26:27). This pagan society still did not value much a right or even a life of other human beings. If the Philistine men liked something that belonged to another person, they could take it simply by force. For that reason, Isaac was afraid, similar to his father Abraham, to be killed by the men of this place on account of his wife. For that reason, “When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, ‘She is my sister,’ because he was afraid to say, ‘She is my wife.’ He thought, ‘The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful’” (Genesis 26:7).

In the field of theological study and interpretation of the ancient biblical text, there are some loud voices that sharply criticize the Patriarch Isaac because he said that Rebekah is his sister. At the first appearance, it looks like a legitimate point that may discredit the dignity of Isaac. However, all accurate investigators of the ancient text have to take a second look at this passage, and inspect it based on the fundamental regulation of exegesis and hermeneutics. To illustrate an alternative point of view, let me emphasize that there will be outrage if someone calls the Lord Jesus Christ a racist person, based on the fact that when a Canaanite woman asked Jesus to help her daughter, Jesus replied: “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs” (Matthew 15:26). I am convinced that even the people who are not much familiar with the Christian exegesis or hermeneutics would consider such interpretation as a wrong one, which is out of the biblical context or traditionally accepted view of Lord’s character. Therefore, it is crucially important for the contemporary reader to be impartial and absorb the information out of the ancient text and not to bring their own presuppositions into the text, because this approach could possibly lead to the misinterpretation of the biblical text out of the historical setting. For that reason, a modern-day scholar William Todd suggests: “We have to follow the advice of scholars and read with sympathy, trying to find out

what the words means to those who first told these ancient stories, or first listened to them.”¹²⁵

In the light of this hermeneutical rule, it must be refreshed that the biblical narrative precisely reveals Isaac’s factual motive for his action, and his intention is truly the key that will help to disclose this passage correctly. “When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, ‘She is my sister,’ because he was afraid to say, ‘She is my wife.’ He thought, ‘The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful’” (Genesis 26:7). For that reason, Isaac did not act out of evil desire or willingness to gain a selfish benefit from anyone. Constructed on the textual analysis, the rabbinic community and respected Hebrew scholars give emphasis to the undeniable fact that the Patriarch Isaac was acting out of frightfulness for his own life and as a result for the wellbeing of his entire family excluding a large number of his servants.¹²⁶

Since ancient times, the Christian community has fully supported this view. For example, Augustine of Hippo stated that Isaac “had the same fears as his father of the perilous beauty of his wife when he lived among strangers.”¹²⁷ In addition, it is quite important to highlight that the context purposely depicted to its readers that when the pagan king Abimelech learned that Isaac was terrified to lose his own life he did not condemn or criticize Isaac’s actions at all. In his human sympathy to Isaac’s anxieties, the Philistines king Abimelech issued a decree for the entire kingdom: “Anyone who harms this man [*Isaac*] or his wife shall surely be put to death” (Genesis 26:11). Based on the textual description, even Isaac’s critics agreed that “Recognizing the seriousness of the matter, Abimelech institutes a protective

¹²⁵ William Todd. *New Light On Genesis*. The Furnival Press, 1978, 125.

¹²⁶ Bereishis Vol. I. Page 1085

¹²⁷ Augustine, *City of God* 16.36

law for Isaac and his wife.”¹²⁸ Therefore, the fact that the king issued such a strong decree in the imperative form is solid evidence that Isaac’s fear was realistic, and has no basis for any criticism.

Meanwhile, knowing that Isaac had the intention of going to Egypt with his family, the Lord God appeared to him and ordered him, “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live... So Isaac stayed in Gerar” despite the fact that he was strongly uncomfortable to live there (Genesis 26:3, 6). It is obvious that Isaac is much more afraid to disobey God than he is afraid to lose his own life. Thus, the watchful study of the narrative leads to the conclusion that through the careful description of Isaac’s horrible circumstances of life, in which he trusts the Lord God, the narrator wants to powerfully emphasize the faithfulness and obedience of the Patriarch, and not the other way around. The ancient Hebrew and Christian Communities strongly believed that “God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly person who does his will” (John 9:31).¹²⁹ Seeing Isaac’s total obedience the Lord reveals his plan to prolong and reestablish the everlasting covenant with Isaac as the only legitimate successor of Abraham. For that reason, God reiterated his main covenantal promises to Isaac.

First, “For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham.” Second, “I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky.” Third, “through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed” (Genesis 26:3–4). Talking about this biblical passage, Philo of Alexandria maintains the view that the Lord God wishes to praise the Patriarch Isaac as one worthy of his father’s nobility, for God would not firmly

¹²⁸ Allen P. Ross. *Creation and Blessing*. Baker Book House Company. 1988, 460.

¹²⁹ Kohlenberger, John R. *The Evangelical Parallel New Testament*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 668.

establish the prayers made to the father with an oath, for the sake of the son, if God did not witness the same virtue in Isaac.¹³⁰

In addition, it is notable that the Lord God promised to give the Promised Land not to all descendants of Isaac, but only to those who will value, preserve, and inherit the covenantal relationship with God. The contemporary reader also has to understand that God's will always has been to save and bless people from all social and ethnic groups in the world, "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:3–4). However, it will be only possible through the righteous seed (Messiah) of Abraham. Therefore, it is important for Isaac's family to realize the seriousness of the covenant relationship with God and preserve it. In light of this research, it is essential to highlight that considering Isaac's hardship and his fear for his own life the Lord God appeared to Isaac second time, with a good disposition and without judgment, to bring the word of encouragement.

For that reason, the Lord God said to him, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham" (Genesis 26:24). It is observable that the biblical text does establish the fact that God did not condemn Isaac, for he said that Rebekah is his sister. Fully understanding Isaac's human concerns, God came to him to bring comfort into his life. For the right evaluation of Isaac's actions, it is important to keep in mind that the Scripture teaches: "There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you – who are you to judge your neighbor" (James 4:12)? Therefore, established on the scrupulous textual analyses and the biblical teaching all reasonable people believe that if the Philistines king Abimelech

¹³⁰ Philo, Of Alexandria., and Ralph Marcus. *Questions and Answers on Genesis*. Loeb Classical Library, 380. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993, 464–465.

and the Lord God did not judge the actions of the Patriarch Isaac; so should not anyone judge him.

It is absolutely clear that the Patriarch Isaac is depicted by the narrator as a hardworking man who, under the protection and blessings of the Lord God, became a very wealthy person who had so many flocks, herds, and servants. Therefore, when the king Abimelech saw the wealth of Isaac he said to him, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us” (Genesis 26:16). Textual analyses reveal that Abimelech was truly afraid of Isaac’s huge household. However, the modern reader should not assume that Isaac became a rich man over a short period of time. It has been already discussed that at the age of seventy-five years Isaac’s father Abraham left his well-established life at the city Haran, and went to the Promised Land. At that time, Abraham was a rich man who had an estate, which he accumulated during his previous seventy-five years of life. Besides that, Abram had many servants who worked for him. For instance, “when Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan” (Genesis 14:14). Therefore, according to the Bible, when Abraham left the ancient city Haran he had at least 318 strong male warriors.

It would be right to assume that each man had a wife, children, and parents who lived with them because that was the custom at that historical time. For example, Dr. Lawrence O. Richards points out that the family in the Old Testament time usually is “an extended family of three or more generations plus any servants living with them, or an even wide circle of relatives who trace their family band back to a common male ancestor.”¹³¹ A simple calculation would show that Abraham at the age of 75 was a master of about three thousand people. During the next hundred

¹³¹ Lawrence O. Richards. *New International Encyclopedia of Biblical Words*. Zondervan, 1991, 263.

years of Abraham's life his wealth has been constantly increased, and when at the age of one hundred seventy-five years Abraham died he "left everything he owned to Isaac" (Genesis 25:5).¹³²

A modern-day Old Testament scholar Gordon J. Wenham highlights that, "Through this chapter there is a very strong emphasis on Isaac's relationship to his father, and this is reflected in this speech as well."¹³³ For that reason, the narrator depicted Isaac as the son of Abraham who fully understood the importance of the covenantal relationship with God, and the fact that the most significant task of his life was not to stray from the calling of his family, because only through his "offspring all nations on earth will be blessed" (Genesis 26:3–4). Similarly, a well-known scholar Devora Steinmetz maintains the ancient rabbinic view that, "Isaac's role is not to seek a destiny, but to continue a destiny; he is not to make the choices, but to maintain what has already been established, as he will do with the wells which his father had dug."¹³⁴

Consequently, the biblical narrative highlights that "Isaac reopened the all wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them" (Genesis 26:18). For Isaac it was a challenging process, because the Philistines constantly quarreled with his servants. It has been already mentioned that the Patriarch Isaac was a powerful man; yet, the way he deals with his opposition reveals much about his peaceful character. Therefore, the biblical scholars underline, based on the textual analysis, that Isaac had a nonviolent personality. As an example, Victor Hamilton emphasizes that "To his credit Isaac does not respond with anger

¹³² <https://populationeducation.org/content/what-doubling-time-and-how-it-calculated>

¹³³ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, Word Biblical Commentary 2. Word Books, 1994, 192.

¹³⁴ Devora Steinmetz. *From Father to Son*. Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1991, 89.

against those who plugged his father's well. Indeed, he quietly goes about the business of re-digging and reopening these wells."¹³⁵ In the same way, one of the most influential modern Old Testament scholars Walter Brueggemann notes out that: "Isaac is a man of peace."¹³⁶

Throughout the Holy Scripture, the Patriarch Abraham is known as a man who constantly erected an altar of worship and offered a sacrifice to God, and it was the right way to show his attitude of gratitude toward the Most High God (Genesis 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9). Now, the narrator represents Isaac as a next faithful worshiper of God who follows his father Abraham's spiritual tradition. As an example of Isaac's faithfulness, the narrator depicts that "Isaac built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord. There he pitched his tent, and there his servants dug a well" (Genesis 26:25). The structure of this verse deeply reveals the order and priority of Isaac's life – God, household, work. Moving to a new place, Isaac first builds an altar, sacrifices an offering, and worships the Lord God. Only after all of these, Isaac establishes his residence and takes care of the family business. This part of Isaac's life was a great example for his sons, and a powerful illustration for the future generations about importance of the correct priority in their life.

Furthermore, the patriarch Isaac is described as a man with a big heart who was capable of forgiving the bad behavior of other people and moving on. As an example, the narrator describes the fact that "Abimelech had come to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal adviser and Phicol the commander of his forces. Isaac asked them, 'Why have you come to me, since you were hostile to me and sent me away'" (Genesis 26:26–27)? The king Abimelech responds that they came to

¹³⁵ Victor Hamilton. 201.

¹³⁶ Walter Brueggemann. Interpretation A bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. WJK, 2010, 224.

establish a sworn agreement as a treaty of peace between them and Isaac, because “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you... and now you are blessed by the Lord” (Genesis 26:28–29). It is truly incredible that the hostile neighbors saw God’s presence in the life of Isaac, and thus came to make a treaty of peace with the man of God. Fully understanding the agreement’s responsibility, Isaac agreed with the request, and as a result he “made a feast for them, and they ate and drank. Early the next morning the men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac sent them on their way, and they went away peacefully” (Genesis 26:30–31). This truly remarkable event and the way it was handled shows that both sides of the agreement must keep their promises, because a verbal oath made any agreement irrevocable, even though someone may not like it later.¹³⁷

The second main character of this chapter is the Philistine king Abimelech. Some commentators suggest that this king Abimelech is the same person who met the patriarch Abraham in chapter twenty. Still other scholars think that “Abimelech was evidently a Philistine dynastic title; this need not be the individual Abraham encountered in Gerar decades before.”¹³⁸ What is absolutely clear is that the narrator characterizes the king Abimelech as a man who was able to discover the truth, and eventually came up with the right conclusion that was constructed on his personal observation. Let me reiterate that the first time, it happened when acting out of fear Isaac said to the men of Gerar that Rebekah was his sister. However, carefully observing the life of Isaac, the king Abimelech once spots Isaac caressing Rebekah. For that reason, “Abimelech summoned Isaac and said, ‘She is really your wife!

¹³⁷ Bill T. Arnold. *The New Cambridge Bible Commentary*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, 233.

¹³⁸ Donald Guthrie. *The New Bible Commentary Revised*. W.M. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1981, 102–103.

Why did you say, ‘She is my sister?’ Isaac answered him, ‘Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her’” (Genesis 26:9).

It is truly remarkable that even before ‘the Mosaic Law’ the pagan king Abimelech fully understood that the marital relationships are under God’s special protection. As a lawmaker and its executor, the king Abimelech fully understood that even a mistake of a one member of the society could bring a curse upon the entire kingdom. Even if this king Abimelech never met Abraham, it is absolutely clear that he is well aware of the great patriarch and what was happening when the Philistines mistreated his wife Sarah. ... (Genesis 20:1–18). For that reason, wanting to avoid punishment and distraction of his kingdom by the Divine power the king Abimelech ordered his people: “Anyone who harms this man or his wife shall surely be put to death” (Genesis 26:11).

Later, Isaac became a very wealthy man with many flocks, herds, and servants. When the king Abimelech observes Isaac’s productivity in the land of Philistines he said to Isaac, “Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us” (Genesis 26:16). Therefore, Isaac and his entire household moved away from the vicinity of the ancient city Gerar. On the other hand, sometime later, the king Abimelech had come to Isaac’s new residency with his personal advisor and the commander of his forces and said to Isaac: “We saw clearly that the Lord was with you; so we said, ‘There ought to be a sworn agreement between us’ – between us and you. Let us make a treaty with you” (Genesis 26:28). The biblical scholars point out “the Philistine king is making a plea rather than dictating terms. He is presenting his case from a position not of strength but of vulnerability.”¹³⁹

Abimelech’s willingness to have peace with a growing powerful neighbor who is protected by God is completely understandable. However, it is absolutely

¹³⁹ Victor Hamilton. *Genesis*. 207.

thought provoking that once again based on his own observations Abimelech came to the right conclusions. In addition to that, the own word of the pagan king: “the Lord was with you” testified that Isaac was a peaceful man who had an evident relationship with the Lord God. Meanwhile, Isaac accepted his visitors and their proposal with open arms, and displayed his hospitality, not by words, but by actions. Therefore, as an integral element of the covenantal agreement, Isaac made a meal for Abimelech and his people. Fully realizing the obligation of both sides of the sworn agreement and its irreversibility after the oath, Isaac and Abimelech swore an oath to each other the very next morning. Then, Abimelech and his companions went back home peacefully from the residence of Isaac (Genesis 26:31).

The third main character of this chapter is Esau, the firstborn son of Isaac and Rebekah. There are only two verses that describe Esau’s behavior and its excruciating impact on the lives of his parents. In this elegantly concise narrative, the author of the text, once again, profoundly identifies Esau’s factual personality and his direction of life. “When Esau was forty years old, he married Judith, daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and also Basemath, daughter of Elon the Hittite. They were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah” (Genesis 26:34–35). It has been already strongly illustrated that even the pagan king Abimelech understood and respected the value of the marital relationship, although he was not a member of the covenantal community. On the other hand, Esau who from his childhood had a unique chance to learn the righteous way of life directly from his great grandfather Abraham, totally neglected the value of the marital relationship, and disrespected his family tradition by marrying Hittite women.¹⁴⁰

It is obvious that by the example of his own parents Esau should be aware not to engage in interracial marriage (Genesis 24:1–4). A contemporary reader should

¹⁴⁰ Nahum M. Sarna. *The JPS Torah Commentary*. The Jewish Publication Society, 1989, 189.

understand that the reason for that family rule was to protect the covenantal community from running astray from God's principles under the influence of pagan's spouses who evidently had been worshipers of false gods. For example, the Scripture teaches that "A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the Lord loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god (Malachi 2:1). The history and the Old Testament writings are proven that interracial marriages often lead Israelites into adultery.

Based on the textual analysis, it has been emphasized by biblical scholars that Esau's marriage had been initiated by himself rather than leaving the initiative to his parents and that is an accurate representation of his disrespectful nature.¹⁴¹ In his book *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis* Hugh C. White points out that: "To choose not one but two wives from among the nearby people, rather following the more difficult course of obtaining a wife from the distant family, signifies again that Esau places immediate gratification above the more abstract cultural and spiritual values of the family." Then, the author concludes, "Esau's improper marriages finally place him beyond the pale."¹⁴²

Fully constructed on the linguistic analyses of the text, *Bereishis* brings attention to the fact that "the Midrash notes that these women were indeed suited to be wives of the wicked Esau." Then, the author further advocates that "With this marriage, accordingly, Esau set the seal on his complete unfitness to be the one who was to carry on the mission of Abraham."¹⁴³ In the same way as their Hebrews brothers, Christian scholars completely agree with the rabbinic interpretation that

¹⁴¹ David W. Cotter. *Genesis*. The Liturgical Press, 2003, 199.

¹⁴² Hugh C. White. *Narration and Discourse in the Book of Genesis*. Cambridge University Press, 1991, 214.

¹⁴³ *Bereishis* Vol. I. 1112.

“this little note in the chapter demonstrates how unfit Esau was to lead the covenant people into the blessings of God, and how foolish Isaac’s later attempt to bless Esau actually was (27:1–40).”¹⁴⁴

The biblical scholars admit that chapter 26 serves an important organic part of the book of Genesis that increases the reader’s deeper understanding of the previous narrative, and contributes valuable data to help see more clearly the development of the continuing story. Predominantly, the narrator represents Isaac as the only legitimate successor of Abraham and the heir who follows his father Abraham’s spiritual tradition. After the death of Abraham, the Lord God reestablished the everlasting Abrahamic covenant with Isaac who wholly understood the importance of his covenantal relationship with God. Isaac is also depicted as a hardworking, wealthy, and peaceful man who gains much respect and support from the earthly and the Heavenly kings.

On the other hand, Isaac’s eldest son Esau is presented as a hideous person; even compared to the pagan king Abimelech. As an example of his ungodliness, the author describes that Esau completely neglected the value of the marital relationship, and disrespected his family tradition by marrying Hittite women. Therefore, scholar David Grey Barnhouse strongly argues that Esau was “God’s enemy... Passionate, impatient, impulsive, incapable of looking before him, refusing to estimate the worth of anything which does not immediately appeal to his senses, preferring the animal to the spiritual, he is rightly called a ‘profane person.’”¹⁴⁵

2.1.4. Jacob's Victories Have Been Praised by God

¹⁴⁴ Allen Ross. Cornerstone Biblical Commentary. Tyndale House Publishers, 2008, 162.

¹⁴⁵ David Grey Barnhouse. Genesis, A Devotional Exposition, Volume 2. Zondervan publishing House, 1973, 46.

In light of this conversation, it is important to note that during his return from Mesopotamia to the Promised Land, Jacob learned that his brother Esau was approaching him with 400 soldiers (Genesis 32:6). A Hebrew scholar W. Gunther Plaut argues that knowing Esau's desire to kill his brother (Genesis 27:41), Jacob became scared and had to wisely prepare to meet his older sibling.¹⁴⁶ Organizing everything the way he personally envisioned, the Patriarch Jacob was left alone during that night, and he met an individual who wrestled with him until daybreak (Genesis 32:24–32). Some theologians argue, “the encounter of Peniel was understood as a test of Jacob’s fitness for the larger tasks that lay ahead. The results were encouraging. Though he was left alone to wrestle the night with a mysterious assailant, Jacob did not falter.”¹⁴⁷ Besides that, the author suggests that this story of Jacob has much similarity with Joshua, the man who shortly before his great victory over Jericho also met the angel of God and had been encouraged by the divine revelation (Joshua 5:13–14).

The mysterious opponent that wrestled Jacob was first identified as a man. Later, Jacob classified him as אֱלֹהִים (*Elohiym*) which literally could mean the designation deity or the supernatural being. Hebrew and Christian theologians, based on the writing of the Old Testament prophet (Hosea 12:4), have confidence that Jacob indeed was wrestling with the angel of the Lord. However, what is even more significant is that according to the Scriptures the angelic being was not able to prevail against the ninety-seven years old Patriarch Jacob (Genesis 32:25). Therefore, theologians and linguists deliberate much on the fact that Jacob, nearly a hundred year old man at that time, was able to wrestle with the angel of God and prevail. This

¹⁴⁶ W. Gunther Plaut. *The Torah A Modern Commentary*. US, 1981, 173–174.

¹⁴⁷ The Anchor Bible. Genesis. Introduction, Translated, and Notes by E. A. Speiser. Doubleday & Company, Inc, 1964, 257.

well described and accepted episode of Jacob's life intensely suggests that he was endowed with enormous physical strength similar to Samson.¹⁴⁸

When the angel of God realizes that he could not prevail against the patriarch, he attempts to end the fighting competition and physically harms Jacob by touching the socket of his hip so that "Jacob's hip was wrenched" (Genesis 32:25). James L. Kugel, points out that "The very idea of Jacob having been wounded suggested the wounding of the Lord Jesus in the crucifixion."¹⁴⁹ In conjunction with Jacob's injury, I personally would like to emphasize that every medical doctor may testify that a wrenched hip produces a horribly excruciating pain that an ordinary man would no longer wrestle or even engage in any physical activity. Nevertheless, despite all of his complicated circumstances and horribly painful suffering, Jacob totally refused the idea to surrender. As a result, he continually wrestled and constantly held the angel in his arms.

Therefore, the angel of God asked Jacob to let him go, and as the reader can see, the physical competition turned into a verbal contest. However, realizing that he is dealing with Elohim (a divine being) Jacob replies, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26 JUB). The biblical scholars have solid confidence that "Jacob's request for a blessing indicates his identification of the person."¹⁵⁰ In other words, accurately revealing Jacob's reaction to the angelic request, the narrative depicted that Jacob truly was a very strong fighter, and an extraordinary fellow who would never exchange his blessing for temporary comfort or relief. It seems that the narrator is once again emphasizing the fact that spiritually,

¹⁴⁸ Kenneth A. Mathews. *Genesis 11:27–50:26*. Vol 1B. The New American Commentary, B&H Publisher, 1996, 556–557.

¹⁴⁹ James L. Kugel. *Traditions Of The Bible*. Harvard University Press, 1998, 400.

¹⁵⁰ Raymond E. Brown. *The Jerome Bible Commentary*. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968, 34–35.

intellectually, and emotionally Jacob was an antipode of his brother Esau, the fellow who despised his blessings just because he had experienced a plain hunger, which compared to the suffering of Jacob would be considered as an nothingness (Genesis 25:32).

The angel of God most likely had been surprised by the boldness of the old patriarch, and therefore said unto him: “What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for thou hast fought with God and with men, and hast prevailed” (Genesis 32:27–28 JUB). John E. Hartley states that the angel’s reference to Jacob’s prevailing with men “points to his prevailing over Laban and Esau.”¹⁵¹ Theologians likewise draw attention to the fact that all of Jacob's victories had been presented by the angel as the honest and respectful acts that are worthy of praise. On the other hand, some latest commentators based on their own assumptions claim that the change of Jacob’s name symbolized the deep transformation of his inner character during the preparation to meet Esau.¹⁵² Nevertheless, all fair and impartial researchers would point out that the text or any ancient biblical commentaries (until the middle of the 16th century) do not have even a word that supports this view. Indeed, by answering to the angel that his name is Jacob the patriarch in fact said ‘I am the one who is protected [blessed] by God.’

Then, the angel of the Lord stressed that Jacob already fought with Elohim and with men, and has prevailed; therefore, he will be called Israel. Based on this statement theologians believed that Jacob’s new name is an acknowledgement of

¹⁵¹ John E. Hartley. *Genesis Vol 1. New International Biblical Commentary*. US, 2002, 284.

¹⁵² Mays, James Luther, Beverly Roberts Gaventa, and Society of Biblical Literature. *The Harpercollins Bible Commentary*. Edited by James Luther Mays and Joseph Blenkinsopp. Reviseded. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2000, 103.

who he has been and presently is. For example, Claus Westermann claims “he [*the angel*] then assigns him [*Jacob*] a new name, Israel, in v.29a and gave the reason for it in direct speech: ‘You have struggled with God(s) and with men and have prevailed (v.29 b).’”¹⁵³ In the same way, Victor P. Hamilton noticed that “the reason for the name change is clear: *because you have struggled with God, and with men have you succeeded*. The explanation for the name change focuses on what Jacob has done: he has struggled with God; he has succeeded men.”¹⁵⁴ In other words, the angel of God meant – you already prevail me (Elohim) and men, because God protected you, therefore your name should be Israel. Sometime later, Yahweh [*the Lord God Almighty*] appeared to the patriarch again and personally reiterated, “thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name, and he called his name Israel” (Genesis 35:10 JUB). A theologian Leander E. Keck suggests that the patriarch’s new name “represents Jacob’s strength and capacity for struggling well. If Jacob had not struggled and prevailed, there would have been no new name, at least not the name Israel.”¹⁵⁵

There are still debates even today what the original Hebrew word יִשְׂרָאֵל (*Yisra’el*) means. Some scholars think the word Israel means ‘the prince of God’ or represents Jacob’s close relationship with the Most High deity Elohim. Other scholars argue that the word Israel means ‘[The God] El rules’ or ‘[The God] El fights.’ Yet, the one aspect of this story that is fully accepted by Hebrew and Christian scholars is that Jacob’s new name is a strong signal of a successful future meeting with his brother Esau, as well as the indication that the offspring of Jacob /

¹⁵³ Claus Westermann. *Genesis 12–36 A Continental Commentary*. Translated by John J. Scullion S. J. Augusting Publishing House, 1985, 518.

¹⁵⁴ Victor P. Hamilton. 335–336.

¹⁵⁵ Leander E. Keck. *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. Volume I. Abingdon Press, 1994, 567.

Israel will also triumph their enemies with the support and protection of Yahweh.¹⁵⁶ As a final point, it should be highlighted that in the subsequent narrative two of these names, Jacob and Israel, continue to be used; this strongly suggests that both names are still appropriately describing the full personality of this powerful individual who has enormous impact on the history of humankind.

It is important to underline that Jacob's new name is not the blessing itself, as some individuals may suggest, but a statement or assertion of the fact that Jacob *has fought with God and with men, and has prevailed*; therefore he deserved the new name Israel as a result of his victory. Thus, the narrator emphasizes that at the end of their conversation and before he left the old patriarch alone, the angel blessed Jacob / Israel there. For some reason the narrative did not reveal for the reader the specificity of Jacob's blessings, yet only generally proclaims that the angel of God blessed the patriarch Jacob (Genesis 32:29). Typically, the statement of blessing is accompanied with the description of the blessing. On the other hand, the Bible contains examples of blessings, similar to Jacob's, without a precise specificity.

For instance, the Scriptures reveal that the king David one day "blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty" (2 Samuel 6:18). Similarly, the Scriptures depict that before his ascending up back to heaven Jesus took his disciples to the vicinity of Bethany and "he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven" (Luke 24:50–51). It is explicitly obvious that in the case of followers of Christ, the subjects of the king David, or the patriarch Jacob, the narrator is not providing us with the specificity of the blessing. Nonetheless, the contemporary reader can be reassured that all of these blessings had been much valuable and completely understandable for all of its recipients. In his commentary on the nature of Jacob's blessing Claus Westermann

¹⁵⁶ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, Word Biblical Commentary 2. Word Books, 1994, 192.

maintains the widely held view that “This can mean only that he transfer something of his superhuman power to him... the one he could not overcome.”¹⁵⁷ In the same way, *The New Interpreter’s Bible* suggests, “the blessing spoken here by God enables the promises to be realized in Jacob’s life.”¹⁵⁸

After all, according to the ancient biblical text the angel of God disappeared from Jacob before the sunrise. For that reason, Jacob could not clearly see the face of his opponent, but only indistinctly. The Old Testament scholar Derek Kidner, accentuates the fact that “The story implies that the vision of God was only dim, even though it was face to face.”¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, fully realizing the outcome of his encounter “Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning, ‘I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved’” (Genesis 32:31 JSB). It is obvious that for Jacob the expression '*seen a divine being face to face*' meant a tough fight, which he obviously legitimately won and became a holder of a new name and a recipient of blessing.

2.2. A positive view of Jacob in Jewish and Christian teaching

2.2.1 The Jewish View of Jacob

Well-preserved historical data surfaced the fact that ancient biblical commentators, exegetes, and ordinary people considered the Patriarch Jacob as a significant example of true piety and faithfulness.¹⁶⁰ As a result, early philosophers

¹⁵⁷ Claus Westermann. 518–519.

¹⁵⁸ Leander E. Keck. *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. Volume I. Abingdon Press, 1994, 567.

¹⁵⁹ Derek Kidner. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Inter Varsity Press, 2008, 170.

¹⁶⁰ Thompson, John Lee. "The Immoralities of the Patriarchs in the History of Exegesis: A Reappraisal of Calvin's Position." *Calvin Theological Journal* 1991, Vol. 26, N° 1, P. 9–46 (1991), 9.

and historians always had an exceptionally positive view of Jacob and his rich personality. For example, one of the most distinguished Hellenistic philosophers, Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–50 CE), advocates that “Jacob was a man with an excellent moral character.” Then, speaking of the patriarch’s behavior toward other people, Philo elegantly compares Jacob with a great general who behaves this way because he is interested in preventing war and bringing lasting peace through a strength ideology.¹⁶¹ Likewise, Titus Flavius Josephus (37–100 CE), the Romano–Jewish ancient historian, decisively portrayed the Patriarch Jacob as an outstanding and positive person whom “[*the Lord*] God was [*always*] assisting in all that he desired.”¹⁶²

Equally, Hebrew exegetes and scholars have continuously held the view that the Holy Torah given by the Lord God through Moses depicted their forefather Jacob as a perfect man, because the Hebrew adjective [תָּם / *tam*] that describes Jacob at Genesis 25:27 means perfect, complete, or morally innocent (Strong's Number H8535).¹⁶³ Hebrew sages also maintain the rock-solid view that the Patriarch Jacob was a wonderful man who always studied the will of God and worshiped his beloved Creator in the tabernacle (the Tent of the congregation [אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד] *'ōhel mō'êd*), the

¹⁶¹ Philo, Of Alexandria. Philo. Supplement I. Questions and Answers on Genesis. Translated by F. H Colson, G. H Whitaker, and Ralph Marcus. The Loeb Classical Library. Harvard University Press, 1953, 163, 207.

¹⁶² Josephus, Flavius. *The Complete Works of Josephus, (ad 37–C. 100)*. Ancient Classics Series. Delphi publishing limited: Delphi Classics, 2014; Feldman, Louis H. Josephus' Portrait of Jacob. *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 79, no. 2/3 (1988), 101–151.

¹⁶³ Wigram, George V. *The Englishman's Hebrew Concordance of the Old Testament: Coded with the Numbering System from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Pub, 2001.

portable earthly dwelling place of the Lord God).¹⁶⁴ Similarly, in the Jewish Aramaic translation of the Torah (35–120 CE) called *Targum Onkelos* states that "when the boys grew up, Esau became (lit., was) a man (who was) a skilled hunter, a man who would go into the field; but Jacob was a perfect man who ministered at the house of study."¹⁶⁵

Additionally, it is important to note that Hebrew exegetes strongly believe that each step of Jacob's fascinating life was permanently guided by Hashem (a title used in Judaism to refer to Yahweh [*jah 'weh*]) - the Lord God of the Israelites, and that "the name Jacob derives from the Hebrew word יַעֲקֹב [Ya'akov-el] 'y-`-k-b-`-l,'" which literally means "may God protect."¹⁶⁶

2.2.2 The View of the Muslim Community

In light of this discussion, it is also imperative to indicate that since its founding in the 7th century CE, Islam has always held a highly respectful view of the Patriarch Jacob, whose name and exemplary actions are mentioned in the Qur'an

¹⁶⁴ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Brooklyn, N. Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 1063–1064.

¹⁶⁵ Onkelos, Alexander Sperber, Moses Aberbach, Bernard Grossfeld, and Onkelos. *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text: (based on A. Sperber's Edition)*. New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1982, 152.

¹⁶⁶ Jewish Publication Society. *The Jewish Study Bible*. Edited by Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler. Second Edition. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014, 49. See also, Thompson, Thomas L. *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham*. Reprint 2016ed. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, 133. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016, 43–44.

16 times.¹⁶⁷ Jacob (Yā'qub ibn Ishāq ibn Ibrāhīm يَعْقُوبُ ابْنُ إِسْحَاقَ ابْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ) is an extraordinary [*righteous*] figure in Islam, as he faithfully continues the legacy left by his great forefathers Isaac and Abraham. The Muslim community also believes that God granted his most magnificent loveliness to Jacob and chose him as one of the most exalted people of the past.

For that reason, the Quran often mentions Jacob as a powerful and far-sighted person and emphasizes that he is in the company of the godliest people.¹⁶⁸ Besides that, the Muslim community often praises Jacob for rightly teaching his children to worship only one true God. For example, the Quran says: “Were ye witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold, he said to his sons: ‘What will ye worship after me?’ They said: ‘We shall worship thy god and the god of thy fathers, of Abraham, Isma'il and Isaac - the one (True) Allah: To Him we bow (in Islam)’” (Quran, surah 2).¹⁶⁹

2.2.3. The Patristic View of the Patriarch Jacob

Speaking of the ancient Christian point of view of the biblical patriarchs, a contemporary professor of theology and ethics, Russell Ronald Reno, recognizes the historical fact that “in their concern for the moral character of the patriarchs, the

¹⁶⁷ Gibb, H. A. R, and P. J Bearman. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Vol. XI. New Edition / ed. Leiden: Brill, 1954, 254. See also, Houtsma, M. Th. E.J. Brill's First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913-1936 . Leiden ;: E.J. Brill, 1988. Print.

¹⁶⁸ Koran. Arabic and English. *The Koran: The Eternal Revelation Vouchsafed to Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets*. Books That Matter. New York: Praeger, 1971, 652.

¹⁶⁹ Itani, Talal. *The Quran in English*. Dallas, Tex.: Clear Quran, 2014. See also, Esposito, John L. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* . New York, N.Y: Oxford University Press, 2009. Print.

church fathers differed very little from the ancient Jewish reader.”¹⁷⁰ Likewise, the academic Derek Kidner, as well as many other leading modern scholars, have confidence that the early Christian community saw that the Old and New Testament writings depict the Patriarch Jacob exceedingly positively (Genesis 28; John 1:50–51; Hebrew 11:20–21).¹⁷¹

For example, Saint Jerome (347–420 CE), author of the *Vulgate* Latin translation of the Holy Bible at the end of the 4th century, portrayed Jacob (likewise to Hebrew scholars) as a simple [*innocent*] person living in the tabernacles [*of God*].¹⁷² Similarly, Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), a man who had an enormous impact on the development of Christian theology, reflected the ancient apostolic view of this matter, stating that Jacob was “‘a simple man living at the tabernacles.’ Some translators have ‘guileless’ in place of ‘simple.’ But, whether we say ‘guileless’ or ‘simple’ or ‘without pretense’ for the Greek *áplastos*... the man [*Jacob*] himself is guileless.”¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Reno, R. R. *Genesis*. Brazos Press, 2010, 227.

¹⁷¹ Kidner, Derek. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, V.1. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2008, 152. See also, Walter Brueggemann. *Interpretation A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. WJK, 2010, 219. Also, Perrin, Nicholas. *Jesus the Priest*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2018, 215–216.

¹⁷² Edgar, Swift, Angela M Kinney, and Dumbarton Oaks. *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 1. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010. See also, Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint, Gerald G Walsh, and Grace Monahan. *The City of God*. Vol. Books Viii–Xvi /. *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, V. 14. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press, 2008, 16.37.

¹⁷³ Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint, Gerald G Walsh, and Grace Monahan. *The City of God*. Vol. Books Viii–Xvi /. *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, V. 14. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press, 2008, 16.37.

Likewise, Saint Ephrem the Syrian (306–373 CE), who has been recognized as a Doctor of the Church, also had an extremely positive view of the Patriarch Jacob.¹⁷⁴ In the same way, Saint Aurelius Ambrosius (340–397 CE) Bishop of Milan found in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [*Israel*] “a [*right*] pattern of how to live” that all believers should “follow in their shining footsteps along a kind of path of blamelessness opened up to us by their virtue.”¹⁷⁵ Following from the ancient apostolic view, Aurelius Ambrosius persistently taught his spiritual flock that: “He [*Jacob*] was a great man and truly happy who could lose nothing of his and possess nothing of another’s... the man who has nothing to excess is just – this is to observe the proper mean of justice. The wise man is never empty but always has the garment of prudence on himself.” Then, in conclusion, Saint Ambrosius called on all faithful believers: “Follow the example of [*the*] holy [*Patriarch*] Jacob.”¹⁷⁶

In light of this analytical research, it is also important to emphasize that throughout the post-Patristic period, the most influential Christian leaders have predominantly held an exclusively positive outlook on the Patriarch Jacob and completely justified all aspects of his colorful behavior depicted in the Holy Bible. For example, a Scholastic philosopher and Doctor of the Church Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE) stated that “Jacob’s assertion that he was Esau, Isaac’s firstborn, was spoken in a mystical sense because, to wit, the latter’s birthright was due to him by right: and he made use of this mode of speech being moved by the spirit of prophecy, in order to signify a mystery.”¹⁷⁷ Throughout his well-preserved

¹⁷⁴ Halton, Thomas P. *The Fathers Of The Church*. V. 91. CUOA Press, 1994, 171.

¹⁷⁵ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 189.

¹⁷⁶ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 158–159.

¹⁷⁷ DeLapp, Kevin Michael, and Jeremy Henkel, eds. *Lying and Truthfulness*. Hackett Readings in Philosophy. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2016, 181.

comprehensive writings, Saint Thomas Aquinas also strongly insists that “it is not a lie to do or say a thing figuratively (Summa Theologica 2–2.110.3).”¹⁷⁸

Similarly, an English Scholastic philosopher and theologian John Wycliffe (1320–1384 CE) had an exceptionally positive view of the Patriarch Jacob as an absolutely righteous man of God.¹⁷⁹ In the same manner, a German professor of theology and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther (1483–1546 CE), completely supports this ancient Patristic exegesis, saying: “Jacob had an upright and unspoiled will, was saintly and very zealously devoted to godliness, and was fervent in his desire for the [*upcoming*] kingdom of God.”¹⁸⁰ A prominent British theologian and founder of the Methodist movement, John Wesley (1703–1791 CE), correspondingly believed that “[*the Patriarch*] Jacob was a plain man – an honest man that dealt fairly.”¹⁸¹

2.2.4. Post-medieval Bible Translations Presented Jacob – an Innocent Man

This classic orthodox Christian view of the Patriarch Jacob was defended and supported by the early post-medieval Bible translators. As a result, the English scholar and a leading figure in the Protestant Reformation William Tyndale (1494–

¹⁷⁸ Jeffrey, David Lyle, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992, 656.

¹⁷⁹ John Wycliffe and his followers. *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal books, in the earliest English versions made from the Latin Vulgate*. Oxford, at the University Press, 1850.

¹⁸⁰ Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Jan Pelikan and Walter A Hansen. Translated by George Victor Schick. Volume 4, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 21–25 /. Saint-Louis (Mo.): Concordia Publishing House, 1964, 387.

¹⁸¹ Wesley, John. *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*. CCEL, 1987, 53.

1536 CE) in his translation of *The Five Books of Moses* (1534) indicated that: “A *simple*; He [*Jacob*] is simple that is without craft & deceit & contynueth in beleuyng & executynge of godes wyll.”¹⁸² In plain modern English, this means that Jacob was a man without craftiness and deception, and a man who continually believed and fulfilled the will of God in his life. Likewise, John Rogers (1505–1555 CE), an English clergyman and the Bible commentator who guided the development of the *Thomas Matthew Bible* (1537 CE), also carefully preserved the long-standing Patristic view that the Patriarch Jacob was a man “without craftiness and deception.”¹⁸³

It should be also emphasized that *The Great Bible* (1539 CE) was the first authorized edition of the Holy Bible in English, authorized by King Henry VIII of England, which also depicted Jacob as a perfect man by translating the Hebrew adjective [טָם / *tam*] that describes Jacob at Genesis 25:27 “perfect.”¹⁸⁴ In the same manner, *The Bishops' Bible* (1568 CE) is another English translation of the Holy Bible that depicts Esau and his brother Jacob at Genesis 25:27 as follows: "And the boyes grewe, and Esau became a cunnyng hunter, and a wylde man: but Jacob was a perfect man, and dwelled in tentes."¹⁸⁵ Again, in plain modern English, this means that the boys grew up, Esau became a cunning hunter and a wild man [*a man with a wildly unruly nature*], but Jacob was a perfect man and dwelled in tents [*houses of worship*]. It is a well-accepted fact that historically the early post-medieval Bible translators and commentators viewed hunter [*a wild man*] Esau as the complete

¹⁸² See APPENDIX # 2 # WILLIAM TYNDALE'S FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES [Gene 25] – (1494–1536 CE).

¹⁸³ See APPENDIX # 3 # THOMAS MATTHEW BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1505–1555 CE).

¹⁸⁴ See APPENDIX # 4 # THE GREAT BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1540 CE).

¹⁸⁵ See APPENDIX # 7 # BISHOP'S BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1568 CE).

antipode for his perfect brother Jacob, or as *The Holy Bible: Containing The Old And New Testaments* (1876 CE) depicted Jacob, as “an upright man” (Genesis 25:27).¹⁸⁶

There is evidence that the ancient Hebrew and Christian sages, philosophers, historians, and biblical commentators have noted that the book of Genesis depicts the relationship of the two brothers Cain and Abel, as well as Ishmael and Isaac, in addition to Esau and Jacob, all resemble instances of fraternal rivalry when a younger brother always appears in a much more desirable light. In the case of Esau and Jacob, scholars note that both of these twins came from the same womb, had the same parents and an identical environment. However, they are truly worlds apart. For that reason, Menahem M. Kasher notes that “when the boys grew, one [*Jacob*] went along the path of life and the other [*Esau*] along the path of death.”¹⁸⁷ The covenant relationship with the Creator, God's plan of redemption, and spirituality were of no significance to the carnal man – Esau. Therefore, he prefers temporary food to his eternal ecclesiastical position, saying, “What good is in my birthright” (Genesis 25:32 LEB)? After all, Esau on his own free will despised his birthright and sold it to his brother Jacob for nothing as if it were nothing. Therefore, *The NIV Application Commentary* highlights that Esau “valued it [*the priceless birthright*] so cheaply that he sold it for a bowl of stew.”¹⁸⁸ It should also be emphasized that the New Testament author of the book of Hebrews fully supports the view that Esau's sinfulness was the reason he freely sold his birthright. After this transaction, Jacob, who experienced communication and deep relationship with God, inherited the legal

¹⁸⁶ See APPENDIX # 12 # JULIA E. SMITH. THE HOLY BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1869 CE).

¹⁸⁷ Paterson Moira. 11–12.

¹⁸⁸ Walton, John H. *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text ... to Contemporary Life*. 551.

right to receive paternal blessings, which were reserved for the holder of the birthright, and this is exactly what Jacob received with the support of his pious mother Rebekah.

2.3. The role of the figure of Rebekah in the positive interpretation of Jacob

From Second Temple Judaism 515 BCE to the mid-16th century, the historians and philosophers of the Jewish and Christian communities, as well as the authors of non-biblical secular and religious literature, portrayed the Matriarch Rebekah exceedingly positively. According to the biblical narrative, Rebekah was personally selected by the Lord God as the suitable wife for the Patriarch Isaac and thus the mother of the chosen people, preserving the Messianic line, and therefore bringing blessings upon every human tribe (Genesis 3:15; 12:1–3). Ancient believers were confident that this divine choice was attested to by Rebekah’s precise ancestry, appearance, physical strength, remarkable morality, sexual purity, strong-will, and ability to communicate with the Most High God directly (Genesis 24, 25).

Therefore, *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* points out that “Rebekah is ‘God’s [*chosen*] instrument’ in *Friar’s Tale*... in the fragmentary play of Isaac in the Towneley cycle. Rebekah appears as a wise counselor to Isaac. She is [*also*] mentioned in Pope’s paraphrase of Chaucer’s *Merchant’s Tale*, in [a] list of virtuous women.”¹⁸⁹ Additionally, experts have observed that “in medieval art, Rebekah is usually depicted as the exemplary bride at the well, serving the camels of Isaac’s slave, as the crafty servant of God hiding in the background while

¹⁸⁹ Jeffrey, David L, David L Jeffrey, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992, 657.

Jacob obtains the blessing, or as the bride of Christ (Ecclesia) holding her pitcher or adorned with bracelets and earrings.”¹⁹⁰

On the other hand, a number of latest biblical commentators primarily use a negative adjective or phrase to depict Rebekah, such as a manipulator, liar, deceiver, swindler, tricky, or, as Bruce Vawter says, the “Lady Macbeth of the Bible.”¹⁹¹ Similarly, Walter Brueggemann argued that in the biblical narrative, Rebekah should not evoke any positive emotions from the modern listener.¹⁹² John Skinner went further and sarcastically suggested that the jealous Rebekah is an illustration of the Jewish concept of femininity.¹⁹³ Therefore, this portion of research aims to depict how, over the centuries, different groups of people have looked at Rebekah’s character.

2.3.1 Who Started Her Criticism

In the light of this discussion, let's find out exactly when and thanks to whom exactly the Matriarch Rebekah began to be criticized. It is a well-documented fact that the first to sharply question Rebekah’s character and thereby cast a shadow on her whole life was the French theologian John Calvin (1510–1564 CE). In his commentary on the *Book of Genesis*, Calvin implemented into public thoughts the

¹⁹⁰ *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. 657.

¹⁹¹ Vawter, Bruce. *On Genesis: A New Reading*. 1st ed. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1977, 299.

¹⁹² Brueggemann, Walter. *Genesis*. Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982, 234.

¹⁹³ Skinner, John. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*. 2nd Ed. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, [1]. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1951, 370.

idea that Rebekah as a human being was not praiseworthy, as her attitude “was ill regulated.” Thereafter, he added, “and on this point the corruption of nature too much betrays itself.”¹⁹⁴ It must be noted however that in his commentary, John Calvin does not provide any patristic, historical, or linguistic-grammatical reason for such a far-reaching, innovative hypothesis. Nonetheless, his new drastic interpretation of Rebekah's life overturned the traditional exegetical approach and laid the foundation for a radical change in outlook on Rebekah's life, which has since become negatively reflected in connection with her son Jacob and vice versa.¹⁹⁵ In the seventeenth century, Calvinist interpretation gained many more followers and exerted great influence on the clergy and parishioners of the rapidly growing Protestant communities.

In a relatively short period of time, the negative opinion of the matriarch Rebekah was raised up and cultivated by Matthew Henry (1662–1714 CE), whose biblical commentaries also had a massive impact on the Christian community. For instance, in his interpretation of Genesis 27, Henry stated that “Rebekah is here plotting to procure for Jacob the blessing which was designed for Esau. The means were bad, and in no way justifiable.”¹⁹⁶ It is certainly impressive that Calvin suggested the hypothesis that Rebecca's attitude was “poorly regulated,” Henry a

¹⁹⁴ Calvin, Jean. *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses, Called Genesis*. Edited by John King, (Incumbent of Christ Church, Hull). Calvin's Commentaries. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans Pub, 1948, 50.

¹⁹⁵ Probst, Christopher J. *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

¹⁹⁶ Henry, Matthew, Leslie F Church, and Gerald W Peterman. *The NIV Matthew Henry Commentary in One Volume: Based on the Broad Oak Edition*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1992, 131.

short time later decisively asserts as an indisputable fact that Rebekah was a sinner who taught her son Jacob how to lie and deceive.

A few years later, Charles Henry Mackintosh (1820–1890 CE) stated that in “Rebekah and Jacob, we see nature taking advantage of nature... There was no waiting upon God whatever.” Mackintosh also argued that “as to Rebekah, she was called to feel all the sad results of her cunning actions.”¹⁹⁷ In the same way, Friedrich August Dilman (1825–1894 CE) also sharply criticized two of these people, stating that “Rebekah’s fraudulent deceit and Jacob’s sin are not unpunished.”¹⁹⁸ In the meanwhile, the most devastating blow for Rebekah's reputation came from Samuel Rolles Driver (1846–1914 CE), an English scholar at New College and Oxford. His opinion was taken as the new standard by many scholars during the post-Enlightenment time. According to Dr. Driver, “the action of Rebekah and Jacob was utterly discreditable and indefensible.”¹⁹⁹

2.3.2. The Jewish view of Rebekah

The Hebrew community understands Rebekah in the Genesis portrayal as the answer for a need or a prayer, as well as the person who strengthened others by giving them water to drink. For example, Meir Sternberg points out that Rebekah is the water-drawing woman whose performance surpasses even the most optimistic

¹⁹⁷ Mackintosh, Charles Henry. *Notes on the Book of Genesis*. New York: Revell, 1879, 278.

¹⁹⁸ Dillmann, August, August Knobel, and August Wilhelm Knobel. *Genesis, Critically and Exegetically Expounded*. Translated by William Barron Stevenson. Edinburgh Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1897, 212.

¹⁹⁹ Buss, Martin J, and Society of Biblical Literature. *Encounter with the Text: Form and History in the Hebrew Bible*. Semeia Supplements. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979, 164.

human expectations.²⁰⁰ As a matter of fact, the very first words in the Bible from the mouth of Rebekah are “Drink, my lord” (Genesis 24:18). The narrator emphasizes that Rebekah was simply asked by Abraham’s servant, Eliezer of Damascus, “Please give me a little water from your jar” (Genesis 24:17); however, “when she [*Rebekah*] had finished giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also until they have finished drinking” (Genesis 24:19). According to Genesis 24:10, Eliezer came to Mesopotamia with 10 loaded camels belonging to his master the Patriarch Abraham. A farmer who breeds livestock would point out that a typical camel can drink over 50 gallons of water at a go. Nonetheless, this woman was willing to scoop up, with her own jar, perhaps over 500 gallons of water to satisfy 10 thirsty animals, which implies a lot of hard work. Thus, Rebekah is not only a model of hospitality but also a pious woman who is willing to do much more than asked. The early Rabbinical homiletical interpretation of the book of Genesis points out that Abraham knew, long before Isaac and Rebekah were wed, that Rebekah would be his daughter-in-law (Genesis Rabbah 57.1).²⁰¹

As a demonstration of Rebekah’s worthiness to become the new matriarch of the chosen family, the Holy Scriptures describes her ancestry, outstanding physical strength, appearance, hospitality, and sexual purity, which is critically important for the biblical standard of holiness. Additionally, Rebekah was a very beautiful woman: “a virgin; no man had ever slept with her” (Genesis 24:16). Some readers have thus raised the question: “Why does the Bible refer to Rebekah as “a virgin,” and then add that “no man had ever slept with her?” The medieval French rabbi Shlomo

²⁰⁰ Meir Sternberg. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*. Indiana University Press, 1985, 138.

²⁰¹ Neusner, Jacob. *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis: A New American Translation*. Brown Judaic Studies, No. 104–106. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1985, 291, 317–318.

Yitzchaki, well-known by the acronym of Rashi, in discussing this passage, expresses that “not every virgin is necessarily ‘innocent!’ In ancient time, a young woman could guard her virginity, but still act promiscuously in a sexual manner with men.” Rashi thereafter adds: “Therefore, Scripture teaches us that she [*Rebekah*] was innocent of all this” (Genesis Rabbah 60:5). Similarly, Rabbi *Michael Leo Samuel* argues the following: "Obviously, if she was a virgin, then no man ‘knew her’! There are two kinds of virginity. One type pertains to young females who have not yet had sexual intercourse and have preserved their sexual innocence." Thereafter, Samuel adds that "The second kind of virginity pertains to an innocence of soul. Rebekah’s virginity consisted of both types."²⁰²

In her article in *Conservative Judaism*, Menorah Rothenberg argues that the biblical narrative portrays “Rebekah as Abraham reincarnate,” the new mother of the chosen people, and the one with the best moral qualification.²⁰³ Thus, “Rebekah has to repeat the step once taken by Abraham. She has to leave her family, her town, and her country” (Genesis 24:57–61).²⁰⁴ Midrash, the ancient Hebrew commentary on part of the written and oral Torah, has always considered her a “lily among the thorns!”²⁰⁵ Talking about this powerful metaphorical expression, Deborah A. Green points out that “R. Hanan of Sepphoris describes the person who performs ‘acts of loving kindness’ (gemilut ḥasadim) as a ‘lily among the thorns,’” going on to point out the following: “In the same page, the Matriarch Rebekah is described as a lily

²⁰² Samuel, Michael L. *Rediscovering Philo of Alexandria: A First Century Torah Commentator Volume I*. First Edition Design Publ., 2017.

²⁰³ Rothenberg, Menorah. *A Portrait of Rebekah. The Devolution of a Matriarch into a Patriarch*. *Conservative Judaism* 54, no.2 (Winter 2002), 62.

²⁰⁴ Teugels, Lieve M. *Bible and Midrash: The Story of "the Wooing of Rebekah" (gen. 24)*. *Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology*, 35. Leuven: Peeters, 2004, 94–95.

²⁰⁵ Teugels, Lieve M. *Bible and Midrash: The Story of "the Wooing of Rebekah" (gen. 24)*. 204.

among the thorns because she is a ‘righteous one’ (tzadeqet) among many tricksters.”²⁰⁶ Similarly, one of the oldest Haggadic Midrash on Song of Songs supports this same hermeneutical view of Rebekah (Song of Songs Rabbah 2.2).

The ancient Hebrew sages and commentators frequently emphasize that the biblical narrative describes Rebekah as a great woman who brought much comfort and peace into Isaac’s personal life (Genesis 24:67; Genesis Rabbah 60.16). Furthermore, rabbis state that Rebekah’s “beauty and her virginity, incorporate the interlocking of the ‘human’ condition for Isaac’s wife with the divine hand.”²⁰⁷ Other details portraying the Matriarch Rebekah as the ideal wife, presented through action and speech, will supplement this impressive list. In addition, the Hebrew sages point out that Rebekah is among seven well-respected biblical women who had difficulty conceiving. Nevertheless, owing to her righteousness and Isaac’s prayer, the Lord God Almighty miraculously intervened in her life (Genesis Rabbah 53.5; 63.5). “Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife... The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, ‘Why is this happening to me?’ So she went to inquire of the Lord.” (Genesis 25:21–22).

Many commentators also point out that “Rebekah is the first human being to have sought God.”²⁰⁸ Furthermore, she is the very first woman of the Bible to whom

²⁰⁶ Green, Deborah A. *The Aroma of Righteousness: Scent and Seduction in Rabbinic Life and Literature*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011, 153.

²⁰⁷ Rothenberg, Menorah. *A Portrait of Rebekah. The Devolution of a Matriarch into a Patriarch*. *Conservative Judaism* 54, no.2 (Winter 2002), 46.

²⁰⁸ Zornberg, Avivah G. *The Murmuring Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious*. New York: Schocken Books, 2009.

God spoke directly.²⁰⁹ Therefore, in Judaism, the Matriarch Rebekah is considered a prophetess (Midrash Tanhuma, Genesis. Wayehi 12.16; Genesis Rabbah 67.9).²¹⁰ “The Lord said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger’” (Genesis 25:23).

Hebrew scholars and linguists often highlight this oracle as not mainly about the two individuals to be born, but about the two great nations, Israel and Edom (Rom), these two distinctive persons are going to establish. As has been known throughout history, Esau and Jacob hold opposite ideological beliefs, life values, political beliefs, and spiritual characteristics. According to Midrash Rabbah, “Esau was the one who stretched out against his brother Jacob, even while still in the mother’s womb.” Thus, the psalmist, talking about Esau, said: “The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent” (Psalm 58:3–4).²¹¹ The Hebrew commentators regularly highlight the fact that the psalmist describes Esau as a liar who poisons like a serpent. Thus, people should not trust the man associated with the deceiver-serpent (devil). Moreover, the Hebrew commentators argue that God foresaw and revealed for Rebekah that Jacob and his offspring will serve Yahweh

²⁰⁹ Friedman, Richard E. *Commentary on the Torah: With a New English Translation*. San Francisco, Calif.: Harper San Francisco, 2001, 87.

²¹⁰ Neusner, Jacob. *Genesis Rabbah: The Judaic Commentary to the Book of Genesis: A New American Translation*. Brown Judaic Studies, No. 104–106. Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1985, 418.

²¹¹ Midrash Rabbah. *Genesis In Two Volumes*. Translated by Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman The Soncino Press, London, 1961, 559.

(*'ja:hwei*) — the Lord God of the Israelites — and that Esau and his descendants would primarily worship idols.²¹²

To emphasize Rebekah's excruciating pregnancy and life-threatening difficulty during delivery, rabbinic sources claim that during birth, Esau ripped up his mother's womb such that she could not have more children (Pesikta de Rab Kahana, Piska 3.1).²¹³ Despite this, and later disregarding the dysfunctionality of Esau's family, Rebekah was always a loving mother to both her children.²¹⁴ In addition, the Hebrew sages believe that as an illustration of Rebekah's love toward Esau, the narrative deliberately describes that, instead of his personal tent (house) Esau, even at the age of 77, kept his valuable clothes, which he inherited as a firstborn son, in the house of his mother Rebekah (Genesis 27:15).

Hebrew scholars recognize the Patriarch Isaac as an important link in the patriarchal chain who played an essential role in his children's lives. Alternatively, as Ephraim Avigdor Speiser has pointed out, "the vitality of the [*righteous*] line will now depend on the woman who is to become Jacob's mother."²¹⁵ As a consequence, the context makes known what Rebekah said to her youngest son Jacob: "Look, I

²¹² Bereishis. *Genesis, A New Translation With A Commentary Anthologized From Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. Translation and commentary by Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz. Vol. I. Mesorah Publications, Ltd, 2009, 1055.

²¹³ Braude, William G, and Israel J Kapstein. *Pesikta Dē-Rab Kahāna: R. Kahana's Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Festal Days* (version 2nd ed.). 2nd ed. Philadelphia, Pa.: Jewish Publication Society, 2002.

²¹⁴ Leibowitz, Nehama. *Studies in Bereshit (genesis): In the Context of Ancient and Modern Jewish Bible Commentary*. Special Edition for Lambda Publishers. Brooklyn, New York: LAMBDA, 2288–289.

²¹⁵ Speiser, E. A. Genesis. [1st ed]. *The Anchor Bible, I*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964, 182.

overheard your father say to your brother Esau, ‘Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.’” Then, she added, “Now, my son, listen carefully... I can prepare some tasty food... Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies” (Genesis 27:5–10). Deliberating this passage, Hebrew sages share the view that since Jacob had legally bought the birthright from his brother Esau, Rebekah must have thought, “Jacob has [*legally*] bought the birthright from Esau, it is only right that he should wear these clothes [*and receive the blessing of the firstborn*].”²¹⁶

In light of this conversation, it must be emphasized that Hebrew scholars take seriously the fact that the patriarch Isaac never condemned his wife Rebekah for her deeds; he also fully agreed with her plan to send their youngest son Jacob to Mesopotamia to find a suitable wife.²¹⁷ For example, Jay Hillman, Doctor of Juridical Science, points out that Isaac never expressed that he had been cheated or deceived by his spouse Rebekah.²¹⁸ Additionally, the general editor of *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Allen Clifton, states that “Rebekah is not blamed [*by the author*] for her wickedness.”²¹⁹ Based on the original textual observation, rabbis, sages, and Hebrew biblical scholars point out that, as a prophetess, Rebekah always acted in response to the Divine Commandment.²²⁰

²¹⁶ Tanhuma, Midrash. *Genesis. Vol. I.* Edited by S. Buber Recension. Translated by John T. Townsend. KTAV publishing House, INC, 1989.

²¹⁷ Brown, Raymond E. *The Jerome Bible Commentary.* Prentice–Hall, Inc., 1968, 100.

²¹⁸ Hillman, Jordan J. *The Torah and Its God: A Humanist Inquiry.* Amherst, N. Y.: Prometheus Books, 2001, 95.

²¹⁹ Allen, Clifton J. *1901 — The Broadman Bible Commentary.* Edited by Clifton J. Allen. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman Press, 1972, 214.

²²⁰ Allen, Christine G. *On Me Be the Curse, My Son!* Philadelphia: Fortress 1979, 163.

2.3.3. The Extra-biblical View of Rebekah

A well-known example of extra-biblical literature is the *Book of Jubilees*. Modern scholars believe that this was compiled in the second century BCE. In general, the book re-tells, in its unique way, all the biblical stories recorded in the *Book of Genesis* and the first half of *Exodus*. In his commentary on this book, a contemporary Hebrew scholar James L. Kugel fully recognizes the positive description of Rebekah, terming her as “the powerful woman of Jubilees.”²²¹ Similarly, the Catholic scholar John C. Endres rightly has pointed out that *Jubilees* devotes an unusual amount of attention to Rebekah, depicting her as the model matriarch with a highly important role in establishing and strengthening the chosen Abrahamic family. “Rebekah formed an indispensable element in the structure, and she emerges as the central character.”²²²

Likewise the protestant scholar James C. VanderKam suggests that the *Book of Jubilees* completely approves of Rebekah’s actions: “Appropriate usurpation of the paternal role in blessing her son—something she could do because she, like Abraham and unlike Isaac, recognized his [*Jacob*’s] true character and superiority over his older brother.” Then, VanderKam concludes that “Something simply had to be done to avert his ill-conceived plan, one that ran contrary to the insights of Abraham and Rebecca into the souls of the two young men.”²²³

²²¹ Kugel, James L. *A Walk through Jubilees: Studies in the Book of Jubilees and the World of Its Creation*. Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism, V. 156. Leiden: BRILL, 2012, 168, 432.

²²² Endres, John C. *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees*. *Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 18*. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1987, 183–184.

²²³ VanderKam, James C. *The Book of Jubilees. Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, 62.

According to the context of the *Book of Jubilees*, the Patriarch Abraham evidently recognized during his lifetime that his youngest grandson Jacob would be his true spiritual heir. Consequently, Abraham blessed Jacob with Rebekah being present: “My dear son Jacob whom I myself love, may God bless you from above the firmament. May he give you all the blessings with which he blessed Adam, Enoch, Noah, and Shem. Everything that he said to me and everything that he promised to give me may he attach to you and your [*descendants*].”²²⁴ Afterward, the patriarch instructed Rebekah to watch over Jacob, since the covenantal blessing would be exclusively prolonged through Jacob and not Esau (Book of Jubilees 19). Following the personal revelation of God and the instruction of Abraham, Rebekah dedicated the rest of her life to faithfully fulfilling her destiny—to protect and support her son Jacob (Genesis 25, 27; Jubilees 25). Furthermore, the context of *Jubilees* reveals that Rebekah’s actions toward all members of her family were entirely formed in heaven (Jubilees 25–26).

The ancient manuscript *Joseph and Aseneth* is another early extra-biblical text that describes the Matriarch Rebekah positively—as the model of women’s beauty. This manuscript mainly depicts the romantic relationship of Jacob’s beloved son Joseph and his Egyptian spouse Asenath. The amazing beauty of Joseph’s wife was compared, in this book, to the Hebrew matriarchs, Rebekah being one of them. A contemporary scholar John J. Collins highlighted that the narrator of the text comments that Aseneth did not look like any Egyptian women, but was rather, “in every respect similar to the daughters of the Hebrews; and she was tall as Sarah, handsome as Rebecca, and beautiful as Rachel.”²²⁵

²²⁴ VanderKam, James C.. 58.

²²⁵ Collins, John J. “*Joseph and Aseneth: Jewish or Christian?*” *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 14.2 (2005), 107.

In light of this discussion, it should be noted that Rebekah is also positively characterized through the writings of a first-century historian Titus Flavius Josephus, a personal friend and advisor of Vespasian's son Titus, serving as translator when Titus—the future Emperor—led the Siege of Jerusalem (the First Jewish–Roman War 70 CE). Throughout his outstanding works, Josephus often describes Rebekah's noble status, the goodness of her heart, her hospitality, hardworking attitude, and profound personal wisdom.²²⁶ Additionally, the Matriarch Rebekah is characterized positively throughout the writings of the most famous ancient philosophers such as Philo of Alexandria. For example, Markus H. McDowell stressed that throughout Philo's writings “Rebekah represents Patience.”²²⁷ Similarly, Craig S. Keener points out that “elsewhere, Philo seems ready to allegorize Rebekah as a true disciple of [*the Lord*] God able to teach wisdom to men.”²²⁸ Furthermore, it is necessary to re-emphasize that since the beginning of the Current Era to the mid-16th century, Rebekah has always been positively depicted on artifacts as well as secular and religious literature.²²⁹

2.3.4 The Patristic view of Rebekah

²²⁶ Josephus, Flavius, and Paul L Maier. *Josephus, the Essential Writings: A Condensation of Jewish Antiquities and the Jewish War*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1988, 29–32.

²²⁷ McDowell, Markus H. *Prayers of Jewish Women: Studies of Patterns of Prayer in the Second Temple Period*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament. 2. Reihe, 211. Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2006, 147–148.

²²⁸ Keener, Craig S. *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012, 631–632.

²²⁹ Jeffrey, David Lyle, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). 657.

A modern professor of theology and ethics Russell Ronald Reno elucidates the following historical fact: “In their concern for the moral character of the patriarchs, the Church Fathers differed very little from the ancient Jewish reader. They were also anxious to minimize the apparent immorality of Rebekah.”²³⁰ Similarly, the *Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature* points out that “on the matter of the deception of Isaac by Jacob when coached by Rebekah, biblical commentators from early times through the 16th century tended to sanction Rebekah’s conduct.”²³¹ It had been assumed by the Early Church, based on personal experience (starting during the pregnancy), the prophecy of God, the Fathers’ warning, and personal observation, that Rebekah had been veritably forced by these surrounding circumstances to protect her upright son Jacob from his wicked brother – Esau.

This is similar to the conduct of her predecessor, the Matriarch Sarah. The ancient Christian view observes that in the case of Sarah, God himself even commented to Abraham the following: “Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac [*the youngest son*] that your offspring will be reckoned” (Genesis 21:12). For that reason, the Church Fathers were convinced that similarly to those of Sarah, the Divine Will was manifested in the affairs of the Matriarch Rebekah.²³²

There is much evidence that the ancient Christian community was also highly positive about Rebekah and her support of Jacob, in particular in her support of Jacob receiving the blessing of his father Isaac (Genesis 27). For instance, Quodvultdeus,

²³⁰ Reno, R. R.. *Genesis*. Brazos Press, 2010, 227.

²³¹ Jeffrey, David L, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin P Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992, 656.

²³² Sheridan, Mark, and Thomas C Oden. *Genesis 12–50. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*. Old Testament, Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2002, 169.

a fifth-century Church Father and the Bishop of Carthage, taught that Rebekah was “the mother, who had heard the promise of the blessing for the elder brother, since she was divinely inspired, prepared a mystical plot made with prophetic art in order to direct the blessing to Jacob.”²³³ Likewise, Robert Graves and Raphael Patai note that “Rebekah who overheard Isaac’s words, summoned Jacob as soon as Esau was out of sight. ‘Your father means to bestow a blessing on Esau. This must not be, since you are now his first-born [*because Esau despised and freely sold his birthright*]!’” In addition, through the course of history, theologians and biblical commentators have argued that later “Jacob did not lie to Isaac saying only: ‘I am your first-born son,’ which was the truth—since he had bought Esau’s birthright.”²³⁴

It seems that Jacob was deeply concerned about being a part of his mother’s strategy when he said the following: “My brother Esau is a hairy man, while I have smooth skin. What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing” (Genesis 27:11–12). Rebekah replied, “My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say” (Genesis 27:13). The ancient Christian community recognized that in her willingness to take the curse upon herself, the Matriarch Rebekah exhibits amazing spiritual maturity.²³⁵ Following this orthodox view, James Jordan stated the following: “We see again that it is [the] woman who [tricks] the serpent, eye for eye and tooth for tooth. Even more importantly, we see that Rebekah was willing to die for the covenant. She offers her

²³³ Sheridan, Mark, and Thomas C. Oden., 169.

²³⁴ Graves Robert, and Raphael Patai. *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1964, 197–199.

²³⁵ Saint John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Genesis 46–67*. Translated by Robert C. Hill. The Catholic University of America Press, 1992, 53.

life and all her happiness to secure God’s will. In her willingness to die, Rebekah is nothing less than a picture of Jesus [*Christ*] Himself.”²³⁶

It is truly remarkable that most ancient and some contemporary theologians compare Rebekah to the image of Jesus Christ—the one who sacrificed his life for the benefit of others. Moreover, Christine Garside Allen appropriately emphasizes the fact that Rebekah “is also the first person in the Bible to offer herself in reparation of someone else.”²³⁷ Like Abraham who, in his obedience to the Lord God Almighty, was willing to sacrifice his youngest and beloved son, Isaac; Rebekah, as a symbol of her obedience to God, demonstrated her willingness to sacrifice her own life for the sake of her youngest and beloved son, Jacob.

The considerable writings of the Church Fathers have determined Rebekah’s actions to be an exemplary act of obedience to the Lord God. For example, John Chrysostom (347–407 CE), Archbishop of Constantinople, spoke about Rebekah as an extraordinary woman who “was not concocting this only out of her own thinking but was also implementing the prediction from on high.” Chrysostom concludes that “Jacob and Rebekah had done what was expected of them, the one needing his mother’s advice, the other playing her part completely.”²³⁸ Likewise, following the ancient Patristic view, Martin Luther (1483–1546) interpreted Rebekah’s behavior as an “obliging” action, since “it not only serves the advantage of someone [*but*] prevents a sin [*of Esau*]. Therefore, it is not proper to call it a lie; for it is rather a virtue and outstanding prudence... and advantages of [*others*] are served. For this

²³⁶ Jordan, James B. *Primeval Saints: Studies in the Patriarchs of Genesis*. Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001, 96.

²³⁷ Allen, Christine G. *On Me Be the Curse, My Son!* Philadelphia: Fortress 1979, 166, 171.

²³⁸ Saint John Chrysostom. *Homilies on Genesis 46–67*. Translated by Robert C. Hill. The Catholic University of America Press, 1992, 53–54.

reason, it can be called a pious concern for the brethren, or, in Paul’s language, zeal for piety.”²³⁹

3. CHANGING THE PARADIGM OF INTERPRETATION OF THE IMAGE OF JACOB IN REFORMED THEOLOGY

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²³⁹ Luther. *Martin. Luther’s Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, Hilton C Oswald, Helmut T Lehmann, Christopher Boyd Brown, Benjamin T. G Mayes, and James L Langebartels. [American Edition] / ed. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955, 292.

3.1. The contribution of John Calvin and his successors in the formation of the negative image of Jacob

Modern historians and anthropologists have argued that after the first ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325 CE), the Protestant Reformation was one of the most significant religious events, wielding widespread influence over the course of history, the social order of society, and inspiring political, intellectual, cultural, and theological upheaval. At the outset, the Protestant reformers contended to have broken from the Roman Catholic Church precisely on the issue of the source of authority. In theory, the Protestant rallying cry of “Sola Scriptura” implied the rejection of the authority of Roman Catholic tradition, in favor of returning to the Holy Bible as the only foundation for moral, social order, and theological decisions. On the other hand, in reality, the Reformation slightly opened the door to interpreting the ancient biblical narrative without any reference to traditional Patristic approaches.²⁴⁰ As a consequence, the Protestant Reformation as a whole slowly led to considerable changes in Western Christianity and, in particular, altered the conventional exegesis of the life, character, and evaluation of the Patriarch Jacob and a complete reinterpretation of his personal name.²⁴¹

During the Protestant Reformation (1517–1648 CE), the innovative idea arose, especially among the Reformed theologians, that the Patriarch Jacob as a human being did not possess qualities worthy of praise. The first individual to sharply question the character of Jacob and thereby cast a dark shadow on his whole life was French theologian John Calvin (1509–1564 CE). In his substantial

²⁴⁰ Thiselton, Anthony C. *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub, 2009, 28. See also, Gritsch, Eric W. *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012.

²⁴¹ Ryrie, Alec. *Protestants: The Faith That Made the Modern World*. Penguin Books, 2017.

commentary on the book of Genesis, the founder of Reformed theology deliberately implemented into public thought the innovative idea that Jacob as a man was unworthy of admiration. Thus, the fact that the Patriarch Jacob became “the father of the church was not given as a reward, but only as a pure result of God’s grace.”²⁴²

At that moment in history, John Calvin, speaking of Genesis 25:29–34, persistently added: “Jacob should have willingly satisfied his brother’s hunger. But when being asked, he refuses to do so: *who would not condemn him for his inhumanity?*”²⁴³ In his own uncommon way of thinking, Calvin also reasoned that “in compelling Esau to surrender his right of primogeniture, he [*Jacob*] seems to make an illicit and frivolous compact.”²⁴⁴ As a result, according to Calvin’s groundbreaking view, Esau became a victim of his youngest wicked brother Jacob. In conjunction with the above information, it is important to emphasize that John Calvin also strongly condemned Jacob’s behavior as described in Genesis 27. According to this strong voice of influence in Reformed theology, Jacob was able to receive the blessing of [*the firstborn child*] by deceit, and also thanks to the support of his evil mother Rebekah.

In this chapter, Moses prosecutes, in many words, a history which does not appear to be of great utility. It amounts to this; Esau having gone out, at his father's command, to hunt; Jacob, in his brother's clothing, was, by the artifice of his mother, induced to obtain by stealth the blessing due by the right of nature to the firstborn. It seems even like a child's play to present to his father

²⁴² Calvin, Jean. *Genesis*. Crossway Classic Commentaries. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 224.

²⁴³ CALVIN, JOHN. *Commentaries of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. Place of Publication Not Identified: DEVOTED Publishing, 2018, 278.

²⁴⁴ CALVIN, JOHN. 2018, 278.

a kid instead of venison, to feign himself to be hairy by putting on skins, and, under the name of his brother, to get the blessing by a lie... It truly appears ridiculous, that an old man, deceived by the cunning [*sapience*] of his wife, should, through ignorance and error, have given utterance to what was contrary to his wish. And surely the stratagem of Rebekah was not without fault; for although she could not guide her husband by salutary counsel, yet it was not a legitimate method of acting, to circumvent him by such deceit.²⁴⁵

As a result, Calvin considered Jacob ‘a deceiver,’ which seemingly contradicted all the ancients and his contemporaries’ Reformed theologians, including Huldrych Zwingli and Wolfgang Musculus.²⁴⁶

3.1.1 Further Development of Calvin's View of Jacob's Character

Over time, Calvin's profound influence in the city of Geneva, modern Switzerland, made him famous and helped him gather more followers among ordinary people, biblical commentators and national Bible translators, especially among the British. Thus, according to *The Encyclopædia Britannica*: “the Geneva Bible (1557–1560 CE), also called *Breeches Bible*, a new translation of the Holy Bible [was] published in Geneva by a colony of Protestant scholars in exile from England who worked under the general direction of Miles Coverdale and John Knox and under the influence of John Calvin.”²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Wellman, Sam. *John Calvin: Father of Reformed Theology*. Heroes of the Faith. Ulrichsville, OH: Barbour, 2001.

²⁴⁶ Thompson, John Lee. The Immoralities of the Patriarchs in the History of Exegesis: A Reappraisal of Calvin's Position. *Calvin Theological Journal* 1991, Vol. 26, N° 1, P. 9–46 (1991), 14, 20, 37, 43.

²⁴⁷ *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Geneva-Bible>

Therefore, significantly influenced by John Calvin and his eye-catching innovative theological system, *the Geneva Bible* was the first known English translation of the Bible which, in contradiction to categorically all preceding Bible translations, claimed that the name Jacob means, “a deceiver.” The rationale of this interpretation was completely established on Esau's statement: “Was he not iuftely called Iaakob, for he hathe deceiued me thefe two times” (Genesis 27:36 TGB).²⁴⁸ Impartial readers will immediately notice a side-note next to the verse 36 that interprets the biblical text: “In Gen.25, he was so-called [*Jacob*] because he held his brother by the heel, as though he would overthrow him: and therefore he is here called an over thrower, or deceiver” (See the side-note to *the Geneva Bible* 1560 for Genesis 27:36).²⁴⁹

Around this historical time, the king of Great Britain, Henry VIII (1491–1547 CE), based on his own socio-political motives, thoroughly split with the Roman Catholic Church and started the procedure of creating the independent Anglican Church, where the monarch is also the supreme leader of the church. From the very beginning, the book called *Henry Viii and the English Reformation* explains “Sixteenth century Catholic historians of the English Reformation were convinced that its cause was Henry VIII’s decision to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn. Their Protestant opponents were happy to acclaim Henry’s decision as the instrument of divine providence...”²⁵⁰

²⁴⁸ Berry, Lloyd E, and William Whittingham. *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

²⁴⁹ See APPENDIX #6# GENIVA BIBLE [Gene 27] – (1560 CE)

²⁵⁰ Rex, Richard. *Henry Viii and the English Reformation*. British History in Perspective. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993, 1.

For the new church, it was a long, bumpy, and painful process to develop her self-governing theological doctrine and find her scrupulous niche in the massive galaxy of biblical theology. However, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603 CE), the new Anglican Church was completely drawn into the orbit of the rapidly growing and very attractive (especially for the British royal family) Reformed theology which severed any relationship with the Catholic Church and her teachings.²⁵¹ For that reason, the newest English Bible translation, completely supported by the state church and the royal family, known as *the King James Bible*, entirely adopted the *Geneva Bible's* expository approach to interpreting the Patriarch Jacob's name and character. As a result, *the King James Bible* also depicted Jacob as "a supplanter." (Genesis 27:36 KJV 1611).²⁵²

During the seventeenth century, the Reformed exegesis gained many more followers and exerted much influence on the clergy and parishioners of the local congregation, who remained under the sway of Calvin's groundbreaking ideas. As a result, in a relatively short period of time, the negative opinion of the Patriarch Jacob was presented and cultivated by another influential Reformed theologian, Matthew Henry (1662–1714 CE), whose commentaries also had a massive impact on the whole Christian community. For instance, in his interpretation of Genesis 27, Matthew Henry stated that:

Rebekah is here plotting to procure for Jacob the blessing which was designed for Esau. The means were bad, and in no way justifiable. If it was not wrong to Esau to deprive him of the blessing (he himself having forfeited it by selling

²⁵¹ Hampton, Stephen William Peter. *Anti-Arminians: The Anglican Reformed Tradition from Charles II to George I*. Oxford Theological Monographs. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

²⁵² See APPENDIX #8# THE ORIGINAL KING JAMES BIBLE [Gene 27] – (1611 CE).

the birthright), yet it was a wrong to Isaac. It was a wrong to Jacob too, whom she taught to deceive, by putting a lie into his mouth.²⁵³

It is certainly impressive that John Calvin suggested the pioneering hypothesis that Jacob and Rebecca's attitudes were "poorly regulated," while Matthew Henry a short time later decisively asserted as an indisputable fact that the Matriarch Rebekah was a sinner who taught her son Jacob how to lie and deceive.²⁵⁴

Following the same reformed logic of interpretation, a gifted writer and commentator Charles Henry Mackintosh (1820–1890 CE) correspondingly stated that, in “Rebekah and Jacob, we see nature taking advantage of nature.” Then he concluded, “there was no waiting upon God whatever.”²⁵⁵ Mackintosh also strongly argued that “as to Rebekah, she was called to feel all the sad results of her cunning actions.”²⁵⁶ In the same way, a German professor of philosophy Friedrich August Dillman (1825–1894 CE) sharply criticized these two characters, accordingly stating that “Rebekah’s fraudulent deceit and Jacob’s sin are not unpunished.”²⁵⁷ In light of this conversation, it is essential to point out that since the Protestant Reformation,

²⁵³ Henry, Matthew, Leslie F Church, and Gerald W Peterman. *The NIV Matthew Henry Commentary in One Volume: Based on the Broad Oak Edition*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1992, 131.

²⁵⁴ Henry, Matthew, Leslie F Church, and Gerald W Peterman. 132.

²⁵⁵ Mackintosh, Charles Henry. *Notes on the Book of Genesis*. New York: Revell, 1879, 278.

²⁵⁶ Mackintosh, Charles Henry. 1879, 278.

²⁵⁷ Dillmann, August, August Knobel, and August Wilhelm Knobel. *Genesis, Critically and Exegetically Expounded*. Translated by William Barron Stevenson. Edinburgh Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1897, 212.

the Patriarch Jacob began to be portrayed negatively, often in combination with his beloved mother, Rebekah, and vice versa.²⁵⁸

3.1.2. The Contribution of Samuel R. Driver to the Development of the Reformed View

However, the most devastating blow for Jacob's reputation was committed by Samuel Rolles Driver (1846–1914 CE), an English divine and Hebrew scholar at New College, Oxford, and a clergyman of the Anglican Church, whose teaching, as already mentioned, strongly resonates with many of Calvin's thoughts. In his monumental publication entitled *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Remarks*, Samuel Driver sophisticatedly discredits the reputation of the Patriarch Jacob and his mother – Rebekah. It should also be noted that Samuel Rolles Driver was the first academic to attempt to present Calvin's inventive ideas on the subject in an attractive scholastic form, which added more weight to Calvin's already innovative approach of interpretation.

In his argument, Samuel Driver claims that Jacob's name philologically means a deceiver: “being explained from ‘*ákeb*, ‘heel,’ just before. The verb ‘*ákeb* means properly *to follow at the heel*.” Driver also sophisticatedly suggests that the original and eccentric Hebrew adjective [תָּמַ / *tam*] that describes the Patriarch Jacob as a “perfect” man should not be interpreted literary but allegorically (Genesis 25:27). “Heb. *perfect*, – usually (e.g. Job i. 1; Ps. xxxvii. 37) in a moral sense (= blameless), such as would hardly be applicable to the crafty Jacob.”²⁵⁹ In his other

²⁵⁸ Probst, Christopher J. *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.

²⁵⁹ Driver, S. R. *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes. Westminster Commentaries*. New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1909, 255.

scholarly writings Driver specified why this was the case: “Instigated by his ambitious and designing mother, Jacob deceives his aged father [*Isaac*], and wrests from his brother [*Esau*] his father’s blessing.”²⁶⁰ In addition, Driver goes even further and elegantly implements another idea that the Patriarch Jacob acted this way because “truthfulness was not observed by the normal Israelite with the strictness demanded by a Christian standard.”²⁶¹ Thus, Driver, like Matthew Henry, and Charles Henry Mackintosh also confirms Calvin’s understanding that “Jacob by craft secured his father’s blessing.”²⁶²

The new formulation of Samuel Driver concerning the character and name of the Patriarch Jacob fell on well-prepared ground, thanks to the teachings of John Calvin, and the support of *the Geneva Bible* and *the Bible of King James*. Furthermore, it is most likely that a significant role was played by the socio-political status of Driver and his numerous scientific publications. At the same time, this study draws attention to the important fact that Driver was a member of the Old Testament Revision Committee of the English Revised Version of the Bible (1876–1884 CE). As an influential member of this working group, Samuel Driver was able to fully implement his pioneering ideas into the newest and very prominent edition of the Bible (ERV). *The English Revised Version of the Bible* (1885) was the third English translation of the Bible, which, unlike the traditional Patristic approach, completely removed the favorable image of the Patriarch Jacob and overshadowed the meaning of his name.

When discussing this issue, all impartial researchers should remember that the ERV was published at a time when Great Britain was the dominant colonial power

²⁶⁰ Driver, S. R. 1909, 255.

²⁶¹ Driver, S. R. 1909, 255.

²⁶² Driver, S. R. 1909, 255.

of the world, and English was the predominant language of worldwide communication. Therefore, the publication of the ERV (1885 CE), which was initiated and completely supported by Oxford University and the state church of the Anglican community, had a significant influence and played an essential role in further disseminating Calvin's innovative ideas and his predominantly negative view of the Patriarch Jacob, which, based on the work of Samuel Driver, would seem to have received scientific support. In addition, there is also evidence that the ERV approach was adopted by the ASV (1901 CE), and then literally by all other biblical translations that were made in other native languages at the beginning of the 20th century.²⁶³

3.1.3 The modern continuation of the reformed paradigm of interpretation

Reliable data shows that, based on the massive work and popularity of John Calvin, Matthew Henry, Charles Henry Mackintosh, Friedrich August Dilman, Samuel Rolles Driver and the strong influence of the Reformed theological view on the latest state-sponsored English Bible translations, Jacob's negative hermeneutic interpretation was effectively cemented into public consciousness, and the global Church by the end of the nineteenth century. This change apparently, forever overshadowed the life of the once extremely respected Patriarch Jacob and led to the attractive assertion that the name of crafty Jacob means "deceiver".

Subsequently, a Reformed theologian James Hastings (1852–1922 CE) went further on to state: “Jacob is the typical Jew. His life is the epitome of that wonderful people, who are found in every country and belong to none; who supply us with our loftiest religious literature, and are yet a byword for their craft, their scheming, and

²⁶³ Mills, Watson E, and Roger Aubrey Bullard. *Mercer Dictionary of the Bible*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1991, 110.

their love of money.”²⁶⁴ By the beginning of the twentieth century, this negative view of the Patriarch Jacob and his descendants reached its climax. Consider the sharp statement of another Reformed theologian Albertus Pieters (1869–1955 CE): "God willed that after the institution of the New Covenant there should no longer be any Jewish people in the world – yet here they are! That is a fact – a very sad fact, brought about by their wicked rebellion against God."²⁶⁵

For the integrity of this investigation, it is essential to note that some opponents theologians and researchers still argue that during their long lives, Samuel Driver, James Hastings, and Albertus Peters had not provided convincing archeological, scientific, historical or linguistic basis for such radical changes in the interpretation of Jacob's name and his historically prized character. Besides that, Christian opponents of this view strongly argue that Reformed theologians did not provide any substantial anthropological evidence to support the belief that a typical Jew is less moral than an ordinary member of the Christian community.²⁶⁶ In addition, some contemporary scholars debate that such anti-Semitic sentiments in European society inspired the vilest maniac - Adolf Hitler - to declare in one of his famous speeches that "I believe to be acting according to the wishes of the Almighty Creator: By fighting off the Jew [*killing them*], I am fighting for the work of the Lord" (Mein Kampf, 1925).²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Hastings, James. *The Greater Man And Women of the Bible*. New York, 1913, 405–406.

²⁶⁵ Pieters, Albertus. *The Sea of Abraham*. Michigan, 1950, 123.

²⁶⁶ Driver, S. R. *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*. Westminster Commentaries. New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1909, 255.

²⁶⁷ Griech-Polelle, Beth A. *Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust: Language, Rhetoric and the Traditions of Hatred*. Perspectives on the Holocaust. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2017, 79.

Speaking of the biblical Jacob, it is important to emphasize that contemporary proponents of the reformed (untraditional) understanding of his character still portray the Patriarch Jacob as a quiet “mama’s boy” who basically stayed at home, and a sneaky opportunist-manipulator who tricked the people around him.²⁶⁸ For example, a modern *International Theological Commentary* intensely supports the idea that the Patriarch Jacob was a man who received the blessing by deception.²⁶⁹ Likewise, *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* even indicates that “[the] Scripture itself speaks against Rebekah and Jacob.”²⁷⁰ Similarly, *Bible Student’s Commentary* maintains the view that “he [*Jacob*] took advantage of his brother’s hunger and exhaustion in order to buy the priceless birthright blessings for the price of a bowl of stew.”²⁷¹ In light of this discussion, it is essential to emphasize the fact that many modern professors regularly teach this approach to the biblical interpretation of their students in seminaries and colleges.²⁷²

3.2. Factors in the development of the Reformed understanding of the image of Jacob

²⁶⁸ Jeffrey, David Lyle, and Gregory Maillet. *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice*. 120.

²⁶⁹ Janzen, J. Gerald. *Abraham and All the Families of the Earth: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis 12–50*. International Theological Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, 103–105.

²⁷⁰ Reno, Russell R. *Genesis*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brazos Press, 2010, 227.

²⁷¹ Aalders, G. Charles. *Genesis*. Bible Student's Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1981, 82.

²⁷² Kim, Mitchell M, Lane T Dennis, and Dane C Ortlund. *Genesis: A 12-Week Study*. Edited by J. I Packer. Knowing the Bible. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2013, 59–74

3.2.1 Allegorical Interpretation of the Bible

It is worth pointing out that the ancient Christian community was not centralized, and this factor leads to the reality that for the first few hundred years, the palette of Christian belief truly included the whole spectrum of colors. In other words, the ancient Christian community maintained a reasonably strong unity in the presence of a countless variety of opinions. Thus, many social, operational, and theological issues were never completely settled worldwide. In discussing these matters, a contemporary scholar Roger E. Olson rightly points out that early on mutually exclusive views such as Arianism, Sabellianism, and Trinitarian theology, often co-existed relatively peacefully together within the global Christian community.²⁷³

In this historic time, an allegorical method of biblical interpretation was developed, which gradually gained immense popularity. Modern-day scholars consider Origen of Alexandria (184–253 CE) to be the founder of biblical allegorical interpretation, which seeks to find out a deeper, spiritual meaning within the text.²⁷⁴ There is evidence that Origen strongly believed that “every biblical text without exception had a spiritual meaning..., and it is only the weakness of our sight that prevents us from seeing it.”²⁷⁵ What is more, Origen, in his writings, often denies that the literal meaning of the text even exists. For example, he passionately taught:

Could any man of sound judgment suppose that the first, second and third days (of creation) had an evening and a morning, when there were as yet no sun or moon or stars? Could anyone be so unintelligent as to think that God

²⁷³ Olson, Roger E. *The Mosaic of Christian Belief*. InterVarsity Press, 2016, 137–142.

²⁷⁴ McKim, Donald K. *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998, 52.

²⁷⁵ Daniélou Jean, SJ. *Origen*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2016, 182.

made a paradise somewhere in the east and planted it with trees, like a farmer, or that in that paradise he put a tree of life, a tree you could see and know with your senses, a tree you could derive life from by eating its fruit with the teeth in your head? When the Bible says that God used to walk in paradise in the evening or that Adam hid behind a tree, no one, I think, will question that these are only fictions, stories of things that never actually happened, and that figuratively they refer to certain mysteries.²⁷⁶

Another early church theologian Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (155–240 CE), who is often called "the founder of Western theology," was a solid supporter of Origen's allegorical method of biblical interpretation.²⁷⁷ For that reason, Tertullian at all times promoted the idea that "Christians must read the Old Testament Scripture spiritually and not in the literal fashion of Jews."²⁷⁸ In addition, Tertullian had claimed that the prediction of the Lord God given to Rebekah in the book of Genesis 25:21–25 that "the older will serve the younger" (in the literal meaning speaking of Esau and Jacob), was really a prediction that the community of Israelites would become subservient to the Church.²⁷⁹ If so, then Jacob and his descendants do not have virtue, and their behavior should be condemned in the same way as carnal Esau. Based on this assumption, Tertullian thought that Gentiles, having "attain[ed] the grace of divine favor from which Israel has been divorced,"

²⁷⁶ Barton, John. *A History of the Bible: The Story of the World's Most Influential Book*. New York: Viking, 2019, 482.

²⁷⁷ Gerald Bostock, "Allegory and The Interpretation of The Bible in Origen," *Literature & Theology*, vol.1, no.1, (March 1987), 47.

²⁷⁸ Wilken, Robert L. *Judaism and the early Christian mind: a study of Cyril of Alexandria's exegesis and theology*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2004, 17.

²⁷⁹ Tertullian, *Answer to Jews* III, VIII, XIII; *Apology*, XXI; see also Irenaeus, *Ag. Heresies* 4.21.1.

the older (or greater) “Jews must necessarily serve... the (younger) Christian.”²⁸⁰ Furthermore, Tertullian harshly declared, “the state of the Jews is one of humiliation, in a certain sense dead, and very dry, and dispersed over the plain of the world.”²⁸¹ It is clear that such teachings of Tertullian (a very influential man of his time) made a great contribution to strengthening and spreading the already existing anti-Jewish sentiments throughout the Christian community.

3.2.2 Replacement Theology

Evaluating further development of anti-Jewish sentiments among the ancient community, it is important to point out to the fact that extraordinary changes had taken place when the Roman Emperor Constantine (272–337 CE) “legalized Christianity and created a mechanism for imperial involvement in the regulation of the life of the Church.”²⁸² For this reason, in the beginning of the fourth century under the leadership of the bishop Hosius of Corduba (256–359 CE) and with the emperor personally present, the first ecumenical Council of Nicea (325 CE) established a strong need for leadership and doctrinal centralization of all local congregations.²⁸³ With this trajectory of the church’s development, soon a single,

²⁸⁰ Tertullian, Prescription VIII; *Answer to Jews I*; see also Cyprian, Testimonies I.19, 22, 25.

²⁸¹ Roberts, Alexander, James Donaldson, A. Cleveland Coxe, and Allan Menzies. *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A.d. 325*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994, 566–567.

²⁸² Lenski, Noel, and Noel Emmanuel Lenski, eds. *The Cambridge companion to the Age of Constantine*. Cambridge University Press, 2012, 132.

²⁸³ Hindson, Edward E, and Dan Mitchell, eds. *The Popular Encyclopedia of Church History*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2013, 149. See also, Burns, J. Patout, and Robin M. Jensen. *Christianity in Roman Africa: the development of its practices and beliefs*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2014, 42.

universal theology and headship had been conveyed and popularized by the majority of bishops whose power and social status had been greatly enhanced among society.

The modern researcher Joel Richardson states that since that time, the majority of the Christian Church has held the view that the Jewish people, because of their rejection of Jesus as Messiah, have in turn been corporately rejected by the Lord God Almighty, and now the Christian community has succeeded the Israelites as the definitive people of God.²⁸⁴ At the moment this doctrine is mainly known as supersessionism, also called fulfillment theology, or replacement theology. Historians and theologians are convinced that by the end of fourth century, these views were predominantly accepted with historical certainty and set down as one of the ‘main theological principles’ described by Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea (265–340 CE), in his writing, *Ecclesiastical History*. Through this monumental writing, Eusebius captivated audiences by arguing that the destruction that came upon the entire Jewish nation is the observable penalty laid upon them by divine justice “the divine vengeance overtook the Jews for the crimes which they dared to commit against Christ.”²⁸⁵

Since the development of replacement theology, a predominantly negative attitude toward Judaism among the majority of the ecclesiastical clergy and theologians had been strongly established, which views the Jewish Nation as having rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

3.2.3 Anti-Semitism

²⁸⁴ Joel Richardson. *When A Jew rules the World*. USA 2015.

²⁸⁵ Eusebius, Of Caesarea, Bishop of Caesarea, *History of the Church*. Translated by Rufinus, Of Aquileia, and Philip R Amidon. *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, Volume 133. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016, I.I; II. 5-6, 26; III.5–7.

According to the encyclopedia, Britannica anti-Semitism is hostility toward or discrimination against Jews as a religious or racial group. It is a given fact that in the past time, millions Hebrew men, women, and innocent children had been killed based on anti-Semitic sentiment of ordinary people and leading elites around the world. The very first account of anti-Semitism has been described in the ancient book of Esther. This book depicts a man named Haman a son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, who is a clear prototype of all anti-Semitic leaders (Ester 3:1). The current biblical scholars highlights that Haman was a descendent of Amalek, because the word ‘Agag’ refers to the Amalekite royal title. According to the book of Genesis Amalek is a grandson of Esau the oldest brother of Jacob (Genesis 36:12). The Anchor Bible appropriately stresses out that “This is the view of Josephus, the Talmud, and the Targums, as well as of most commentators, who rightly view Haman as a descendent of the Amalekites, a people who frustrated Israel in Exod xvii 8–16.”²⁸⁶

Haman, the most respected counselor of the Persian king Xerxes, was full of hatred toward Jews People, because a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin named Mordecai would not kneel down and worship Haman (Ester 2:5, 3:2). A scholar E. Ray Clendenen points out that “mention of Haman as an Agagite gives the knowledgeable reader a clue that the conflict between the two was centuries old and would result in the Agagite’s demise.”²⁸⁷ Had been full of hate toward all Jews “Haman looked for a way to destroy all Mordecai’s people, the Jews, throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes” (Ester 3:6 NIV). To achieve this horrible plan he

²⁸⁶ Bible, the Anchor Bible. Esther. Introduction, Translated, and Notes by Carey A. Moore. Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1971, 35.

²⁸⁷ E. Ray Clendenen. Ezra Nehemiah Esther. Vol 10. The New American Commentary, B&H Publisher, 1993, 326.

fabricated a false story that Jews “do not obey the king’s laws; *for that reason*, it is not in the king’s best interest to tolerate them” strongly concluded Haman standing in front on the king (Ester 3:8). Then, he added “If it pleases the king, let a decree be issued to destroy them, and I will give ten thousand talents of silver to the king’s administrators for the royal treasury” (Ester 3:9).

The head of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of British Columbia Dr. William Nicholls points out that historically all anti-Semitism always had been fueled with a very well fabricated lie of ungodly people. As an example, Nicholls points out into the once very popular accusation that “Jews ritually murder a Christian child at the season of Passover and mingle the child’s blood with the unleavened bread they eat at that time.”²⁸⁸ A Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung once pointed out, “Nazi anti-Judaism was the work of godless, anti-Christian criminal. But it would not have been possible without the almost two thousand years’ pre-history of ‘Christian’ anti-Judaism.”²⁸⁹

The Protestant Reformation (1517–1648) brought major changes within western Christianity. Nonetheless, the doctrine of supersessionism, in general, as well as a negative attitude towards Judaism and the Jewish people as a whole, had not changed. The Protestant reformers contended that they broke with the Roman Catholic Church precisely on the issue of source of authority. In theory, the protestant rallying cry of “Sola Scriptura” (Latin: scripture alone) meant rejection of the authority of the Catholic tradition in favor of returning to the Holy Scriptures as the only guide for moral and theological decisions. Nonetheless, the Protestant Reformation opened slightly the door to interpret the biblical narrative free from any

²⁸⁸ William Nicholls. *Christian Antisemitism. A History of Hate*. Jason Aronson, 1993, 237.

²⁸⁹ Küng Hans. *On Being a Christian*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1976, 169.

traditional approach, and highly increased the social tension between the Hebrew and Christian communities.²⁹⁰

For example, in his book *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism*, the Lutheran theologian Eric W. Gritsch earnestly argues that even Martin Luther had been mistaken in his teaching and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures and took some passages for some biblical doctrines completely out of historical context.²⁹¹ As a matter of fact, Luther said in his book *On the Jews and Their Lies*. “The sun has never shone on a more bloodthirsty people than they [the Jews] are who imagine that they are God’s people who have been commissioned and commanded to murder and to slay the Gentile.”²⁹² It is clear that Luther's harsh anti-Semitic teaching strongly echoes the dogma of replacement theology [supersessionism].

Thus, contemporary historian Michael Bruening notes that Martin Luther also promoted the idea that “first, to set fire to their [*Jews*] synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone... Second, I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed.”²⁹³ Besides, a scholar W. G. Jordan, points out that Martin Luther, talking about the book of Ester, vigorously stated: “I am so hostile to this book that I wish it did not exist, for

²⁹⁰ Katz, Jacob, and Mazal Holocaust Collection. *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980.

²⁹¹ Gritsch, Eric W. *Martin Luther's Anti-Semitism: Against His Better Judgment*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012.

²⁹² Luther, Martin. *The Jews and Their Lies*. Los Angeles: Christian Nationalist Crusade, 1948, 17–18.

²⁹³ Bruening, Michael W, ed. *A Reformation Sourcebook: Documents from an Age of Debate*. North York, Ontario, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2017.

it Judaizes too much and has too much heathen naughtiness.”²⁹⁴ Luther is a famous historical figure, yet his latest teaching stirred up anti-Semitic sentiments in European society, the persecution of the Jewish community, hatred of all Jewishness, and caused some theologians to the negatively reinterpret the lives of the founders of the Hebrew community, including the Patriarch Jacob.

Certainly if he were here today, Luther, as a German man, would not support the view that all Germans are bloodthirsty people because of what Adolf Hitler had done to the Jews. Hitler was a German man; however, the German nation in the present day should not be responsible, or punished for what this evil man and his horrible regime had done during the twentieth century. Similarly, the Hebrew community should not be responsible today for what their leaders had done to the Messiah. Additionally, it seems important to emphasize that the Lord Jesus Christ has already forgiven the sins of his opponents on the cross of Calvary, including people who betrayed him at the crucifixion. Therefore Jesus asked during his prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Preaching the Gospel after the miraculous resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter highlighted to the Hebrew community at Jerusalem "you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers." Then, the Apostle pointed out "God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways” (Acts 3:25–26).

3.2.4 Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination

As an incredibly influential person of his time, John Calvin did not differ much from Luther’s anti-Jewishness from the very beginning of his career.

²⁹⁴ W. G. Jordan. *Ancient Hebrew Stories and Their Modern Interpretation*. Cosimo, Inc. 2005, 320.

Therefore, Calvin openly stated “I have had many conversations with many Jews: I have never seen either a drop of piety or a grain of truth or ingenuousness – nay, I have never found common sense in any Jew.”²⁹⁵ On the other hand, some researchers, perhaps wishing to justify Calvin, argue that this was Calvin's usual attitude towards any of his opponents. “A fellow-laborer of Geneva describes him, as ‘somewhat governed by his passions; impatient, full of hatred, and vindictive: and if he once takes a spite against a man, he never forgives.’ A multitude of incidents confirm this brief portraiture of his character. Beast, dog, vile god, mad god, liar, were common epithets against his opponents.”²⁹⁶

Calvin's anti-Jewishness is still the subject of controversy among modern theological historians. However, it is noteworthy that John Calvin was the first one to question the behavior of biblical Jacob and Rebekah and thereby cast a dirty shadow on their whole life. Consider this, in his commentary on the book of Genesis, the founder of the Reformed theology implements into the public thoughts the idea that “Moses praises Esau on account of his vigor; but speaking of Jacob... had nothing worthy of commendation.” Then, Calvin raises a destructive hypothetical question: “who would not condemn him [*Jacob*] for his inhumanity?”²⁹⁷ In his own uncommon way of thinking, John Calvin furthermore reasoned “in compelling Esau to surrender his right of primogeniture, he [*Jacob*] seems to make an illicit and frivolous compact.”²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Zachman, Randall C. *John Calvin As Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian: The Shape of His Writings and Thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006, 120.

²⁹⁶ The Methodist Review. D. S. DOGGETT, D. D., Editor. Volume 5. Printed by Colin & Nowlan, 1851, 100.

²⁹⁷ Anderson, John Edward. 51.

²⁹⁸ Calvin, Jean. *Genesis*. Crossway Classic Commentaries. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 224.

To understand why Calvin proposed this innovative approach to interpretation, a modern researcher needs to understand that Reformed theology is a well-organized and complex teaching, fully built on the doctrine of predestination. Thus, John H. Leith says, “Predestination can be taken as a special mark of Reformed theology.”²⁹⁹ Speaking about this, a scholar B. A. Gerrish also points out that “the sufficiency of Scripture in matters of Belief is nowhere more strictly adhered to than in Calvin’s treatment of predestination: he believes in the double decree (of election and reprobation) only because he finds himself forced to do so.”³⁰⁰ According to Calvin’s own word: “By predestination, we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man.” Then Calvin came to the conclusion that “all [*people*] are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”³⁰¹ A well-known specialist in Patristic writings, John Horsch, claims that this view is wrong, because “According to Augustine’s teaching, the history of mankind would, from a religious and spiritual point of view, be little more than a puppet show...”³⁰² This is also the reason Susan Wesley states: “The doctrine of predestination as maintained by rigid Calvinist is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred because it changes the most holy God with

²⁹⁹ Leith, John H. *An Introduction to the Reformed Tradition: A Way of Being the Christian Community*. Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981, 103.

³⁰⁰ Gerrish, B. A. *The Old Protestantism and the New: Essays on the Reformation Heritage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, 59.

³⁰¹ Calvin, Jean, John Thomas McNeill, and Ford Lewis Battles. 206.

³⁰² Horsch, John. *A Short History of Christianity*. Cleveland, O: author, 1903, 105.

being the author of sin.”³⁰³ The vast majority of modern theologians also reject this doctrine.³⁰⁴

Nevertheless, to prove his pioneering theoretical point of predestination, Calvin introduces Jacob's negative premise, and then (in contradiction to categorically all preceding Bible commentators and theologians)³⁰⁵ he concludes that Jacob as a man absolutely does not have anything worthy of admiration. Thus, the fact that the Patriarch Jacob became “the father of the church was not given as a reward, but only as a pure result of God’s grace.” Which points to support of Calvin’s doctrine of predestination at the expense of Jacob's dignity and righteousness.³⁰⁶

This teaching lead to the development of the incorrect etymological assumption that Jacob’s personal name is built on the Hebrew noun אָקֵב ('aqev) for “heel” meaning, “he grasps the heel” or “he cheats” (Genesis 25:26; 27:36).³⁰⁷ The historical data also reveals some empirical evidence that in the past the interpretation of Jacob’s name strongly influenced the explanation of the entire life of the patriarch, and the biblical narrative. Therefore, reformers started to be convinced that the

³⁰³ Clarke, Adam, and N. Bangs and T. Mason (Firm). *Memoirs of the Wesley Family: Collected Principally from Original Documents*. New York: Published by N. Bangs and T. Mason, for the Methodist Episcopal church, 1824, 333.

³⁰⁴ Hunt, Dave. *What Love Is This? : Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*. Published by The Berean Call, 2013, 273–291.

³⁰⁵ Jeffrey, David L, David L Jeffrey, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1992, 656–657.

³⁰⁶ Calvin, Jean. *Genesis*. Crossway Classic Commentaries. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001, 224.

³⁰⁷ Dictionary, Holman Bible. "Trent C." *Butler, Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman Publishers* 1991, 738.

biblical description depicted Jacob as a quiet “momma’s boy” who mainly stayed at home, and as a sneaky opportunist-manipulator who knows how to trick the people around him. For all of these reasons, the patriarch Jacob was best known for years as a deceiver.

In combination with the foregoing information, it is substantial to highlight two things that are completely supported by modern Reformed theologians and scholars. First, as Professor of Reformed theology, John L. Thompson, points out in his research article *The Immoralities of the Patriarchs in the History of Exegesis: A Reappraisal of Calvin's Position*, in the beginning many Reformed theologians, including Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531 CE) and Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563 CE), had a predominantly favorable view of all biblical patriarchs, and only John Calvin remained distinctive among his contemporaries for his singular rejection of the traditional positive explanation for patriarchal behaviors.³⁰⁸ Likewise, a Senior Officer of the Calvin Studies Society and Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies, Barbara Pitkin, points out that sometimes the biblical text challenges Calvin's theological presuppositions; therefore, he does not even agree with his fellow Reformed theologians, such as Martin Bucer (1491–1551 CE), in the interpretation of the Gospel of John (John 2:11, 23–25; 3:2; 6:14).³⁰⁹

Second, speaking of Calvin’s legacy and his massive well-preserved commentary on the book of Genesis, a modern-day book, *A History of Biblical Interpretation*, states that, “When writing a commentary, preparing a lecture, or

³⁰⁸ Thompson, John Lee. "The Immoralities of the Patriarchs in the History of Exegesis: A Reappraisal of Calvin's Position." *Calvin Theological Journal* 1991, Vol. 26, N° 1, P. 9–46 (1991), 14, 20, 37, 43.

³⁰⁹ Pitkin, Barbara. "Seeing and Believing in the Commentaries on John by Martin Bucer and John Calvin." *Church History* 68, no. 4 (1999): 865–885.

thinking about one of the eight sermons he [*Calvin*] might preach in a given week, he had little time to consult his sources but instead relied chiefly on his memory, theological instincts, and rhetorical skill in crafting his comments.” The publication also claims that John Calvin habitually “didn't have time to consult many sources in preparing his commentary on Genesis and thus could not avail himself of other arguments that might have served to mitigate his harshness.”³¹⁰ A scholar John L. Thomson also maintains the objective view that Calvin's harshness in writings may have stemmed simply from the fact that “he worked in haste.”³¹¹

3.3. Problems of Reformed interpretation

Many contemporary scholars, professional theologians, and ordinary people, including myself, sincerely believe that the Bible's interpretation must be carried out in true succession with the Apostolic Faith. In addition to that, I personally much respect John Calvin for his firm and consistent view that the Holy Bible is the primary source of our knowledge of God and his revelation. Specifically for Calvin's statement that “In order that true religion may shine upon us, we ought to hold that it must take its beginning from heavenly doctrine and that no one can get even the slightest taste of right and sound doctrine unless he be a pupil of Scripture.”³¹² This

³¹⁰ Hauser, Alan J, and Duane Frederick Watson. *A History of Biblical Interpretation*. Vol. Volume 2, the Medieval through the Reformation Periods. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2009. 348, 360.

³¹¹ Thompson, John L. “Calvin's Exegetical Legacy: His Reception and Transmission of Text and Tradition.” *The Legacy of John Calvin: Calvin Studies Society Papers 1999*, ed. David L. Foxgrover (Grand Rapids: Calvin Studies Society, 2000), 31–56.

³¹² Kerr, Hugh T, and Johannes Calvijn. *Calvin's Institutes: A New Compend*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989, 29.

sound theological approach is entirely based on the teachings of the Apostles, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

In the light of this analytical study, it is also important to emphasize that the contemporary Church still completely supports the point of view first expressed during the Ecumenical Council in Ephesus (431 CE), "We [*the Christian community*] must strive therefore in common to keep the faith which has come down to us today, through the Apostolic Succession. For we are expected to walk according to the Apostles [*and their teachings*]." ³¹³ If the dogmatic conviction of the Church should be based on the infallible biblical text and the teachings of the Church Fathers, let us look, once again, at the Holy Scriptures and find out exactly what the early believers thought about those aspects of Jacob's life that are sharply criticized by the founders and supporters of the innovative reformed view.

3.3.1 The Bible Declares: "Esau Despised His Birthright."

Proponents of the most recently reformed interpretation of Jacob's character always sharply criticize the Patriarch for his seemingly low moral standard, based on the fact that Jacob recommended to his oldest brother Esau "sell me your birthright" (Genesis 25:31). For example, John Calvin judgmentally claims that "Jacob should have willingly satisfied his brother's hunger. But when being asked,

³¹³ Schaff, Philip. *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: [Second Series]*. Oxford: Parker and Co. 1890, 220.

he refuses to do so: *who would not condemn him for his inhumanity?*”³¹⁴ Likewise, Matthew Henry stated that “he [*the Patriarch Jacob*] took advantage of his brother’s necessity to make him a very hard bargain.”³¹⁵

It is merely a fact that any contemporary reader, who is separated by time, culture, and way of life from the people to whom the Holy Bible was originally written, may have a negative view of Jacob’s proposal. On the other hand, all modern-day unbiased readers and professional theologians must keep in mind the necessity to explain the original biblical text in the accurate historical setting, conveying what the narrator intended to say insofar as it is possible. As Eugene Merrill said, “It is important in that interpretation of biblical texts must take into account the historical and cultural milieu.”³¹⁶

Speaking of this biblical narrative, the ancient Hebrew and Christian communities believed that Moses gives his audience an example that profoundly supports the previous description of Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:27–28) and reveals what each one of them valued most of all in life. “Once Jacob cooked a thick stew, and Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, ‘Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am exhausted’” (Genesis 25:29–30 LEB)! There is evidence that ancient theologians and biblical commentators interpreted this passage through the prism of the fall of the first people (Adam and

³¹⁴ CALVIN, JOHN. *Commentaries of the First Book of Moses Called Genesis*. DEVOTED Publishing, 2018, 278.

³¹⁵ Henry, Matthew, Leslie F Church, and Gerald W Peterman. *The NIV Matthew Henry Commentary in One Volume: Based on the Broad Oak Edition*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1992, 47.

³¹⁶ Merrill, Eugene H. The lifespans of the EB–MB Patriarchs: a hermeneutical and historical conundrum. *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 57 no 2 Spr 2015, 267–280.

Eve) because they preferred earthly perishable food to obedience to the Lord God, which is exactly what lascivious Esau did.³¹⁷

Ancient exegetes also pointed out that in his request for the food, ‘give me some of that red stuff,’ Esau uses the uncommon Hebrew word לָאֵת (la`at).³¹⁸ Therefore, a modern biblical scholar David W. Cotter argues that this word “is used in later Hebrew for animals eating – the distinction is rather like that of German between *essen*, reserved for humans, and *fressen*, reserved for animals – and very rude when applied to humans.”³¹⁹ It is Esau who describes his-own uncontrolled animalistic feelings with the word that is reserved only for the wild creatures.

Robert Bernard Alter further presents that “the verb he (*Esau*) uses for gulping down occurs nowhere else in the Bible, but in Rabbinic Hebrew it is reserved for the feeding of animals.”³²⁰ In the same way, Victor P. Hamilton upholds the notion that Esau’s “coarse expression suggested his bestial voracity.”³²¹ In keeping with this understanding, *Bereishis: a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources* preserves the strong rabbinic view that Esau’s speech and action revealed his wild character.³²² Therefore, the biblical text emphasizes the fact that "Esau despised his birthright" (Genesis 25 NASB).

³¹⁷ Leupold, H. C. *Exposition of Genesis*. Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1942, 711.

³¹⁸ Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. 393.

³¹⁹ Cotter, David W. *Genesis*. Berit Olam. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2003, 191–192.

³²⁰ Alter, Robert. *The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008, 131.

³²¹ Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis*. Vol., Chapters 18–50. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub, 1995, 182.

³²² Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*.

In light of this conversation, it is also noteworthy to emphasize that all the Fathers of the Church have always portrayed Jacob exclusively as an innocent man in all aspects of his life. For example, Saint Augustine of Hippo reflected the ancient apostolic view of this matter, stating that the Patriarch Jacob was an absolutely irreproachable man of God.³²³ Likewise, Saint Aurelius Ambrosius saw in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob [*Israel*] “a [*right*] pattern of how to live” that all believers should “follow in their shining footsteps along a kind of path of blamelessness opened up to us by their virtue.”³²⁴

Proceeding from the ancient apostolic view, Aurelius Ambrosius taught his spiritual flock that: “He [*Jacob*] was a great man and truly happy who could lose nothing of his and possess nothing of another’s... the man who has nothing to excess is just – this is to observe the proper mean of justice. The wise man is never empty but always has the garment of prudence on himself.” Then, in conclusion, Saint Ambrosius called on all faithful believers: “Follow the example of [*the*] holy [*Patriarch*] Jacob.”³²⁵ 33/34

Similarly, Martin Luther always identified that “Jacob had an upright and unspoiled will, was saintly and very zealously devoted to godliness, and was fervent

2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 1066–1067.

³²³ Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint, Gerald G Walsh, and Grace Monahan. *The City of God*. Vol. Books VIII–XVI /. The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation, V. 14. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2008, 16.37.

³²⁴ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 189.

³²⁵ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 158–159.

in his desire for the [upcoming] kingdom of God.”³²⁶ John Wesley also correspondingly believed that “[the Patriarch] Jacob was a plain man - an honest man that dealt fairly.”³²⁷ Modern biblical scholars indicate that the context reveals Jacob’s willingness to share his food with Esau based on the deal. For that reason, Jacob proposed that Esau “sell [to him] [his] birthright first” (Genesis 25:31 LEB). However, analyzing the ancient biblical text through historical and linguistic lenses, *The New Cambridge Bible Commentary* concludes that the original “reader would see nothing wrong with this [uncovered] proposal, and would instead appreciate the wiser and more cunning Jacob over the shortsighted Esau.”³²⁸

3.3.1.1 Jacob’s Request Was Justified By the Legal Regulation

It is also essential to keep in mind that Jacob’s request was absolutely justified by the legal regulation of that historical time. In his book *The Eternal Torah* a respected scholar David Lieberman contends that “the transaction of selling the birthright, ‘primogeniture’ the legal privilege into which one is born, was a practice not uncommon and was recognized by ancient law.”³²⁹ Another well-known contemporary scholar, Nahum Sarna, maintains the same view “The way Jacob acquired his brother’s birthright could not have been considered either unusual or

³²⁶ Luther, Martin. *Luther's Works*. Edited by Jaroslav Jan Pelikan and Walter A Hansen. Translated by George Victor Schick. Volume 4, Lectures on Genesis, Chapters 21–25 /. Saint-Louis (Mo.): Concordia Publishing House, 1964, 387.

³²⁷ Wesley, John. *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*. CCEL, 1987, 53.

³²⁸ Arnold, Bill T. *Genesis*. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 233.

³²⁹ Lieberman, David. *The Eternal Torah: A New Commentary Utilizing Ancient and Modern Sources in a Grammatical, Historical, and Traditional Explanation of the Text*. 2nd ed. River Vale, NJ: Twin Pines Press, 1986, 68.

objectionable in the context of his times. As a matter of fact, there is every reason to believe that Jacob's dealings with Esau and his father [*Isaac*] represent a stage of morality in which the successful application of shrewd opportunism was highly respected."³³⁰

In light of this ancient hermeneutical approach, "the negotiation initiated by [*the Patriarch*] Jacob assumed that Esau had the right to sell it apart from parental approval. This comports with the other [*extra-biblical*] ancient texts that describe selling and buying of inheritances."³³¹ Still other commentators emphasize, "Jacob's use of food to achieve his purposes is something he may have learned from watching Esau's relationship to Isaac."³³² In addition, the ancient believers often emphasized that Esau did not have to accept Jacob's proposal. However, the fact that he entered into it absolutely freely made him fully responsible for his actions. For that reason, a modern theologian Shira Weiss indicates: "His oath was inviolable and the contract bound by it was irrevocable, since such an oath raises the contract into the realm of the absolute."³³³

On the other hand, preferring temporary, perishable food to his invaluable spiritual position, which he inherited as the first-born, Esau sharply answers: "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me" (Genesis 25:32 KJV)? The biblical text evidently shows that carnal hunter Esau cares more about his earthly profit or benefit than about his honorable position as the

³³⁰ Sarna, Nahum M. *Understanding Genesis*. Heritage of Biblical Israel, V. 1. New York: Schocken Books, 1995, 188.

³³¹ Mathews, K. A. *Genesis*. 393.

³³² Brodie, Thomas L. *Genesis As Dialogue: A Literary, Historical, & Theological Commentary*. Oxford England: Oxford University Press, 2001, 300.

³³³ Weiss, Shira. THE ETHICS OF PRICE GOUGING: Jacob's Purchase of Esau's Birthright. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 45 no 1 Mar 2017, 142–163.

firstborn son. Moreover, evaluating this incident, J. Vernon McGee strongly contends, “He [*Esau*] was not starving to death as some would imply. No one who had been brought up in the home of Abraham would starve to death. There would always be something for him to eat.”³³⁴

However, like Adam and Eve, Esau was tested by his own desire for perishable food, a pleasure for his eyes (Genesis 3:6). Thus, John E. Anderson argues that “it is difficult to assume that Esau is actually near death as the result of a simple hunting expedition, most notably due to the description in v.27 that he is an adept hunter.”³³⁵ Based on the ancient Orthodox view, Saint Ephrem the Syrian, a well-known theologian of the 4th-century similarly thought “to show that it was not by reason of his hunger that [*carnal*] Esau sold his [*priceless*] birthright, the Scripture says ‘after he had eaten he arose and went away and Esau despised his birthright.’ Therefore, Esau did not sell it because he was hungry but rather since it had no value to him, he sold it for nothing as if it were nothing.”³³⁶

3.3.2 The Rabbinic and Patristic Approach of Interpretation

Calvin's statement regarding Jacob contrasts sharply with the views of the Church Fathers, who believed that the Patriarch did not steal the blessing, but took everything that belonged to him. Once again, it is fascinating that this Patristic apologetic view of Jacob is in accordance with the rabbinic claim that lascivious

³³⁴ J. Vernon McGee. *Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1981, 107–108.

³³⁵ Anderson, John Edward. *Jacob and the Divine Trickster: A Theology of Deception and Yhwh's Fidelity to the Ancestral Promise in the Jacob Cycle*. Siphrut: Literature and Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, 5. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2011, 71.

³³⁶ Halton, Thomas P. *The Fathers Of The Church. Volume 91*. CUOA Press, 1994, 171.

Esau had no faith in everlasting life and no desire for spiritual things; therefore, “even after he had eaten he did not regret the sale.”³³⁷ In the same way, James L. Kugel, a professor of classical and modern Jewish literature, states that “the fact that Esau agreed to sell his birthright for almost nothing – and that, afterward, he was said to have ‘despised’ it – was taken as an indication that this whole episode in the Holy Bible had been intended to illustrate Esau’s fundamentally impious nature.”³³⁸ Likewise, Jordan Jay Hillman in his well-accepted book, *The Torah and Its God*, states: “it is with Esau’s indifference rather than Jacob’s opportunism that the Torah finds fault, ‘Thus did Esau spurn his birthright (Genesis 25:34).’”³³⁹

In the same way, Donald Gray Barnhouse thoughtfully insists that in ancient times the first-born son “was the spiritual leader of his people, and in this case he had the privilege of being an ancestor of the Messiah.” As a consequence, Barnhouse concludes that “Jacob was right to desire such a blessing.”³⁴⁰ Similarly, Midrash Rabbah reasons that it would be absolutely disgraceful if an ungodly person, like Esau, acted as a priest of the Lord God Almighty. For that reason, the Patriarch Jacob was raising a legitimate question: “shall this wicked man [*Esau*] stand and offer the

³³⁷ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis: [sefer Bereshit]: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*. 2nd Ed; Complete in Two Volumes ed. Artscroll Tanach Series. Vol. I. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Mesorah Publications, 1986, 1072–1073.

³³⁸ Kugel, James L. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998, 356.

³³⁹ Hillman, Jordan Jay. *The Torah and Its God: A Humanist Inquiry*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 2001, 89.

³⁴⁰ Barnhouse, Donald Grey. *Genesis: A Devotional Exposition, Two Volumes in One*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1970, 44–45.

sacrifices?”³⁴¹ Moreover, the ancients believed that Jacob’s willingness to buy the firstborn right from his brother did not harm carnal Esau, but was a great benefit to an incompetent man with the wrong mindset.³⁴² Rabbinic sources also point out that “Jacob did not buy the birthright because he wanted a double share but because the birthright had [*transcendental*] honorary significance.”³⁴³

The ancient Christian community emphasized that Esau, of his own free will, despised his birthright and sold it to his brother Jacob for virtually nothing as if it were nothing.³⁴⁴ Therefore, Saint Augustine of Hippo, speaking of the brothers, states, “so great was the diversity in their lives and characters, so great the contrast in their behavior, that the difference in itself made them enemies of each other. One of the twins [*consciously*] lost the birthright, which people then held in great esteem, and the other obtained it.”³⁴⁵ Elsewhere, reflecting on the Orthodox understanding, Augustine states that “The birthright of the elder is transferred to the younger in virtue of a mutually accepted pact..., and confirmed the deal an oath.”³⁴⁶ Modern scholars also support the idea that Esau traded to Jacob both the birthright and its blessing. Analyzing this astonishing exchange, E. Ray Clendenen acknowledges that based on the mutually accepted agreement, Jacob obtained both the rights of

³⁴¹ Midrash Rabbah. *Genesis In Two Volumes*. 569.

³⁴² Philo, *Questions and answers on Genesis*. 172, 173. See also Ralph Marcus. 457–458.

³⁴³ Ibn Ezra, Abraham Ben Meir, H. Norman Strickman, and Arthur M Silver. *Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch*. New York, N.Y.: Menorah Pub, 1988, 253.

³⁴⁴ John H. Walton. *The NIV Application Commentary*. Zondervan, 2001, 551.

³⁴⁵ Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint. *The City of God against the Pagans*. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, 147.

³⁴⁶ Saint Augustine. *The City of God, Books VIII–XVI*. Translated by Gerald G. Walsh and Grace Monahan. U.S.A. 1952. 16.37

firstborn and the blessing that came with this right.³⁴⁷ Similarly, Walter Brueggemann points out that “In Heb. 11:20–21, Jacob is named among those who believed in the promise. In Heb. 12:12–17, Esau is used as an illustration of those who do not believe the [Lord’s] promise.”³⁴⁸

The tenth century biblical commentary of Syrian and Armenian Christians completely supported the understanding that only blameless Jacob recognizes and cherishes the significance of the birthright. “Jacob saw that the right of the first-born was despised and contemned by [carnal] Esau, and he cunningly took it from him”³⁴⁹ When exploring this narrative, Martin Luther also praised the Patriarch Jacob by saying “he did well by watching for all opportunities to obtain the primogeniture.”³⁵⁰ Brian Wintle strongly emphasized the fact that “by despising his birthright Esau lost his status in the family, his right to inherit more than any other heir, the respect of the society and the right to be a leader. From then on Jacob [rightly] was above him in the family hierarchy.”³⁵¹

It is absolutely clear that both ancient and contemporary biblical scholars indicate that according to the Holy Bible, the birthright and its blessings are entwined or coextensive with each other and are therefore inseparable. For instance, the book

³⁴⁷ E. Ray Clendenen. *Ezra Nehemiah Esther*. Vol 10. The New American Commentary, B&H Publisher, 1993, 394.

³⁴⁸ Walter Brueggemann. *Interpretation A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. WJK, 2010, 219

³⁴⁹ Ephraem, Syrus, Saint, and Edward G Mathews, Jr. *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian*. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Vol. 572–573. Lovanii: Peeters, 1998, 113–114.

³⁵⁰ Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. 395.

³⁵¹ Wintle, Brian C, ed. *South Asia Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015, 43.

of Chronicles reveals that “the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel – he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright” (1 Chronicles 5:1 NKJV). Biblical commentators point out that based on Reuben’s sinful action his birthright was removed from his house and given to the righteous house of his youngest brother Joseph during the time when Israel pronounced the blessing upon his offspring (Genesis 35:22; 49:4). Speaking of this passage Charles M. Laymon highlights that “in Gen. 48:8–22 it was not the birthright but a ‘blessing’ that Jacob [*Israel*] gave to the sons of Joseph.”³⁵²

This study draws attention to the fact that, as Julian Morgenstern convincingly reasons, “there is actually little or no difference in practical effect between the birthright and the blessing. Both were intended for the older son, and both secured for the recipient [*beneficiary*] the same advantage.”³⁵³ Following this ancient hermeneutical approach, Devora Steinmetz articulates that “Jacob has bought his brother’s birthright, and the blessing must accompany the birthright,” because the value of the birthright always lies in the blessing that the firstborn child would receive.³⁵⁴

³⁵² Laymon, Charles M. *The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible: Introduction and Commentary for Each Book of the Bible Including the Apocrypha, with General Articles*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971, 210.

³⁵³ Morgenstern, Julian. *The Book of Genesis: A Jewish Interpretation*. [2d Ed.] Schocken Paperbacks. New York: Schocken Books, 1965, 203–204.

³⁵⁴ Steinmetz, Devora. *From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict, and Continuity in Genesis*. 1st ed. Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991, 97–98.

Elaborating on this topic, Kenneth A. Mathews acknowledges, “Jacob obtained both the rights of firstborn and the coveted blessing.”³⁵⁵ Biblical scholars C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch also point out that impious Esau knew that he was giving away, along with the birthright, blessings of spiritual nature, which apparently had no value to him due to his wrong mindset.³⁵⁶ As a result, after this transaction, the Patriarch Jacob inherited the legal right to receive paternal blessings, which were reserved for the holder of the birthright, and this is exactly what Jacob later received with the support of his pious mother Rebekah.

From ancient times, theologians believed that the intrinsic value and consciousness of Esau and Jacob determined their way of life. For that reason, all ancient Hebrew and Christian sages and biblical commentators strongly criticized the mindset and behavior of carnal hunter Esau, and always praised the blameless Patriarch Jacob as an example of godliness and righteousness.³⁵⁷ In the light of the fact that the ancient exegetes completely justify Jacob's morality, it is absolutely difficult to accept the latest reformed re-interpretation of Jacob's character because of its sharp contradiction to the time-honored orthodox view.

The author admits the idea that it is possible that an individual or group of people may be wrong; nevertheless, it is very difficult to assume that all the ancient Hebrew and Christian theologians before the Protestant Reformation were mistaken for centuries on this important matter. It is reasonable to agree with well-respected scholar R. Kent Hughes who affirms that “the closing line of the episode gives us

³⁵⁵ Mathews, K. A. *Genesis 11:27–50:26*. The New American Commentary, V. 1b. Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman, 2005, 394.

³⁵⁶ Keil, Carl Fredrich, and Franz Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament in Ten Volumes*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991, 269.

³⁵⁷ Jeffrey, David Lyle, David L Jeffrey, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). 1992, 656.

the divine commentary because it does not say, ‘Thus Jacob took advantage of his brother, and Esau despised his birthright,’ but only that ‘Esau despised [*disowned*] his birthright.’ Thus, Esau’s own sin sealed his fate.’³⁵⁸

3.3.2.1 Father's Choice

Ancient theologians noticed that chapter twenty-seven of the book of Genesis begins with a depiction of Isaac’s health complications, which motivated him to pass on the blessing to his children. Biblical scholars of modern times agree with their historic counterparts that it happened when the Patriarch Isaac was 137 years old, the age at which his oldest carnal brother Ishmael had already died (Genesis 25:17).³⁵⁹ Due to his blindness and weakness of old age, Isaac thought his own end was near. For that reason, Isaac started a conversation with his oldest son when both Esau and Jacob were 77 years old. The careful study of this chapter and the following one reveals that Isaac preserved a unique blessing for each child based on their individuality and inner character. The son who inherited the right of the firstborn was granted the material prosperity and the headship of the family or the political leadership. Therefore, Isaac said: “May God give you heaven’s dew and earth’s richness— an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed” (Genesis 27:28–29).

³⁵⁸ Hughes, R. Kent. *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004, 337.

³⁵⁹ Lange, Johann Peter, and A Gosman. *Genesis, or, the First Book of Moses: Together with a General Theological and Homiletical Introduction to the Old Testament*. Translated by Tayler Lewis. New York: C. Scribner, 1868, 494–96.

On the other hand, the ecclesiastical authority, through the inheritance of Abrahamic blessings, had been completely preserved from the very beginning for the Patriarch Jacob. As a result, Jacob was chosen to prolong the living human chain that points out to the biological descendant (the Messiah) of a woman who one day would bring blessings upon all nations. Jacob and his descendants were also meant to inherit the Promise Land.³⁶⁰ Therefore, the old Patriarch Isaac later said to Jacob: “May God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful and multiply thee that thou may be a congregation of people and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and thy seed with thee; that thou may inherit the land in which thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham” (Genesis 28:3–4 JUB).

In contrast, having the right of primogeniture, Esau was his father’s natural heir. For this reason, Isaac started a conversation with ‘his oldest son.’ “I am old: I know not the day of my death. Now, therefore, take I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow and go out to the field and take me some venison and make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless thee before I die” (Genesis 27:2–4).

Speaking of this text, Derek Kidner rightly points out that in this passage “we [*modern readers*] shall misjudge the situation if we overlook the evidence of Hebrews 12:16–17 in selling the birthright (Genesis 25:31).”³⁶¹ It is critical to reiterate, all over again, that some time ago Esau absolutely freely sold his birthright to his brother Jacob (Genesis 25:29–34). Saint Augustine describes that in this scene “the birthright of the elder is transferred to the younger in virtue of a mutually

³⁶⁰ Cooper, Arvle. *Genesis: a Verse by Verse Study*. Westbow Press, 2015, 555–655.

³⁶¹ Kidner, Derek. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, V. 1. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2008, 155.

accepted pact... and [they] confirmed the deal an oath.”³⁶² In the same way, John H. Walton emphasizes that lascivious Esau, at his own free will, despised his birthright and sold it to his brother Jacob for almost nothing, as if it were nothing.³⁶³

3.3.3 The New Testament Condemn Esau for personal carelessness

John Calvin and his followers claim that Jacob cunningly forced his brother Esau to sell his precious birthright. On the other hand, it is remarkable that the New Testament writing completely supports the view that Esau’s sinfulness was the actual reason for why he freely sold his birthright to Jacob. For example, the author of the epistle to the Hebrews warns the young Christian community by saying “see to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. 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” (Hebrews 12:15–16 NIV).

Speaking of this passage William L. Lane highlights that “the writer is initially concerned lest anyone (the indefinite τις) should be excluded from the grace of God through personal carelessness (v 15 a). The idiom ὑστερέω ἀπό, followed by the genitive of separation, suggests the notion of *exclusion from* some benefit through one’s own fault.”³⁶⁴ In the same way, a modern biblical scholar Alan C. Mitchell

³⁶² Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint, Gerald G Walsh, and Grace Monahan. *The City of God, Books Viii–Xvi*. 16.37.

³⁶³ Walton, John H. *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text ... to Contemporary Life*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001, 551.

³⁶⁴ Lane, William L. *Hebrews*. Vol. 9–13 /. Word Biblical Commentary, V. 47b. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1991, 452.

points out that carnal Esau “is first described as ‘immoral,’ *pornos*, an adjective related to *porneia*, which often in biblical texts has to do with sexual immorality. Esau is also called ‘profane,’ *bebēlos*, an adjective associated with ritual defilement. The fact that he [*freely*] sold his [*priceless*] birthright for a single meal indicates what is [*actually*] important to him.”³⁶⁵ In addition, this ancient Patristic view is fully consistent with the rabbinical assertion that Esau was a man “with no apparent regard for the sacred institution of the first-born,” therefore he sold his birthright.³⁶⁶

For the integrity of this investigation, it is important to once again stress that some contemporary commentators consider that ‘the opportunist Jacob supplanted his brother Esau by asking him to sell the birthright.’³⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Henry M. Morris, a modern Christian apologist, voices that “the biblical text does not establish such a connection.”³⁶⁸ Speaking of this passage Derek Kidner emphasizes the fact that “the context does not comment ‘so Jacob supplanted his brother,’ but ‘so Esau despised his birthright;’ and Hebrews 12 shares its standpoint, presenting flippant Esau as the antithesis of the pilgrims of Hebrew 11.”³⁶⁹

³⁶⁵ Mitchell, Alan C. *Hebrews*. "A Michael Glazier Book." Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007, 278.

³⁶⁶ Sarna, Nahum M, and Jewish Publication Society. *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New Jps Translation*. The Jps Torah Commentary. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989, 182.

³⁶⁷ Rosenblatt, Naomi H, and Joshua Horwitz. *Wrestling with Angels: What the First Family of Genesis Teaches Us About Our Spiritual Identity, Sexuality, and Personal Relationships*. New York, N.Y.: Delacorte Press, 1995, 240.

³⁶⁸ Morris, Henry M. *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1976, 417.

³⁶⁹ Kidner, Derek. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, V. 1. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2008, 152.

Similarly, Gerhard Von Rad convincingly elaborates that “the [*biblical*] statement, ‘he [*Esau*] ate and drank, and rose and went his way,’ caricatures once again his unpolished callousness.” Then, the author appropriately suggests that “the modern readers must suppress all emotional judgments in the case of such an ancient narrative, which stems from strange cultural conditions and a different moral atmosphere.”³⁷⁰ It is important to highlight that R. Kent Hughes also affirms that “the closing line of the episode gives us the divine commentary because it does not say, ‘Thus Jacob took advantage of his brother, and Esau despised his birthright,’ but only that ‘Esau despised [*disowned*] his birthright.’ Esau’s own sin sealed his fate.”³⁷¹

3.3.4 A Deceiver Revealed Himself

Reformed thinkers portray Esau as a strong man who suffered moral and emotional trauma as a result of his sinful brother's wrongdoing. However, all early biblical interpreters have always sharply criticized the behavior of the spiritless hunter Esau and praised the life of Patriarch Jacob as an example of piety and righteousness.

It is obvious that old Isaac thought of Esau as the true inheritor of the firstborn blessing. As a result, the Patriarch Isaac asked his oldest son Esau to make savory food and come back to receive a blessing, which belonged to the firstborn son (Genesis 27:3–4). If Esau was an innocent man, he would have revealed to his father that sometime ago he freely sold his birthright to Jacob. Consequently, his brother,

³⁷⁰ Rad, Gerhard Von. *Genesis: A Commentary*. Translated by John H Marks. Rev. Ed. The Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1972, 267.

³⁷¹ Hughes, R. Kent. *Genesis: Beginning and Blessing*. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2004, 337.

Jacob, must be blessed instead of him, because when Jacob bought the birthright of his brother, he legally obtained the right to inherit or receive a blessing belonging to the owner of the birthright.³⁷² Then, most likely, the biblical narrative would have developed differently. In contrast, a cunning hunter, Esau, as always, precisely knew how to trap his prey by using his dirty tactics.³⁷³

Saying nothing to his father, Esau went to the field for a hunt and clearly revealed that he was a deceiver who would not keep his sworn oath promises (Genesis 25:33). In misleading his old blind father, carnal Esau violated his oath given to Jacob and wanted to steal a blessing that no longer belonged to him. However, at the age of 77 years old Esau, as a member of the covenantal community, must know that “a specific code of behavior must govern his actions, actions which give him a great responsibility and for which he himself is now answerable.”³⁷⁴ This is for the same reason that even contemporary criminal law admits that “ignorance or mistake as to a matter of fact or law does not affect liability.”³⁷⁵

According to the biblical narrative, Rebekah was listening as her husband Isaac spoke with their oldest son, and when Esau left to hunt game and bring it back, she said to Jacob: “Now, my son, listen to me. Do exactly as I tell you. Go out to the flocks, and bring me two fine young goats. I will use them to prepare your father’s favorite dish. Then take the food to your father so he can eat it and bless you before

³⁷² Steinmetz, Devora. *From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict, and Continuity in Genesis*. 1st ed. Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991, 97.

³⁷³ Kasher, Menahem. *Encyclopedia of Biblical Interpretation, a Millennial Anthology*. V.4. New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1959, 12.

³⁷⁴ Paterson, Moira, I. Babel’, and I. Babel. *The Bar Mitzvah Book*. New York: Praeger, 1975, 25.

³⁷⁵ Molan, Michael. *Sourcebook on Criminal Law*. Cavendish Sourcebook Series. London: Cavendish, 2001, 224–225.

he dies” (Genesis 27:8–10 NLT). Based on this passage, it is important to note that Rebekah believed that her husband, Isaac, could die in a short period of time. Moreover, the narrator of the Bible never condemned deeds of the Matriarch Rebekah!³⁷⁶

And so, this is the reason why the Fathers of the Church writing permanently measured Rebekah’s engagements as an act of obedience to the Lord God Almighty. Consider that an important Early Church Father John Chrysostom (347–407 CE) compassionately spoke about Rebekah as an extraordinary woman who “was not concocting this only out of her own thinking but was also implementing the prediction from on high.” Then, John Chrysostom concludes that “Jacob and Rebekah had done what was expected of them, the one needing his mother’s advice, the other playing her part completely.”³⁷⁷

Another figure, Saint Aurelius Ambrose (340–397 CE), highly praised the Matriarch Rebekah when he said, “Rebekah did not prefer one son to another son but a just son to an unjust one. And indeed, with that pious mother, God’s mysterious plan was more important than her offspring.”³⁷⁸ In the same manner, a German theologian and a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation, Martin Luther used the ancient Patristic hermeneutical approach to advocate that “Rebekah heard from fathers: ‘Your son Esau is unmanageable and headstrong. Therefore, he will not be

³⁷⁶ Tsybalyuk Oleg M. & Melnik, V. V. Rediscovering the ancient hermeneutic of Rebekah’s character. *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies* 76(1), a5526. 2020.

³⁷⁷ John Chrysostom, Saint, and Robert C Hill. *Homilies on Genesis*. The Fathers of the Church, V. 74, 82, 87. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986, *Homilies on Genesis* 53.

³⁷⁸ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 149.

the heir of the blessing. Jacob, however, is godly and pious; therefore, he is destined to become the elder.”³⁷⁹

A well-recognized researcher and biblical commentator William Todd reasoned that the Matriarch Rebekah had been convinced that “Esau had forfeited his birthright.”³⁸⁰ There is also evidence that the ancient Jewish communities believed that, based on the prophecy of God, the warning of the fathers, and personal observation and the last deception of Esau in relation to his father, Rebekah was determined to defend her son Jacob from his godless brother, like her predecessor, the Matriarch Sarah (Genesis 21:10–11). Therefore, the Midrash identified that Rebekah executed divine will in ensuring that Jacob received the blessings of a first-born son. (B’reishit Rabbah 63.7; 67.9).³⁸¹

During their conversation, Jacob expressed his concern that instead of blessings he could receive a curse. In response “his mother said unto him, upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice” (Genesis 27:13 JUB). This study gives attention to the fact that the ancients believed that in Rebekah's call for obedience and her willingness to accept the curse of others on herself, she testified of her high spiritual maturity.³⁸² For that reason, Christine Garside gives priority to the fact that the Matriarch Rebekah “is the first person in the [*Holy*] Bible to offer herself as a

³⁷⁹ Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. 386–390.

³⁸⁰ Todd, William. *New Light on Genesis: The Narrative Explained against Its Geographical, Historical and Social Background*. London: Furnival Press, 1978, 129.

³⁸¹ Weiss, Andrea L. *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*. Edited by Tamara Cohn Eskenazi. New York: Women of Reform Judaism, Federation of Temple Sisterhood, 2008, 621.

³⁸² John Chrysostom, Saint, and Robert C Hill. *Homilies on Genesis*. The Fathers of the Church, V. 74, 82, 87. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986, *Homilies on Genesis 53*.

tool of reparation for someone else.”³⁸³ The biblical narrative reveals that previously, Abraham, in his obedience to the Lord God was willing to sacrifice his youngest beloved son – Isaac (Genesis 22:9-12), and now Rebekah, in her obedience to the Lord God, demonstrates her strong readiness to sacrifice her life for the sake of her youngest beloved son – Jacob.

In their justification of Rebekah’s behavior, some theologians argue that here “Rebekah is nothing less than a picture of Jesus Himself.”³⁸⁴ Then, the context makes known that to strengthen her hesitant son “Rebekah took good clothes of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob, her younger son: And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands and upon the smooth of his neck” (27:15–16 JUB). From ancient times, Hebrew scholars have shared the view that since Jacob legally acquired the birthright from his brother Esau, Rebekah said, “Jacob has bought the birthright from Esau, it is only right that he should wear these clothes,” which belong to the firstborn son.³⁸⁵

3.3.4.1 Jacob – a Guileless Man

The Fathers of the Church had a similar positive view of Jacob’s actions. For example, Augustine stated that the Patriarch Jacob “disguising himself in goat’s skins, placed himself below the paternal hands as though he were a scapegoat bearing away the sins of others.”³⁸⁶ It is obvious that by connecting Jacob to a scapegoat described in the book of Leviticus 16, Saint Augustine gives Jacob an

³⁸³ Allen, Christine Garside. Page 166, 171.

³⁸⁴ Jordan, James B. *Primeval Saints: Studies in the Patriarchs of Genesis*. Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 2001, 96–97.

³⁸⁵ Townsend, John T. *Midrash Tanhuma*. Vol. 1, Genesis. Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1989. *Toledot*.

³⁸⁶ Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint, Gerald G Walsh, and Grace Monahan. *The City of God, Books Viii–Xvi*. 16.37.

extremely positive description and approves of his deeds. However, knowing that there may be simple people who can be confused by Jacob's actions Augustine wrote: "this trick on the part of Jacob may easily be mistaken for fraudulent guile, if we fail to see in it the mysterious intimation of a great reality. That is why the [*Holy*] Scripture prepares us by the word: 'Esau became a skillful hunter, and a husbandman; but Jacob a simple man living at home.'" Then, Augustine added: "Some translators have 'guileless' in place of 'simple.' But, whether we say 'guileless' or 'simple' or 'without pretense' for the Greek *áplastos* there can be no real guile in getting this blessing, since the man [*Jacob*] himself is guileless."³⁸⁷

When Jacob came into the presence of his father, Isaac asked "who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau, thy firstborn; I have done according as thou didst command me; arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me" (Genesis 27:18–19 JUB). The ancients believed that by this action Jacob was doing two significant things. First, Jacob did protect his brother Esau from further sins by not allowing him to accept or steal the blessing, which now rightfully and legally belonged to Jacob (Genesis 25:30–34). Secondly, Jacob was protecting Abraham's house of order from turning into a hunter's lodge under the leadership of ungodly Esau.³⁸⁸

Therefore, the ancient philosopher Philo stated, "When Jacob says to his father, 'I am Esau,' he speaks the truth according to the principle of nature, for his soul is moved in accordance with that form."³⁸⁹ This investigation drew attention to the fact that a well-respected ancient scholar, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274 CE), based on the ancient hermeneutical approach, also insisted that "it is not a lie

³⁸⁷ *The City of God, Books Viii–Xvi.* 16.37.

³⁸⁸ Midrash Rabbah. *Genesis In Two Volumes.* 559.

³⁸⁹ Philo, *Questions and answers on Genesis* 4:207

to do or say a thing figuratively (Summa Theologica 2–2.110.3).”³⁹⁰ In the same way, James L. Kugel indicated, “Jacob tells no lie” because as a new legitimate owner of the birthright in a legal sense he certainly was Isaac’s firstborn son.³⁹¹

3.3.5 The Biblical Narrator Never Condemned Deeds of Rebekah or Jacob

Reformed theologians usually condemn Jacob's behavior in tandem with his mother, Rebekah, who they believe had a negative impact on the lives of the whole family. However, it should be taken into consideration that substantial Patristic writings point out that the biblical narrator never condemned deeds of Rebekah or Jacob. Thus, in line with the early Christian view, Saint Augustine calls the reader to “notice that Isaac makes no complaint that he has been deceived!”³⁹² Similarly, Saint Ambrose depicts Jacob as a man “of piety without reproach.”³⁹³ Most modern-day biblical scholars also completely agree with this view. For example, an Old Testament scholar Victor P. Hamilton convincingly argues that “the [Patriarch] Isaac did not express any criticism toward Rebekah or Jacob for their previous deeds.”³⁹⁴ In addition, speaking with Esau, Isaac informed his oldest son of the following: “I have blessed [*Jacob*] and he shall be blessed” (Genesis 27:33).

An interesting fact is that after all these circumstances, the Patriarch Isaac had without any restrictions passed on to his youngest son, Jacob, the exceptional

³⁹⁰ Jeffrey, David Lyle, E. Beatrice Batson, Sharon Coolidge, Alan Jacobs, Joseph McClatchey, Leland Ryken, Erwin Paul Rudolph, and Wheaton College (Ill.). *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992, 656.

³⁹¹ Kugel, James L. *Traditions of the Bible: A Guide to the Bible As It Was at the Start of the Common Era*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998, 360.

³⁹² *The City of God, Books Viii–Xvi*. 16.37.

³⁹³ Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 152.

³⁹⁴ Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis*. 234.

covenantal Abrahamic blessing, which had been preserved from the very beginning exclusively for Jacob and his descendants. At this historic moment, Isaac once again blessed his youngest son Jacob, the future founder of Israel, saying: “May God Almighty bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply and become many nations! May God pass on to you and your descendants the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham” (Genesis 28:3–4 NLT). Ancient sages, theologians, and biblical commentators paid great attention to the fact that when Esau found out that he could not change the outcome of his father’s decision, he fully reveals the true state of his wild inner being through his hatred of and willingness to kill his brother Jacob (Genesis 27:41). Esau acted this way because he “was a man with no depth of nature and no outlook into the eternal.”³⁹⁵ Scholar Daniel Goleman also advocates that the emotional intelligence or the ability to control one’s feelings is a manifestation of wisdom and maturity. The scholar also emphasizes that figuratively speaking, a person’s inability to control his own emotions is a demonstration of his connection with “hell.”³⁹⁶ Besides that, it can be observed with great sadness an identical similarity between carnal Esau and other firstborn son Cain, the man who was also angry with his youngest blameless brother. Esau acted this way because similarly to carnal Cain he was the seed of evil (1 John 3:12).³⁹⁷

³⁹⁵ Grieve, A. J. *A Commentary on the Bible*. Edited by Arthur S Peake. New York: T. Nelson & Sons, 1920, 156–157.

³⁹⁶ Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. 10th Anniversary Trade Pbk. ed. New York: Bantam Books, 2005, 46.

³⁹⁷ General Editor, W. Gunther Plaut; General Editor, Revised Edition, David E.S. Stein, W. Gunther Plaut, and David E. S Stein. תורה: *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. Rev. ed. New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005, 173.

The narrator once more shows carnal hunter Esau as the absolute antipode of his righteous brother Jacob by indicating that “Esau realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac; so he went to Ishmael and married Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the wives he already had” (Genesis 28:8–9). The third marriage of Esau does not indicate any positive change of his wicked character. For that reason, Devora Steinmetz articulates “Esau’s choice, of course, is wrong once again; much of the Abraham narrative had been directed at separating Isaac’s family from Ishmael’s. By marrying Ishmael’s daughter, Esau reforges a link which was forcibly broken and identifies himself with the line which is not chosen.”³⁹⁸

In reviewing this passage, the Midrash points out that “the name Mahalath (the new wife of Esau) as derived from מַחֲלַת, [*Illness, disease,*] hence adding grief to grief, adding evil to a house already full.” In addition to this, the Midrash concludes that “a wicked woman married a wicked man [*Esau*].”³⁹⁹ Moreover, a contemporary theologian John E. Anderson appropriately argues that among Isaac's family Esau is the only character who never received a direct word from the Lord God. The biblical narrative describes that God spoke to Rebekah, Isaac, and Jacob; however, the Lord never spoke to wicked Esau (Genesis 25:23; 26:2–3; 28:13–15). Therefore, this theologian insists that “the narrative unmistakably portrays Esau not only as unfit to carry the promise forward but also as unfit to hear a divine word.”⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁸ Steinmetz, Devora. *From Father to Son: Kinship, Conflict, and Continuity in Genesis*. 1st ed. Literary Currents in Biblical Interpretation. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991, 100.

³⁹⁹ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis: Genesis*. 1171–1172.

⁴⁰⁰ Anderson, John Edward. *Jacob and the Divine Trickster: A Theology of Deception and Yhwh's Fidelity to the Ancestral Promise in the Jacob Cycle*. 72.

3.3.6 The Lord God Completely Endorsed the Behavior of Jacob

Calvin interpreted Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia as the escape of a sinful man worthy of condemnation. However, the author of the dissertation emphasizes the fact that during Jacob's journey to Mesopotamia, the Lord God appeared to Jacob and gave him promises that were in accordance with Abraham's promises (Genesis 28:19; 12:3). According to Jewish thinkers, this text is a unique opportunity to raise the spiritual status of the patriarch Jacob as the recipient of exceptional revelation. Thus, the narrative emphasizes Jacob's obedient and respectful attitude towards his parents, indicating that “Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Paddan Aram” to find a suitable wife for himself (Genesis 28:7). Following an ancient tradition, *The Biblical Commentary of Jerome* underlines the fact that “Jacob's departure is not an escape, but a mission given by [*the Patriarch*] Isaac.”⁴⁰¹ During his significant journey, Jacob reached a certain location where he had an exceptional dream from the Lord God Almighty, and Jacob called this place Bethel – “House of God” (Genesis 28:19). That night, God spoke to Jacob and made promises to him that match the promises of Abraham.⁴⁰²

I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over

⁴⁰¹ Bea, Augustin Cardinal, and Roland Edmund Murphy. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Compiled by Raymond E Brown, Joseph A Fitzmyer, and Roland E Murphy. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968, 100.

⁴⁰² Grüneberg Keith N. *Abraham, Blessing, and the Nations: A Philological and Exegetical Study of Genesis 12:3 in Its Narrative Context*. Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft, Bd. 332. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003.

you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you (Genesis 28:13–15).

Speaking of that specific place, Gordon J. Wenham shows that in the close vicinity of Bethel the Lord God preliminarily previously appeared to the Patriarch Abraham and gave him some astonishing promises. In light of this conversation, it is crucial to point out that the Scriptures include many passages that contain God's promises to the Abrahamic family (Genesis 15:18; 17:8; 24:7). Nevertheless, Hebrew and Christian scholars are confident that God's revelation to Abraham and Jacob near Bethel is the closest and most significant of all the covenantal promises.⁴⁰³

According to the narrative, during that specific night Jacob had a dream from the Lord God “in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it” (Genesis 28:12). Therefore, “when Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, ‘Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.’ He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven’” (Genesis 28:16–17). Talking about this exceptional account, Hebrew exegesis gives emphasis that the greatness of this unparalleled revelation attractively demonstrates “the uniqueness of the person [*Jacob*] for whom it was intended.”⁴⁰⁴

This research also draws attention to the fact that, as Kenneth A. Matthews points out, "Early Jewish interpretation found in this story an opportunity for elevating the spiritual status of Jacob by casting him in the role of receiving [*truly*]

⁴⁰³ Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis*. Vol. 16–50. Word Biblical Commentary, V. 2. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1994, 223.

⁴⁰⁴ Zlotowitz, Meir, and Nosson Scherman. *Bereishis*. 1181.

exceptional revelation."⁴⁰⁵ The researcher also emphasizes that it was fueled mainly by Jesus' allusions to this event (John 1:50–51). Early Christianity saw that “Jacob’s ladder is best understood as a type of Christ’s mediatorial position, connecting heaven and earth.”⁴⁰⁶ Nicholas Perrin, a friend of mine, and the president of Trinity International University, has a similar view of the Patriarch Jacob. “The Fourth Gospel’s report at John 1.51 of Jesus appropriating the Bethel dream in connection with the Son of Man.”⁴⁰⁷

Moreover, John H. Walton claims that ancient believers were convinced that the personal appearance of the Lord God to the Patriarch Jacob was evidence of the complete divine approval of Jacob's behavior.⁴⁰⁸ In accordance with this ancient point of view, Victor P. Hamilton also notes that “Yahweh [God] does not say a single word to convict Jacob for his behavior towards his father and brother.”⁴⁰⁹ And therefore, today, as in ancient times, it seems logical to assume that the absence of condemnation in the speech of the Lord is a sign of his approval. In other words, the Lord God did not consider any of Jacob's actions to be false or evil, and are not all believers instructed to follow his exemplary assessment?

3.3.7 A Similar accusation of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Reformed interpretation of Jacob's image is based on unacceptable double hermeneutic standards of biblical interpretation. To illustrate this claim, let me correspondingly remind you that not just once, but many times the high priests and

⁴⁰⁵ Mathews, K. A. *Genesis*. 443–444.

⁴⁰⁶ Mathews, K. A. *Genesis*. 444.

⁴⁰⁷ Perrin, Nicholas. *Jesus the Priest*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018, 214.

⁴⁰⁸ Walton, John H. *Genesis*. 554.

⁴⁰⁹ Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis*. 241.

Pharisees of the ancient Jewish community openly accused the Lord Jesus Christ, as had previously been done to his biological ancestor Jacob, of being “a demon-possessed deceiver” (John 7:12, 20, 47; 10:20–21; Mark 3:22). In addition, based on the fact that the Lord Jesus healed a person during a Sabbath, basically the whole Jewish elite blamed him of breaking the Law of Moses (Hebrew: תּוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה Torah Moshe) and wanted to kill Jesus (John 7:19–23).⁴¹⁰ The Gospel of Matthew also quotes this terrible accusation against the Lord Jesus Christ even after his death: “The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ‘Sir,’ they said, ‘we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again’” (Matthew 27:62–63). Nevertheless, notable Christian theologians of all time sincerely believe that then and now no one has a legitimate reason to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed a “deceiver,” because an objective criticism of anyone must not be established based on assertion of wicked people whose opinion has never been supported by the biblical context and apostolic teachings.

For this reason, there is evidence that the Church Fathers considered the accusation that the Lord Jesus Christ “deceived the people” (John 7:12) an absolutely false statement, which should not be taken seriously by any objective reader of the Holy Bible. For example, Saint John Chrysostom speaking of this statement said: “the latter is the opinion of the priests and rulers, as is shown by their saying, ‘He deceives the people’ not ‘He deceives us.’ ...Observe that the corruption is in the [*wicked*] rulers.”⁴¹¹ Similarly, Saint Augustine of Hippo taught that “whoever had

⁴¹⁰ Brown, Raymond Edward. *The Gospel According to John*. The Anchor Bible, I–XII. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1966, 307–312.

⁴¹¹ Elowsky, Joel C, and Thomas C Oden. *John 1–10*. Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament, 4a. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2006, 254.

any spark of grace said, ‘He is a good man.’ ... The rest [*wicked people*] say, ‘No, he seduces the people.’”⁴¹² It is quite understandable that the Church Fathers were of the view that only evil people could claim that Jesus was a “deceiver”.

Over the years, this traditional Patristic view of the Lord Jesus and his character has been adequately defended by theologians, clerics, and biblical commentators. During the Protestant Reformation, this ancient understanding was strengthened by all branches of the Christian community including Reformed theologians. For example, in his commentary to the Gospel of John 7:12, John Calvin is clearly of the strong opinion that this accusation was a false statement of confused people with the wrong understanding of Christ and his most holy doctrine.

And there was much murmuring. He means that, wherever men were collected in crowds, as usually happens in large assemblies, they held secret conversations about Christ. The diversity of opinion, which is here related, proves that it is not a new evil, that men should differ in their opinions about Christ, even in the very bosom of the Church. And as we do not hesitate to receive Christ, who was formerly condemned by the greater part of his own nation, so we ought to be armed with the same kind of shield, that the dissensions which we see daily may not disturb us. Again, we may perceive how great is the rashness of men in the things of God. In a matter of no importance, they would not have taken so great liberty, but when the question relates to the Son of God and to his most holy doctrine, they immediately hasten to give judgment respecting it. So much the greater moderation ought we to maintain, that we may not thoughtlessly condemn our life with the eternal truth of God. And if the world holds us for impostors, let us remember

⁴¹² Augustine, and John W Rettig. *Tractates on the Gospel of John*. The Fathers of the Church, V. 78–79, 88, 90, 92. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988, 28.12, 13.

that these are the marks and brands of Christ, provided that we show, at the same time, that we are faithful. This passage shows likewise that in a great multitude, even when the whole body is in a state of confusion, there are always some who think aright; but those few persons, whose minds are well regulated, are swallowed up by the multitude of those whose understandings are bewildered.⁴¹³

Another well-known Reformed theologian, Matthew Henry, also states in his comments that this false denunciation was the result of the evil thoughts of the high priests who opposed the Lord Jesus Christ and wanted to kill him.

Many who have no ill thoughts of Christ have yet low thoughts of him, and scarcely honour him, even when they speak well of him, because they do not say enough; yet indeed it was his honour, and the reproach of those who persecuted him, that even those who would not believe him to be the Messiah could not but own he was a good man. Others said, Nay, but he deceiveth the people; if this had been true, he had been a very bad man. The doctrine he preached was sound, and could not be contested; his miracles were real, and could not be disproved; his conversation was manifestly holy and good; and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding, that there was some undiscovered cheat at the bottom, because it was the interest of the chief priests to oppose him and run him down.⁴¹⁴

This research notes that contemporary Reformed theologians, clerics, and biblical commentators still appropriately support the understanding that an accusation of Jesus Christ was an absolutely false condemnation of evil people

⁴¹³ Calvin, Jean, and William Pringle. *Commentary on the Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1989, 286–287.

⁴¹⁴ Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*. 778.

whom the author of any Gospel does not support at all. Consequently, the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture* convincingly states: “let us consider therefore how wicked and perverse it is when someone who is a true shepherd is called a deceiver by those who under the pretense of shepherding behave as wolves and true deceivers.”⁴¹⁵ It should be pointed out that the author of this study fully, completely, and totally agrees with such a powerful statement.

In view of this statement, it seems absolutely logical and fair to use, in an identical way, the same traditional hermeneutical method of interpretation regarding the undistinguishable accusations of the Patriarch Jacob and his famous offspring – the Lord Jesus Christ. This unbiased approach to the interpretation of the biblical account will illustrate Esau's baseless accusation against his brother because it never was confirmed by the context of the biblical canon, the ancient philosophical, and religious writings of the Jewish and Christian communities.

3.3.8 Confidence In the Expression of a Carnal Person Is Not Justified

Reformed theologians did not distinguish the statement of the author of the book of Genesis from the speech of the sinner Esau (Genesis 27:36). It is a well-established fact that John Calvin and his followers found their dominant rationale for the sharp accusation of Jacob's character in the statement of his brother Esau: “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright, and, behold, now he has taken away my blessing” (Genesis 27:36 JUB). Based on this exclusive text, the idea arose (during the Reformation) that Jacob was not worthy of the imitation or aspiration of believers. Casting aspersions on Jacob's character was followed by a reinterpretation of the meaning of his name,

⁴¹⁵ Farmer, Craig S, ed. *John 1–12*. Reformation Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, 4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014, 265.

equating “Jacob” with “deceiver.”⁴¹⁶ As we have already analyzed, this innovative method of biblical interpretation was first shown in the comments of John Calvin, and then fully adopted by *The Geneva Bible*.⁴¹⁷

In light of Esau’s strong allegation, it seems necessary to emphasize the essential exegetical and hermeneutical fact that the book of any author, including the Bible, can include the thoughts and conversations of many people or beings, and not just the author’s own ideas. For example, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark* is well known in the world as a play by the English writer William Shakespeare.⁴¹⁸ However, as we know this book includes conversations between different people, an evil spirit, and not just Shakespeare's own concepts.

Therefore, based on the fundamental homiletical, and fully rational frame of hermeneutics, contemporary, impartial readers have to remember that the original biblical text also includes statements that may or may not be correct and are not necessarily always supported by the narrator. For that reason, during the reading of the ancient biblical text, it is vital to separate the voice of the author and his intentions from the other voices that are organically included in the ancient biblical text. In our case, it is important to find out whether this powerful assertion of a cunning hunter Esau is confirmed by the author (Moses), the context of the entire biblical canon, and the ancient philosophical and religious writings of the Jewish and Christian communities. It has already been shown that the ancient Jewish and Christian communities had an exceptionally positive opinion about Jacob.

⁴¹⁶ Jeffrey, David Lyle, and Gregory Maillet. *Christianity and Literature: Philosophical Foundations and Critical Practice*. 120.

⁴¹⁷ Berry, Lloyd E, and William Whittingham. *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969.

⁴¹⁸ Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. Edited by Tucker Brooke and Jack Randall Crawford. The Yale Shakespeare. New Haven: Yale University press, 1947.

In addition to the previous information, I should note that an objective and balanced reader should seriously consider several well-preserved facts for reliability. First, the same book of Genesis depicts the wife of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, on one occasion accusing Jacob's beloved son Joseph by saying: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. But as soon as I screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me and ran out of the house" (Genesis 39:17–18). It is absolutely clear that Joseph went to prison for such a strong accusation. At first glance, it may appear that the trustworthy wife of Potiphar was an unfortunate victim of Joseph, the well-masqueraded Hebrew criminal. On the other hand, this study drew attention that nothing could be further from the truth than this mistaken and unbalanced observation.

For that reason, careful study of the entire biblical narrative reveals that Jacob's youngest son Joseph was a godly, hardworking, and deeply moral man. In contrast to Joseph, his accuser (the wife of Potiphar) was nothing less than an evil and wicked woman who casted her lustful eyes upon handsome Joseph and day-by-day sought to seduce Joseph to immoral sexual relations with her. As a result, the Holy Bible colorfully depicts that:

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And after a time his master's wife cast her eyes on Joseph and said, "Lie with me." But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, because of me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in my charge. He is not greater in this house than I am, nor has he kept back anything from me except you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her (Genesis 39:6–10 ESV).

When her seduction was rejected by Jacob’s son Joseph many times she fabricated a story and slandered the innocent man of God (Genesis 39:11–16). This is an example of how important it is for the contemporary reader to do the deep analysis of the narrative and separate the voice of the author and his intentions from the other voices that are included in the biblical description.

3.3.8.1 Criticism of Reformers Is Not Objective

With the reference to Esau’s latest accusation toward his irreproachable brother Jacob (Genesis 27:36), a careful analysis of the biblical narrative reveals that this allegation is absolutely baseless and should not be taken as convincing or trustworthy because it has never been confirmed by biblical context and apostolic teachings. Speaking of Esau's statement, unparalleled in the Scriptures, the ancient Hebrew and Christian believers seemed unjustified to trust the allegation of a liar who previously absolutely freely sold his birthright (Genesis 25:34).⁴¹⁹

Considering this historical fact, Saint Augustine of Hippo, speaking of Esau and Jacob, states, “so great was the diversity in their lives and characters, so great the contrast in their behavior, that the difference in itself made them enemies of each other. One of the twins [*consciously*] lost the birthright, which people then held in great esteem, and the other obtained it [*rightly*].”⁴²⁰ Correspondingly, Saint Ephrem the Syrian always taught his spiritual flock that “Esau sold his [*priceless*] birthright, the Scripture says ‘after he had eaten he arose and went away and Esau despised his

⁴¹⁹ Walton, John H. *Genesis: The NIV Application Commentary: From Biblical Text ... to Contemporary Life*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001, 551.

⁴²⁰ Augustine, Of Hippo, Saint. *The City of God against the Pagans*. The Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957, 147–148.

birthright.’ For that reason, Esau did not sell it because he was hungry but rather since it had no value to him, he sold it for nothing as if it were nothing.”⁴²¹

It should be noted that Martin Luther likewise fully supported this primordial Orthodox point of view. For example, speaking of this passage, Luther openly states: “Thus were not our first parents miserably deceived in their hopes concerning their first-born, Cain, the murderer? So also Abraham, the exalted, was not the first-born, but Haran. So again Esau was the first-born; but he had to [*freely*] yield his birthright and its blessing to Jacob.”⁴²² Then the theologian went on and colorfully described why we should not trust the assertion of the cunning hunter – Esau. Because, “he had been full of pride and idolatry, and therefore as a grown man, he occupied himself in the fields with hunting and waging war.”⁴²³ “He [*Esau*] was simply a carnal, profane, licentious playboy,” concluded Luther.⁴²⁴

It also should be noted that the New Testament writing presents Esau as a sexually immoral, godless, and untrustworthy man who for a single meal absolutely freely sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son (Hebrews 12:15–16 NIV). Therefore, speaking of this passage William L. Lane advocates that “the writer is initially concerned lest anyone (the indefinite τις) should be excluded from the grace of God through personal carelessness (v 15a). The idiom ὑστερέω ἀπό, followed by the genitive of separation, suggests the notion of *exclusion from* some benefit

⁴²¹ Halton, Thomas P. *The Fathers Of The Church*. Volume 91. CUOA Press, 1994, 171.

⁴²² Luther, Martin, and John Nicholas Lenker. *Commentary on Genesis*. Minneapolis, MN.: Luther Press, 1910, 370.

⁴²³ Pelikan, Jaroslav, and Walter A Hansen. *Luther's Works: Lectures on Genesis Chapters 21–25*. Vol. Volume 4. Luther's Works. Saint Louis: Concordia, 1964, 380–381.

⁴²⁴ Morris, Henry M. *The New Defender's Study Bible: King James Version*. Nashville, Tenn.: World Pub, 2006, 80.

through one's own fault."⁴²⁵ Another contemporary biblical scholar Alan C. Mitchell also points out persuasively that carnal Esau "is first described as 'immoral,' *pornos*, an adjective related to *porneia*, which often in biblical texts has to do with sexual immorality. Esau is also called 'profane,' *bebēlos*, an adjective associated with ritual defilement. The fact that he [*freely*] sold his [*priceless*] birthright for a single meal indicates what is [*actually*] important to him."⁴²⁶

In the same way, one of the leading Protestant German professors Claus Westermann convincingly admitted that it is inappropriate to connect Jacob's character with the accusation of his brother: "the explanation from כָּזַב = 'deceive' (Gen. 27:36), which Hos. 12:4 (Jer. 9:3?) has transferred to Gen. 25:26, is therefore different from intention of v. 26 (cf. R. B. Coote, VT21 [1971] 390)."⁴²⁷ Likewise, Derek Kidner highlights that "the context does not say 'so Jacob supplanted his brother,' but 'so Esau despised his birthright.'"⁴²⁸

Furthermore, it has to be emphasized that this apologetic view of the Patriarch Jacob is in strong agreement with the rabbinic claim, which is supported by Hebrew scholars, that Esau had no faith in everlasting life or desire for spiritual things. As a result, "even after he had eaten he did not regret the sale." For that reason, Jordan Hillman concludes that "It is with Esau's indifference rather than Jacob's

⁴²⁵ Lane, William L. *Hebrews*. Vol. 9–13 /. Word Biblical Commentary, V. 47b. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1991, 452.

⁴²⁶ Mitchell, Alan C. *Hebrews*. "A Michael Glazier Book." Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2007, 278.

⁴²⁷ Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 12–36*. 1st Fortress Press Ed. ed. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1995, 414.

⁴²⁸ Kidner, Derek. *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, V. 1. Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2008, 152–153.

opportunism that the Torah finds fault, ‘Thus did Esau spurn his birthright (Genesis 25:34).’⁴²⁹

In the light of this primordial Orthodox view, contemporary critics who still use the words of Esau as a basis to accuse Jacob should remember that an objective criticism of any biblical passage must always be established based on accurate linguistic analysis of the original text, the correct historical setting, and the author’s intention insofar as it is possible in each particular passage, and not based on the assertion of wicked people whose opinion has never been supported by the biblical context.⁴³⁰ That is exactly why contemporary scholar Eugene Merrill states: “It is important in that interpretation of biblical texts must take into account the historical and cultural milieu.”⁴³¹

Taking everything into account, it is essential to re-emphasize the historical fact that the ancient Hebrew and Christian communities never minded Esau’s condemnation of Jacob. This innovative opinion firstly appears only during the Protestant Reformation (in the middle of the 16th century). Thus, paraphrasing the previously mentioned statement of the *Reformation Commentary on Scripture I* would like to raise a reasonable question: “let us consider therefore how wicked and perverse it is when someone who is a true shepherd ‘*the holy Patriarch Jacob*’⁴³² is

⁴²⁹ Jordan Jay Hillman. *The Torah And Its God*. Prometheus Books, 2001, 89–90.

⁴³⁰ Groom, Susan Anne. *Linguistic Analysis of Biblical Hebrew*. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003. See also: Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2005.

⁴³¹ Merrill, Eugene H. The lifespans of the EB–MB Patriarchs: a hermeneutical and historical conundrum. *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 57 no 2 Spr 2015, 267–280.

⁴³² Ambrose, Saint, Bishop of Milan. *Seven Exegetical Works*. 158–159.

called a deceiver by those who [*in contradiction to the ancient Patristic teaching still support the negative interpretation of Jacob's character*]?"⁴³³

3.3.9 Calvin's View Is Based on Limited Linguistic Knowledge

It should be repeated that John Calvin was the first theologian to portray Jacob as a deceiver and the fact that this innovative point of view was presented in *the Geneva Bible*. However, an English scholar Samuel Rolles Driver was the first who, in an attractive scholastic form, claimed that Jacob's name means a deceiver: "being explained from 'ákēb, 'heel,' just before. The verb 'ákēb means properly *to follow at the heel*."⁴³⁴ It is absolutely clear that with such a sharp statement, Reformed theologians, apparently, forever eclipsed the life and attractiveness of the once highly respected Patriarch Jacob.

On the other hand, this latest seemingly solid understanding of the derivation and meaning of Jacob's personal name has been significantly shaken by numerous archaeological and linguistic innovations during the 20th century. For example, the British Institute for the Study of Iraq published an article (1940) by secular scholar C. J. Gadd in which the author depicts the revolutionary discoveries that had been made in modern Iraq. The outcome of the thoughtful linguistic analysis of the *Tablets from Chagar Bazar and Tall Brak* lead many academics to the strong conclusion that the Semitic name Jacob means "may El [*God*] protect you."⁴³⁵ In light of this discussion, it should also be noted that the Semitic word

⁴³³ Farmer, Craig S, ed. *John 1–12*. Reformation Commentary on Scripture, New Testament, 4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014, 265.

⁴³⁴ Driver, S. R. *The Book of Genesis: With Introduction and Notes*. Westminster Commentaries. New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1909.

⁴³⁵ Gadd, C. J. "Tablets from Chagar Bazar and Tall Brak, 1937-38." *Iraq* 7 (1940), 22–66.

אֱלֹהִים [ʔelo: 'him] El or Elohim is a personal divine name for the Lord God Almighty that is frequently used even nowadays in the Hebrew Bible and rabbinical literature.⁴³⁶

A few years later, *the Journal of Cuneiform Studies* published the article (1959) by another well-respected secular researcher, Stephen D. Simmons, about other essential archaeological and linguistic discoveries in the Middle East. This article aroused keen interest among a large number of modern scholars, linguists, and theologians because ‘*Early Old Babylonian Tablets from H̄armal and Elsewhere*’ strongly suggested that the Patriarch Jacob’s name came from a typical Amorite name *ya`qub-el*, which means “may El [*God*] protect you.”⁴³⁷

In addition, David Noel Freedman, one of the world’s foremost experts on the ancient text, explains (1963) that the personal name ‘Jacob’ came from the Hebrew word יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'aqov*) and it is a shortened form of the theophoric name עֵין יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'aqov-el*), which means "May God Protect." Then, Freedman explains further that a thoughtful reading of the original manuscript of the book of Deuteronomy 33:28, in conjunctions with ancient non-biblical texts, would lead one to the conclusion that “the Holy Scripture in the blessing of Moses does indeed include the longer form of Jacob’s name.”⁴³⁸

As a result of these outstanding discoveries, all Catholic academics under the solid endorsement of Pope Pius XII (1876–1958) accepted all of these scholarly arguments and profoundly modified their view and interpretation of Jacob’s personal

⁴³⁶ Rippee, Ryan Lowell, and Bruce A Ware. *That God May Be All in All: A Paterology Demonstrating That the Father Is the Initiator of All Divine Activity*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2018, 22–26.

⁴³⁷ Simmons, Stephen D. *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1959), 71–93.

⁴³⁸ D. N. Freedman, *Israel Exploration Journal*, Vol. 13, No.2 1963, 125–126.

name. This far-reaching decision was reflected in a new biblical commentary (1971) called *San Jerónimo*.⁴³⁹ Later, this view was likewise reproduced in *The Catholic Study Bible* (1995). Consider this statement: “the name Jacob has no true etymological connection with the Hebrew word for “heel” (aqeb), but is instead a shortened form of some such name as yaaqob-el (“may God protect”).”⁴⁴⁰

Meanwhile, a German Protestant Old Testament scholar, Claus Westermann, also points to the newest archeological and linguistic discoveries, claiming that “the explanation of the name Jacob from the noun כָּעָב = ‘heel’ is no longer aware of the original meaning of the theophoric name: *Iahkûb - ila*, ‘may God protect’ (M. Noth, Fests. A. Alt [1953] 142 = *Ges. Aufs.* II [1971] 213–222).”⁴⁴¹ Another Protestant Old Testament scholar, Gordon John Wenham, upholds the view that the original name Jacob is usually regarded as a shortened form of Ya`qub-el ‘may El protect, reward’ and “is a typical Amorite name of the early millennium, which is found in inscriptions from Chagar Bazar (1800 BC), Qatuna (c. 1700 BC), and in second-millennium Egyptian tests.”⁴⁴² Similarly, the *NIV Application Commentary* (2001)

⁴³⁹ Brown, Raymond Edward, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland Edmund Murphy. *Comentario Bíblico "San Jerónimo". Tomo I (Antiguo Testamento)*. Vol. 1. Ediciones Cristiandad, 1971, 128–129.

⁴⁴⁰ Senior, Donald. *The Catholic Study Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, 30.

⁴⁴¹ Westermann, Claus. *Genesis 12–36*. 1st Fortress Press Ed. ed. A Continental Commentary. Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1995, 414.

⁴⁴² Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis*. Vol. 16–50. Word Biblical Commentary, V. 2. Dallas, Tex.: Word Books, 1994, 176.

stresses that “the name Ya`qub–el (or using other divine epithets besides ‘El’) is common in West Semitic and means, ‘May the God El protect’.”⁴⁴³

It is truly remarkable that the list of distinguished secular and Christian scholars of our time who passionately support this ancient point of view is growing rapidly. For that reason, the *New International Biblical Commentary* (2000) affirms that the majority of Christian biblical scholars recognize that the full form of the name Jacob is ‘Jacob-El,’ which means ‘may El protect him.’⁴⁴⁴ Victor P. Hamilton states that “scholars agreed that the [*personal*] name *Jacob* is an abbreviated name, of which the longer form is ‘Jacob-El,’ or ya`qub-alel. The meaning would be ‘May El protects (him)’ or ‘El will protect (you)’.”⁴⁴⁵ As is evident based on the relatively newest archeological and linguistic discoveries, the majority of the Christian scholars in the present day agree with their Jewish brothers’ view that the name ‘Jacob’ came from the Hebrew word יַעֲקֹב (*Ya'akov*) and it is a shortened form of the theophoric name יְיָ יַעֲקֹב־עֵל (*Ya'akov–el*), which means "May God Protect (You)!"

⁴⁴³ Walton, John H, and Wheaton College (Ill.). Authors. *Genesis: From Biblical Text ... to Contemporary Life*. The Niv Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan, 2001, 549.

⁴⁴⁴ Hartley, John E. *Genesis*. New International Biblical Commentary. Old Testament Series, 1. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000, 238.

⁴⁴⁵ Hamilton, Victor P. "The Book of Genesis, Chapters 18-50." (1995), 178–179.

CONCLUSION

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The comparison of the two approaches to Jacob's figure's interpretation proved that for a reliable perception of the biblical narrative, it is necessary to use traditional hermeneutic, apologetic, and analytical methods of reading and interpreting the Bible. Because only a patristic interpretation of Jacob's character can reasonably oppose all aspects of textual and biblical criticism and directs the reader to understand the biblical text in the historical and cultural circumstances in which the text was written. This approach to interpreting the Bible also helps the Christian community correctly interpret other Scripture's complex passages.

The conclusions formulate the main provisions of the dissertation, which are submitted for defense:

1. The biblical story reveals Patriarch Jacob as a positive hero, which is also facilitated by his opposition to his older brother Esau. The formation of such opposite images takes place with the help of allusions contained in biblical stories before the appearance of the figures of Jacob and Esau, as well as the facts of the life of the brothers: 1) like Adam and Eve, Esau did not pass the food test; 2) Cain and Abel are the prototypes of the confrontation between Esau and Jacob - the elder, the unrighteous, and the younger, the righteous, brothers; 3) the negative image of Esau is consonant with the figure of the evil and depraved hunter Nimrod; 4) Jacob, like his father Isaac, was not the firstborn, but received the blessing of the birthright as opposed to his brothers Ishmael and Esau; 5) Rebekah received God's providence for Jacob. The Bible uses the adjective “perfect” to describe Jacob.

2. In Jewish teaching formed an ideal image of the Patriarch Jacob, which affected the Christian patristic understanding. Aurelius, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, and others perceived Jacob as a pious, innocent, honest, and sinless man, which influenced the translation of the Bible in the sixteenth century.

3. The image of Jacob is reinforced by the image of his mother Rebekah, who in the traditional paradigm of interpretation appears as a spiritual model and even a prototype of Jesus Christ, while negative hermeneutics, on the contrary, sees Rebekah as one of the causes of Jacob's dishonest life.

4. The reason for the emergence of an alternative interpretation of the image of Jacob was the controversy of his actions in the struggle for birthright. John Calvin's negative assessment of such actions was developed by his successors - Matthew Henry, Charles Mackintosh, Friedrich Dillman and, especially, Samuel R. Driver. The latter, in particular, gave a visible scientific basis for the meaning of Jacob's name as a “deceiver” and influenced the formation of his negative image in the translation of the Bible.

5. The emergence and development of the Reformed interpretation of the life and character of Jacob contributed to a number of factors: allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament texts, developed by the Alexandrian school, substitution theology, which formed a negative attitude towards Judaism; anti-Semitism, which forced Christian thinkers to reconsider their attitudes toward Jewish patriarchs; and the doctrine of the predestination of John Calvin, according to which Jacob was a sinful man, and his virtues only a consequence of God's grace.

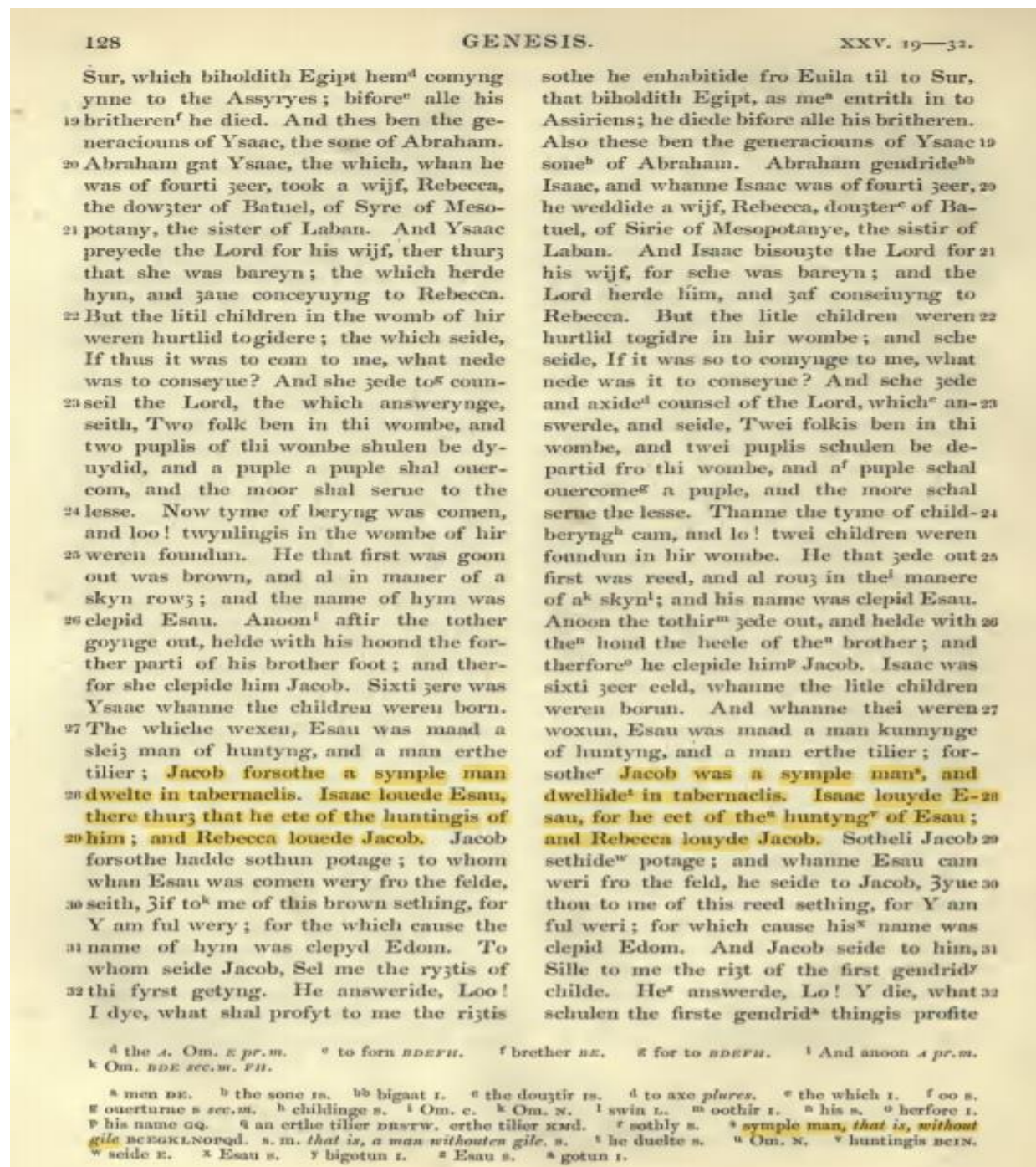
6. The negative hermeneutics of Jacob's image had the greatest effect on the superficial perception of the biblical narrative, on modern translations of the Bible, in which the negative vision of the Patriarch is formed by interpreting Jacob's name as a “deceiver” and led to increased anti-Semitism.

7. Comparative analysis of traditional and Reformed paradigms of interpretation of the image of Jacob revealed many shortcomings of the latter. In particular, the accusations against the Patriarch Jacob were based on unreliable linguistic and textual analysis, double hermeneutical standards, interpretation of the biblical text outside the historical context, and contrary to the orthodox teachings of the church.

Therefore, the study found that the traditional approach to the interpretation of the image of Jacob as a perfect man is more reasonable than a negative view of the figure of the Patriarch by Reformed theologians. The traditional approach is based on hermeneutic, apologetic, and analytical methods of reading and interpreting the Holy Bible in the historical and cultural circumstances in which the ancient text was written and contributed to the formation of objective perception of the biblical narrative.

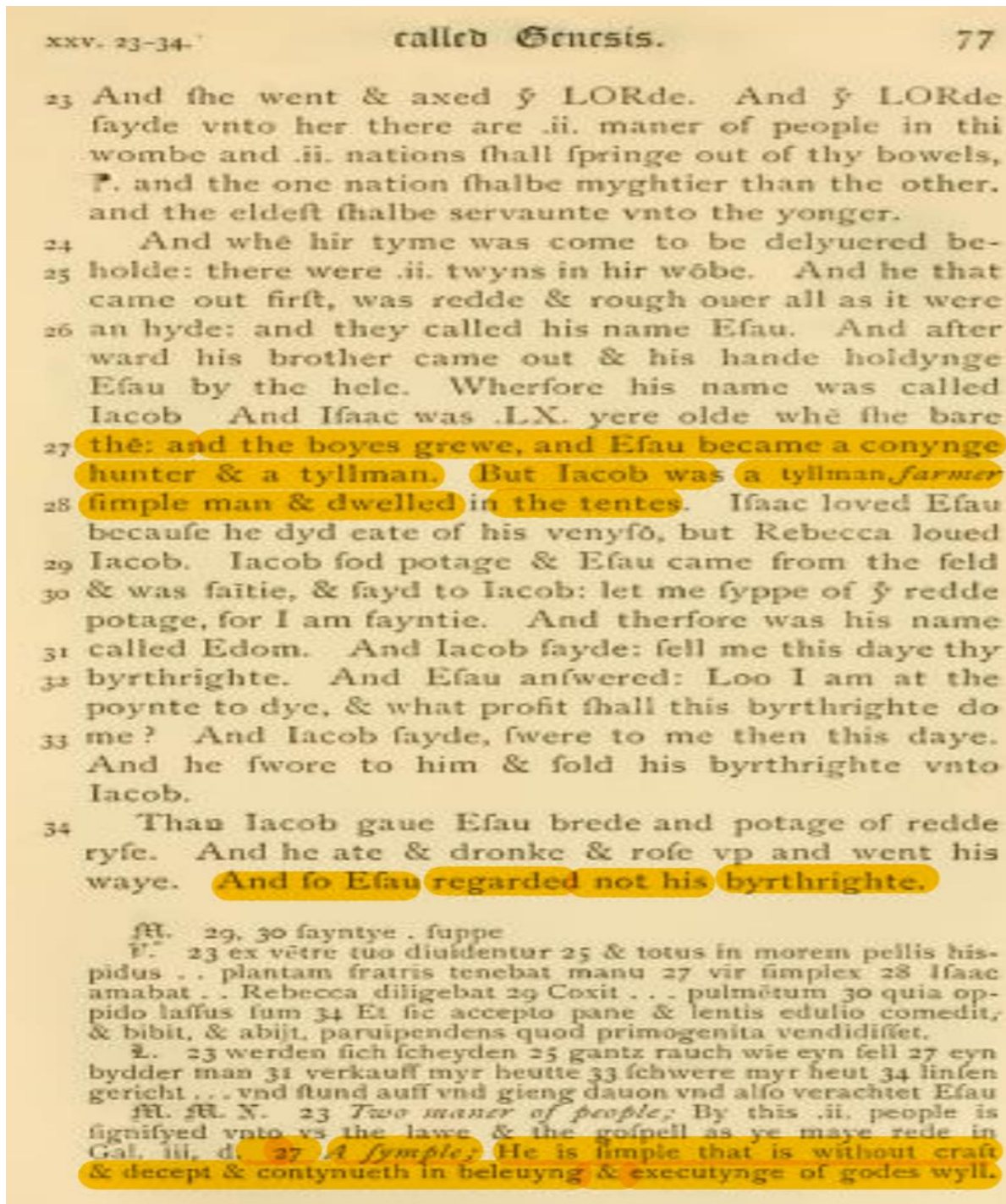
APPENDIX

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1 # WYCLIFFE BIBLE VOLUME 1 [Gene 25] – (1320–1384 CE)⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁶ John Wycliffe and his followers. The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with the Apocryphal books, in the earliest English versions made from the Latin Vulgate. Oxford, at the University Press, 1850.

2 # WILLIAM TYNDALE'S FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES [*Gene 25*] – (1494–1536 CE)⁴⁴⁷



⁴⁴⁷ Tyndale, William. Kulakowski, Rev Terry. *1534 Five Books of Moses*. REFORMED CHURCH PUBLICATI, 2016.

3 # THOMAS MATTHEW BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1505–1555 CE)⁴⁴⁸

Abraham.

Genesis.

bowed hym selfe vnto the Lozde/ flate vpon the erth. And the seruaite toke forth iewelles of siluer & iewelles of gold & raymet/ & gaue the to Rebecca: but vnto hyz bzother & to hyz mother/ he gaue spyrres. And then they ate & dꝛinke/ both he & the men & were wth hym/ and taried all nyght and rose vp in the mornynge.

And he sayde: let me departe vnto my master. But hyz bzother and hyz mother sayde: let the damsell abyde with vs a whyle/ & it be but euen .x. dayes / and than goo thy wayes. And he sayde vnto the: hynder me not/ for the Lozde hath pꝛospere my iourney. Sende me awaye that I maye goo vnto my master.

And they sayde: let vs call the damsell/ & witt what she sayth to the matter. And they called forth Rebecca / & sayde vnto her: witt thou goo with this man? And she sayde: yee.

So they let Rebecca their syster go with her noyse & Abrahamys seruaite/ & the men that were with hym. And they blessed Rebecca/ & sayde vnto her: Thou art oure syster growe in to thousande thousandes / and thy seed possesse & gat of their enemyes. And Rebecca arose & hyz damsell / & satt the vpon the camels/ & wet their waye after the man. And the seruaite toke Rebecca / & wet his waye.

G. To blisse a many neybour is to praye for hym & to wish hym good: and not to wagge: two fingers & ser him.

Gene. xvi. d. h. Herdityce ons to the erce of the spere a syster by the mynde to God.

And Isaac was a comynge from the well of the spyunge & sayde: for he dwelt in the south cōtre/ & was gone out to walke in hys medytacyōs befoze the euē tye. And he lyst by hys eyes & lohed/ and beholde the camels were coming. And Rebecca lyst by hys eyes/ & when she sawe Isaac/ she lychted of the camel/ & sayde vnto the seruaite: what man is this that cometh agaynst vs in the feild? And the seruaite sayde: it is my master. And then she toke hyz mantell/ & put it about her. And the seruaite tolde Isaac all that he had done. Then Isaac bzoughte her in to hys mother Saras tente/ and toke Rebecca/ and she became hys wyfe/ & he loued her: so was Isaac comforted ouer hys mother.

Abraham taketh Bethura to his wyfe/ & begetteth many chyldzen. Abraham dyeth & geueth all his goodes to Isaac. The genealogie of Isaac. The dyeth of Isaac and Esau. Esau selleth his by:chtyght for a messe of potage.

The .xxv. Chapter.

Abraham toke hym another wyfe called Keturah/ whiche bare hym Shimiran / Jekhsan / Medan / Midian / Jethack & Suah. And Jekhsan begat Seba & Medan. And the sonnes of Medan were Assurim / Letusim and Letumim. And the sonnes of Midian were Ephraim / Hanoch / Abida & Elda. All these were the chyldzen of Keturah. But Abraham gaue all & he had vnto Isaac. And vnto the sonnes of hys concubyne he gaue gyses/ and sente them awaye from Isaac hys sonne/ whyle he

a. Concuynes in the scrpture are not bacheltes / but topures: yet be they no rule in the house / but wer e subtectes as seruantes. As Agar was vnto Sara. Gene. xvi. a. s. v. y. h. Gene. xxx. a.

yet spued) eastward/ vnto the east contre.

These are the dayes of the lyfe of Abraham which he spued: an hundred & .lxxv. yere / and than se. I seke & dyed/ in a lustye age (whē he had spued ynough) & was put vnto his people. And hys sonnes Isaac & Ismael buryed hym in the double caue in the felde of Ephraim sonne of Soar the Bethyte befoze Mamre. Whiche felde Abraham bought of the sonnes of Beth: There was Abraham buried & Sara hys wyfe. And after the deeth of Abraham God blessed Isaac hys sonne/ whych dwelled by the well of the spyunge & seinge.

These are the generacions of Isaac. Abrahamys sonne/ which Hagar the Egyptian Saras handmayde bare vnto Abraham. And these are the names of the sonnes of Isaac/ with their names in their hymreddes. The eldest sonne of Isaac Ismael / then Cedar / Abdeel / Midlam / Midma / Duma / Mada / Haddar / Thema / Jetur / Naphtis & Bedma: These are the sonnes of Isaac/ & these are their names/ in their townes & castels. .xii. yeres of Isaac. And these are the yeres of the lyfe of Isaac/ an hundred & .xxv. yere/ & than he fell seke & dyed/ & was layde vnto his people. And he dweld fro Gula vnto Sur is befoze egypte/ as men go toward the Turrys. And he dyed in the pꝛesence of all his bzethren.

And these are the generacions of Isaac Abrahamys sonne: Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was .xv. yere olde whē he toke Rebecca to wyfe/ & daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Mesopotamia & syster to Laban & Sirie.

And Isaac made intercessiō vnto the Lozde for hys wyfe: because she was baren: and the Lozde was intreated of hym/ & Rebecca hys wyfe conceaued: & the chyldzen stroue to gether within her. Then she sayde: yf it shude goo so to passe/ what helpeth it & I am with chyldre: And she went & axed the Lozde. And the Lozde sayde vnto her: there are two manner of people in thy wombe/ & two nacjons shall spyunge out of thy bowels/ and the one nacjon shalbe myghtier than the other/ & the eldest shalbe seruaite vnto the younger.

And when hys tyme was come to be deliuered: beholde there were two twynes in hys wombe. And he & came out fyrst was redde & rough ouer all as it were an hyde: and they called his name Esau. And after ward his bzother came out/ & his hande holdyng Esau by the helle. wherfoze his name was called Jacob. And Isaac was .lx. yere olde when he bare the: & the dayes grewe/ & Esau became a comynge hunter and a tyll man. But Jacob was a tymple man/ & dwelled in the tentes. Isaac loued Esau/ because he byd eate of his bestyon/ but Rebecca loued Jacob.

Jacob sod potage/ & Esau came fro the feild & was

Gene. the d. To be amdge bye to be put in goodly place barpsil/ bar deput with c spany of there that in the same sayth that byd.

Gene. xvi. d. a. s. v. y. h.

c. My the people is lyp tyed vnto the lare & the gospell as y mane rede in Galat. ij. a

Gene. xli. b. b. Simpliciter sample that without enst a decept & con tynued in deli yng & cꝛecy tyng of gods wpl.

4 # THE GREAT BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1540 CE)⁴⁴⁹

Jlahac.

Genesis.

Ho, r.

Abrahā proceeded further and to-
ke him a wyfe called Keturā, why-
che bare hym Simram, and Jech-
san, and Hedan, and Midā, and
Jesbach and Suah. Jechsan begat Seba &
Hedan. And the sonnes of Hedan were: A-
surim, Letusim and Lecumim. And the son-
nes of Midian: Epha, and Epher, Hano-
ch, and Abidas & Elda. All these were the chy-
ldren of Keturā. And Abraham gaue all hys
goodes vnto Jlahac. But vnto the sonnes
of the concubynes whych Abraham had,
he gaue gyftes, and sent them awaye from
Jlahac hys sonne (whyle he yet lyued) cast-
warde, vnto the lande of Iededes.

And these are the dayes of the yeares of
Abrahams lyfe whych he lyued: an hundred
and lxxv. yeare, and than fell sycke and dyed
in a lustye age (whē he had lyued ynough)
and was put vnto hys people. And hys
sonnes Jlahac and Imahel burped hym in
the double caue in the felde of Ephron sonne
of zoar & hethpte besyde the playne of Ma-
re. Whych felde Abraham bought of the son-
nes of heth: There was Abraham burped &
Sara hys wyfe. It fortunēd after the deeth
of Abraham that God blessed Jlahac his son-
ne, and Jlahac dwelled by the well of the ly-
upnge and seynge me.

These are the generaciōs of Ismael Abra-
hams sonne, whych Hagar the Egypcian
Saras handmayde bare vnto Abraham. And
these are the names of the sonnes of Ismael,
in their names accordyng to theyr kyndred-
des. The eldest sonne of Ismael: Nebatoth,
and Cedar: and Adbeel, and Hyslam, and
Hyslam, Duma, and Hafa, & Hadar, Che-
ma, Jetur, Naphis & Kedma: These are the
sonnes of Ismael, & these are, theyr names,
by theyr towncs and castles. xij. princes of
their householdes. And these are the yeares of
the lyfe of Ismael, an hundred and xxxvij.
yeare, and he fell sycke, & dyed, & was layde
vnto hys people. And they dwelled fro He-
milah vnto Sur by the border of Egyp-
te, as thou goest towarde the Assirians. And
he dyed in the presence of all hys chyldren.

And these are the generaciōs of Jlahac
Abrahams sonne: Abraham begat Jlahac.
And Jlahac was. xi. yeare olde whē he toke
Rebecca to wyfe, the daughter of Bathuel
the Sirian of Mesopotamia and syster to
Laban the Sirien. And Jlahac made inter-
cessyon vnto the Lorde for hys wyfe: becau-
se she was baren: and the Lorde was intrea-
ted of hym, and Rebecca his wyfe conceaued:
and the chyldre stroue to gether wythin her.
Therefoze she sayd: yf it shulde goo so to pas-
se, what helpeth it that I am wyth chyldre?
Wherefoze, she went to aske the Lorde. And
the Lorde sayde vnto her: there are two ma-
ner of people in thy wombe, & two nacyns

shal be deuyded out of thy bowels, and the
one nacyon shal be myghtyer than the other,
and the elder shal be seruaunte vnto the
yonger.

Therefoze when hys tyme was come to be
deliuered: beholde, there were two twynnes
in hys wombe. And he that came out fyrst
was redd, and he was all ouer as if were a
rough garmēt. & they called his name Esau.
And after hym, came hys brother out, & hys
hande holdynge Esau by the heele. And hys
name was called Jacob. And Jlahac was.
lx. yeare olde when they were borne: and the
boyes grewe, and Esau became a conynge
hunter: & a tyler of the erth. But Jacob was
a perfecte man, & dwelled in the tentes. Jla-
hac loued Esau, because he dyd eate of hys
venyson, but Rebecca loued Jacob.

Jacob sod potage, and Esau came from
the felde and was sayntie, and Esau sayd to
Jacob: fede me I praye the wyth that redde
potage, for I am sayntie. And therefoze was
hys name called Esau. And Jacob sayde:
sell me thys daye thy byrthryghte.
Esau sayde: Loo I am at the popyte to
dye, and what profyte shall thys byr-
thryghte do me? Jacob answered & swore
to me then thys daye. And he swore to hym,
& solde hys byrthryghte vnto Jacob. Than
Jacob gaue Esau brede and potage of rylle.
And he dyd eate and dryncke and rose vp, &
wet hys waye. And Esau regarded not hys
byrthryghte.

Chapter.

The sojurne of Jlahac towarde Adimelech. The
Homes made vnto Jlahac and hys serues. Jlahac
is rebuked of Adimelech for carryng hys wyfe by
slyter. The chyppinge of the shephardes for the wil-
les. Jlahacs comforted. The atonement betwene
Adimelech and Jlahac.

Ad there came a derth in the la-
de, passyng the fyrst derth that
was in the dayes of Abraham.
And Jlahac went vnto Aime-
lech kynge of the Philistias vnto
Gerar. And the Lorde appeared vnto him,
and sayde: Go not downe into Egyp-
te, but byde in the lande whych I shall thewe vnto
the: sojourne in thys lande, and I will
be wyth the, and will blesse the: for vnto the
and vnto thy sede I will geue all these con-
treys. And I will performe the ooth which
I swore vnto Abraham thy father, and will
multiplie thy seed as the starres of heaue,
and will geue vnto thy seed all these con-
treys. And in thy seed shall all the nacyns of
the erth be blessed, because that Abraham har-
kened vnto my voyce and kepte myne ordi-
nances, my commaundementes, my statu-
tes, and my lawes.

And Jlahac dwelled in Gerar. And the
men of the place asked hym of hys wyfe, and
he sayde: she is my syster: for he feared
to

⁴⁴⁹ The Byble in Englyshe: That Is to Saye, the Content of All the Holye Scripture, Bothe of the
Olde and Newe Testament, Truly Translated After the Veryte of the Hebrue and Greke Textes, by
the Diligent Studie of Dyuers Excellent Lernerd [Men E]xperte in the Fore Tongues. 1540.

5 # GENEVA BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1560 CE)⁴⁵⁰

Izhak.	Genesis		
<p>4 Also the sonnes of Midean were Ephab & Ephér, & Hanooh, & Abida, and Eldaah, all these were the sonnes of Keturah.</p> <p>5 ¶ And Abraham gaue^a all his goods to Izhak,</p> <p>6 But vnto the^b sonnes of the^c concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gaue gifts, and sent them awa^d fro^e Izhak his sonne (while he yet liued) East ward to the East country.</p> <p>7 And this is the age of Abrahams life, which he liued, an hundredth seuenty and fiue yere.</p> <p>8 Then Abraham yelded the spirit, & dyed in a good age, an olde man, and of great yeres, and was^c gathered to his people.</p> <p>9 And his sonnes, Izhak and Ishmaél buried him in the caue of Macl pelah in the field of Ephron sonne of Zohar the Hittite, before Mamré.</p> <p>10 Which field Abraham bought of the Hittites, where Abraham was buried w^h Sarah his wife.</p> <p>11 ¶ And after the death of Abrahā God blessed Izhak his sonne, * and Izhak dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi.</p> <p>12 ¶ Now these are the generations of Ishmaél Abrahams sonne, whome Hagar the Egyptiā Sarahs handmaide bare vnto Abraham.</p>	<p>Alchurim, & Letushim, and Leummim.</p> <p>4 ¶ And Abraham gaue^a all his goods to Izhak,</p> <p>5 ¶ And Abraham gaue^a all his goods to Izhak,</p> <p>6 But vnto the^b sonnes of the^c concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gaue gifts, and sent them awa^d fro^e Izhak his sonne (while he yet liued) East ward to the East country.</p> <p>7 And this is the age of Abrahams life, which he liued, an hundredth seuenty and fiue yere.</p> <p>8 Then Abraham yelded the spirit, & dyed in a good age, an olde man, and of great yeres, and was^c gathered to his people.</p> <p>9 And his sonnes, Izhak and Ishmaél buried him in the caue of Macl pelah in the field of Ephron sonne of Zohar the Hittite, before Mamré.</p> <p>10 Which field Abraham bought of the Hittites, where Abraham was buried w^h Sarah his wife.</p> <p>11 ¶ And after the death of Abrahā God blessed Izhak his sonne, * and Izhak dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi.</p> <p>12 ¶ Now these are the generations of Ishmaél Abrahams sonne, whome Hagar the Egyptiā Sarahs handmaide bare vnto Abraham.</p>	<p>why am^b I thus? wherefore me went I to aske the Lord.</p> <p>23 And the Lord said to her, two nations are in thy wombe, and two maner of people shal be decided out of thy bowels, and the one people shal be mightier then the other, and the^a elder shal serue the younger.</p> <p>24 ¶ Therefore when her time of deliuerance was fulfilled, beholde, twines were in her wombe.</p> <p>25 So he that came ont first was red, and he was all ouer as a rough garment, and they called his name Esau.</p> <p>26 * And afterwarde came his brother out, and his hand held Esau by the heele: therefore his name was caled Izaakob. Now Izhak was thre score yere olde when Rebekah bare them.</p> <p>27 And the boyes growe, & Esau was a cunning hunter, & * liued in the fields: but Izaakob was a plaine man, and dwelt in tentes.</p> <p>28 And Izhak loued Esau, for * venison was his meat, but Rebekah loued Iakob.</p> <p>29 Now Izaakob sodde pottage, & Esau came from the field and was wearie.</p> <p>30 Then Esau said to Iakob, Let me eat, I pray thee, of the pottage so red, for I am weary. I herefore was his name called Edom.</p> <p>31 And Iakob said, Sel me euen now thy birth right.</p> <p>32 And Esau said, Lo, I am almost dead, what is then this^k birth right to me?</p> <p>33 Iakob then said, Swear to me suen now. And he sware to him, * & ^lsolde his birthright vnto Iakob.</p> <p>34 Then Iakob gaue Esau bread and pottage of lentiles: and he did eat and drinke and rose vp, & went his way: So Esau contemned his birth right.</p>	<p>^h That is, & childe, seing one shal destroye another.</p> <p>ⁱ For that is f^oncly refuge in all our miseries Rom. 9, 10</p> <p>Et c. 12, 3 Mat. 2, 2</p> <p>^o Ebr. a man of the field.</p> <p>^p Or, simple and innocent.</p> <p>^q Ebr. venison in his mouthe.</p> <p>^r Or, side me quickely.</p>
<p>1. Chro. 1 29</p> <p>² Ebr. first bor</p> <p>³ Ebr. I was of the mountains head of the mountain of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁵ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁶ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁷ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁸ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁰ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹¹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹² Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹³ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁴ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁵ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁶ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁷ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁸ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>¹⁹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁰ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²¹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²² Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²³ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁴ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁵ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁶ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁷ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁸ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>²⁹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁰ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³¹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³² Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³³ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁴ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁵ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁶ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁷ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁸ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>³⁹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁰ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴¹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴² Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴³ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁴ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁵ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁶ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁷ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁸ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁴⁹ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p> <p>⁵⁰ Ebr. I was of the field of Ephron</p>	<p>13 And these are the names of the sonnes of Ishmaél, name by name, according to their kinreds: the^a eldest sonne of Ishmaél was Nebaioth, then Kedar, & Adbeel, & Mibsam.</p> <p>14 And Mishma, & Dumah, & Massa, Hadar, & Tema, Ietur, Naphis, & Kedemah.</p> <p>15 These are the sonnes of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their townes and by their castles to wit, twelue princes of their nations.</p> <p>16 (And these are the yeres of the life of Ishmaél, an hundredth thirty and seuen yere, and he yelded the spirit, and dyed & was gathered vnto his^b people)</p> <p>17 And they dwelt from Haurah vnto Shur, that is towardes Egypt, as thou goest to Ashur. Ishmaél dwelt^c in the presence of all his brethren.</p> <p>18 ¶ Likewise these are the generations of Izhak Abrahams sonne. Abraham begate Izhak.</p> <p>19 And Izhak was forty yere olde, whē he toke Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the^d Aramite of Padan Arā, and sister to Laban the Aramite.</p> <p>20 And Izhak prayed vnto the Lord for his wife, because she was baren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.</p> <p>21 But the children^e strone together within her: therefore she said, Seing it is so,</p>	<p>21 And these are the names of the sonnes of Ishmaél, name by name, according to their kinreds: the^a eldest sonne of Ishmaél was Nebaioth, then Kedar, & Adbeel, & Mibsam.</p> <p>22 And Mishma, & Dumah, & Massa, Hadar, & Tema, Ietur, Naphis, & Kedemah.</p> <p>23 These are the sonnes of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their townes and by their castles to wit, twelue princes of their nations.</p> <p>24 (And these are the yeres of the life of Ishmaél, an hundredth thirty and seuen yere, and he yelded the spirit, and dyed & was gathered vnto his^b people)</p> <p>25 And they dwelt from Haurah vnto Shur, that is towardes Egypt, as thou goest to Ashur. Ishmaél dwelt^c in the presence of all his brethren.</p> <p>26 ¶ Likewise these are the generations of Izhak Abrahams sonne. Abraham begate Izhak.</p> <p>27 And Izhak was forty yere olde, whē he toke Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the^d Aramite of Padan Arā, and sister to Laban the Aramite.</p> <p>28 And Izhak prayed vnto the Lord for his wife, because she was baren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.</p> <p>29 But the children^e strone together within her: therefore she said, Seing it is so,</p>	<p>^k The reprobate esteeme not Gods benedict except they fele them precisely, & therefore they preferre presents pleasures.</p> <p>Ebr. 12, 16</p> <p>^l Thus I wicked preferre their worldelic comodities to Gods spiritual graces: but the child of God do the contrary</p> <p>^m In the land of Canaan.</p> <p>ⁿ Gods providence all waies watcheth to direct the waies of his children.</p>
CHAP. XXVI.		<p>1 God prouideth for Izhak in the famine. 2 He renueth his promes. 9 The king blameth him for doing his wife. 14 The Philistims hate him for his riches. 15 Stoppe his wellles. 16 And drine him away. 24 God comforteth him. 31 He maketh alliance with Abimelech.</p>	
	<p>1 And there was a famine in the^a land besides the first famine that was in the dayes of Abraham, wherefore Izhak went to Abimelech King of the Philistims vnto Gerar.</p> <p>2 For the Lord appeared vnto him, & said, ^b Go not downe into Egypt: but abide in the land which I shal thewe vnto thee.</p> <p>3 Dwell in this land, & I wil be with thee, and wil blesse thee: for to thee, and to thy</p>	<p>1 And there was a famine in the^a land besides the first famine that was in the dayes of Abraham, wherefore Izhak went to Abimelech King of the Philistims vnto Gerar.</p> <p>2 For the Lord appeared vnto him, & said, ^b Go not downe into Egypt: but abide in the land which I shal thewe vnto thee.</p> <p>3 Dwell in this land, & I wil be with thee, and wil blesse thee: for to thee, and to thy</p>	<p>^a In the land of Canaan.</p> <p>^b Gods providence all waies watcheth to direct the waies of his children.</p>

⁴⁵⁰ The Geneva Bible: THE BIBLE AND HOLY SCRIPTURES CONTERNED IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT. With Mosteprofitable Annotations. AT GENEVA, M.D.LX. 1560.

6 # GENIVA BIBLE [Gene 27] – (1560 CE)⁴⁵¹

Izhák.

Genefis.

30/1224

23 (For he knewe him not, because his handes were rough as his brother Esaus handes: wherefore he blessed him)

24 Again he said, Art thou that my sonne Esau? Who answered, Yea.

25 Then said he, Bring it me hether, and I wil eat of my sonnes venisō, that my soule may blesse thee. And he broght it to hi and he ate: also he broght him wine, and he dranke.

26 Afterwarde his father Izhák said vnto him, Come nere now, and kisse me, my sonne.

27 And he came nere and kissed him. Then he smelled the fauour of his garments, & blessed him, and said, Beholde, the smel of my sonne is as the smel of a field, which y^e Lord hath blessed.

28 * God giue thee therefore of the dewe of heauen, and the fatnes of the earth, and plentie of wheat and wine.

29 Let people be thy seruants, and nacions bowe vnto thee: be lord ouer thy brethré, and let thy mothers childré honour thee. cursed be he that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

30 ¶ And when Izhák had made an end of blessing Iakób, and Iakób was scace gone out from the presence of Izhák his father, then came Esau his brother from his hunting,

31 And he also prepared fauouric meat and broght it to his father, and said vnto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his sonnes venison, that thy soule may blesse me.

32 But his father Izhák said vnto him, Who art thou? And he answered, I am thy sōne, *euens* thy first borne Esau.

33 Then Izhák was ¹ stricken with a meruelous great feare, & said, Who and where is he that hunted venison, and broght it me, and I haue eat of all before thou camest? and I haue blessed him, therefore he shal be blessed.

34 When Esau heard the wordes of his father, he cryed out *as. It is a* great crye and bitter, out of measure, and said vnto his father, Bless me, *euens* me also, my father.

35 Who answered, Thy brother came with subtiltie, and hath taken away thy blessing.

36 Then he said, Was he not iustly called Iakób? for he hath deceued me these two times: he toke my birthright, and lo, now hath he taken my blessing. Also he said, Hast thou not referued a blessing for me?

37 Then Izhák answered, and said vnto Esau, Beholde, I haue made him ^h thy lord, and all his brethren haue I made his seruantes: also with wheat and wine haue I furnished him, and vnto thee now what

Gen. 1. 40.

Gen. 11. 20.

f In perceiuing his error, by appointing his heyre against Gods sentence pronounced before. *10. sufficiently.*

g In the chap. 31. he was so called because he behelde his brother by y^e hole, as though he woulde overthrowe him: & therefore he is here called an *anew* thrower, or deceywer. *h* For Izhák did this as he was the minister and Prophet of God.

shal I do, my sonne?

38 The Esau said vnto his father, Hast thou but one blessing my father? blesse me, *euens* me also, my father: and Esau lifted vp his voyce, and ^{*} wept.

39 Then Izhák his father answered, and said vnto him, Beholde, the fatnes of the earth shaibe thy dwelling place, and thou shalt haue of the dewe of heauen from aboue.

40 And ¹ by thy sworde shalt thou liue, and shalt be thy brothers ^h seruant. But it shal come to passe, whe thou shalt get the masterye, that thou shalt breake his yoke from thy necke.

41 ¶ Therefore Esau hated Iakób, because of y^e blessing, wherewith his father blessed him. And Esau thoght in his minde, * The dayes of mourning for my father wil come shortly, ¹ then I wil slay my brother Iakób.

42 And it was tolde to Rebekáh of y^e wordes of Esau her elder sonne, and she sent ¹ called Iakób her yonger sonne, and said vnto him, Beholde, thy brother Esau ^{is} comforted against thee, *meaning* to kill thee:

43 Now therefore my sōne, heare my voyce: arise, and flee thou to Harán to my brother Labán,

44 And tary with him a while vntil thy brothers fearcenes be swaged,

45 And til thy brothers wrath turne away from thee, and he forget the things, which thou hast done to him: then wil I send and take thee from thence: why shulde I be ^o deprived of you bothe in one day?

46 Also Rebekáh said to Izhák, * I am weary of my life, for the ^o daughters of Heth. If Iakób take a wife of the daughters of Heth like these of the daughters of the land, ^p what auaieth it me to liue?

CHAP. XXVIII.

1 *Iz. hik* forbiddeth Iakób to take a wife of the Canaanites. *2* *Esau* taketh a wife of the daughters of Heth against his fathers wil. *12* Iakób in the way to Harán seeth a ladder reaching to heauen. *14* *Civilis* is promised. *20* Iakób asketh of God onely meat and clothing.

Then Izhák called Iakób and ^a blessed him, and charged him, and said vnto him, Take not a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Arise, ^{*} get thee to ^{*} Padán Arám to the house of Bethuél thy mothers father, and thence take thee a wife of the daughters of Labán thy mothers brother.

3 And God ^{all} sufficient blesse thee, & make thee to encrease, & multiplie thee, that thou maiest be a multitude of people,

4 And giue thee the blessing of Abraham, *euens* to thee & to thy sēde with thee, that thou maiest inherit the lād (wherem thou art a ^b stranger) which God gaue vnto Abraham.

Gen. 1. 40. 41. 42.

Gen. 12. 16.

i Because thine enemies shalbe rounde about thee. *k* Which was fulfilled in his posteritie the Iudaicis: who were tributaries for a time to Irahil, and after came to libertie. *Abd. 1. 10.*

l Hypocrites onely absterne from doing evil for feare of men.

m He hath good hope to recover his birthright by killing thee.

n For y^e wicked soune wil kill the godlie: & y^e plague of God wil afterward light on y^e wicked soune. *Chap. 25. 25.* *o* Which were Esaus wiuces. *p* Merely she persuaded Izhák to agree to Iakóbs depar- ting.

a This seconde blessing was to cōfirme Iakóbs faith, lest he shoulde thinke y^e his father had giuen it without Gods motion. *Os. 12. 12.*

Chap. 24. 10.

10. all might.

b The godlie fathers were pure in minde continually, y^e they were but strigers in this world: to refuse they shoulde liue vp their eyes to heauen, where they shoulde haue a sure dwelling.

Thus

⁴⁵¹ The Geneva Bible: THE BIBLE AND HOLY SCRIPTURES CONTERND IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT. With Mostepfitable Annotations. AT GENEVA, M.D.LX. 1560.

7 # BISHOP'S BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1568 CE)⁴⁵²

Eſau. **Genetiſ.** **Iſaac.**

"Alme, 02 with child. (a) ſheweth to ſome ſerene place to goep, that ſhe might haue ſome re- uelation from heauen.

ſo, why am I thus: wherefore he went to ^(a) aſac the Lorde.

23 And the Lorde ſayde vnto her: there are two maner of people in thy wombe, and two nations ſhalbe deuided out of thy bowelles, and the one nation ſhalbe mightier then the other, and the elder ſhalbe ſeruaunt vnto the younger.

24 Therefore when her tyme was come to be deliuered, behold, there were two rhynges in her wombe.

D 25 And he that came out fyrſt, was red, and ^(b) he was all ouer as it were a harte garment, and they called his name Eſau.

(b) The reu- elation of his ſonne, ſheweth red as the roughnes of his boep.

26 And after hym came his brother out, and his hande holdyng Eſau by the heele, and his name was called Iacob: and Iſaac was ^(c) therefore yere olde when they were borne.

(c) So Iſaac ſaw moſt tyme red toringe pectra, with ſ ſhout of chyldren.

27 And the boyes grewe, and Eſau became a cunning hunter, and a "wyde man: but Iacob was a "perfect man, and dwelled in tentes.

28 Iſaac loued Eſau, becauſe " he dyd eate of his veniſon, but Rebecca loued Iacob.

" Veniſon in huntynge.

29 Iacob ſodde pottage, and Eſau came from the fielde, and was ſayntie:

30 And Eſau ſayd to Iacob: feede me I pray thee, with that ſame red pottage, for I am ſayntie: and therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Iacob ſaide: ſell me this day thy ^(d) byrthyght.

(d) The byrthyght was the ſon of the ſonne, becauſe Iacob was the ſonne of Iſaac, and Iſaac was the ſonne of Iſaac.

32 Eſau ſayde: lo, I am at the poynt to dye, and what profite ſhall this byrthyght do me:


33 Iacob answered: ſweare to me then this day. And he ſware to him, & ſolde his ^(e) byrthyght vnto Iacob.

(e) Eſau ſold his byrthyght vnto Iacob.

34 Then Iacob gaue Eſau bread and pottage of ryſe, and he dyd eate and drinke, and roſe vp, and went his way: and Eſau little regarded his byrthyght.

¶ The. xxvj. Capter.

1 God in the myddelt of famine, bleſseth and ſeedeth Iſaac. 3 Chanaan is prompced to God for Iſaac. 7 Iſaac ſayth that his wyfe is his ſiſter. 11 The very great care of God for Iſaac and his wyfe. 15 The Philſtines do ſtop Iſahacs pittes, and dyue him out. 17 God bleſſyng Iſaac, gyueth hym ryches. 19 He diggeth other pittes. 22 I thankſg. wyng. 24 God comforteth Iſaac. 25 Iſaac doth call vpon God. 28 Abimelech entreteth into a league with Iſaac. 31 Beer ſeba the cite. 34 Eſau maketh a ſeconde marriage.

A 1  And there fell a famine in the land, beſides the fiſt that was in the dayes of Abraham: And Iſaac went vnto ^(a) Abimelech, king of the Philſtines, vnto Gerar.

(a) In the kingdome of Gerar were called Philſtines, as the kinge of Egypt Iſaac ſaw.

2 And the Lorde appeared vnto hym, and ſayde: Go not downe into Egypt, [but] abyde in the lande whiche I ſhall ſheue vnto thee.

3 So iourne in this lande, and I wyll be with thee, and wyll bleſſe thee: for vnto thee and vnto thy ſeede I wyll geue all theſe countreys, and I wyll perſourme the othe whiche I ſware vnto Abraham thy father.

4 And wyll make thy ſeede to multiplye as the ſtarres of heauen, and wyll geue vnto thy ſeede al theſe countreys: and in thy ſeede ^(b) ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed:

(b) Childe gennito.

5 Becauſe ^(c) that Abraham hearkened vnto my voyce, & kept my ordinaunce,

(c) Abrahams hearkening, cauſed

my commaundementes, my ſtatutes, and my lawes.

6 And Iſaac dwelled in Gerar.

7 And the men of the place asked [him] of his wyfe. And he ſayde, ^(d) ſhe is my ſiſter: for he feared to ſay, ſhe is my wyfe, leſt the men of the place ſhoulde haue kylled hym, becauſe of Rebecca, whiche was beautifull to the eye.

8 And after he had ben there a long tyme, Abimelech king of the Philſtines looked out at a windowe, & ^(e) ſawe Iſaac ſportyng with Rebecca his wyfe.

9 And Abimelech called Iſaac, and ſaid: beholde, ſhe is of a ſuretie thy wiſe, and why ſaydeſt thou, ſhe is my ſiſter: To whom Iſaac answered: becauſe I thought that I might peraduenture haue dyed for her ſake.

(d) She ſhall haue ſpoken, a man ſhould haue ſayd ſuch ſake.

10 Abimelech ^(f) ſaid: why haſt thou done this vnto vs: one of the people myght lyghtly haue lync by thy wyfe, and ſo ſhouldeſt thou haue brought ^(g) ſinne vpon vs.

(f) Wherof can we ſay we here chyl by ſinne.

11 And ſo Abimelech charged al his people,

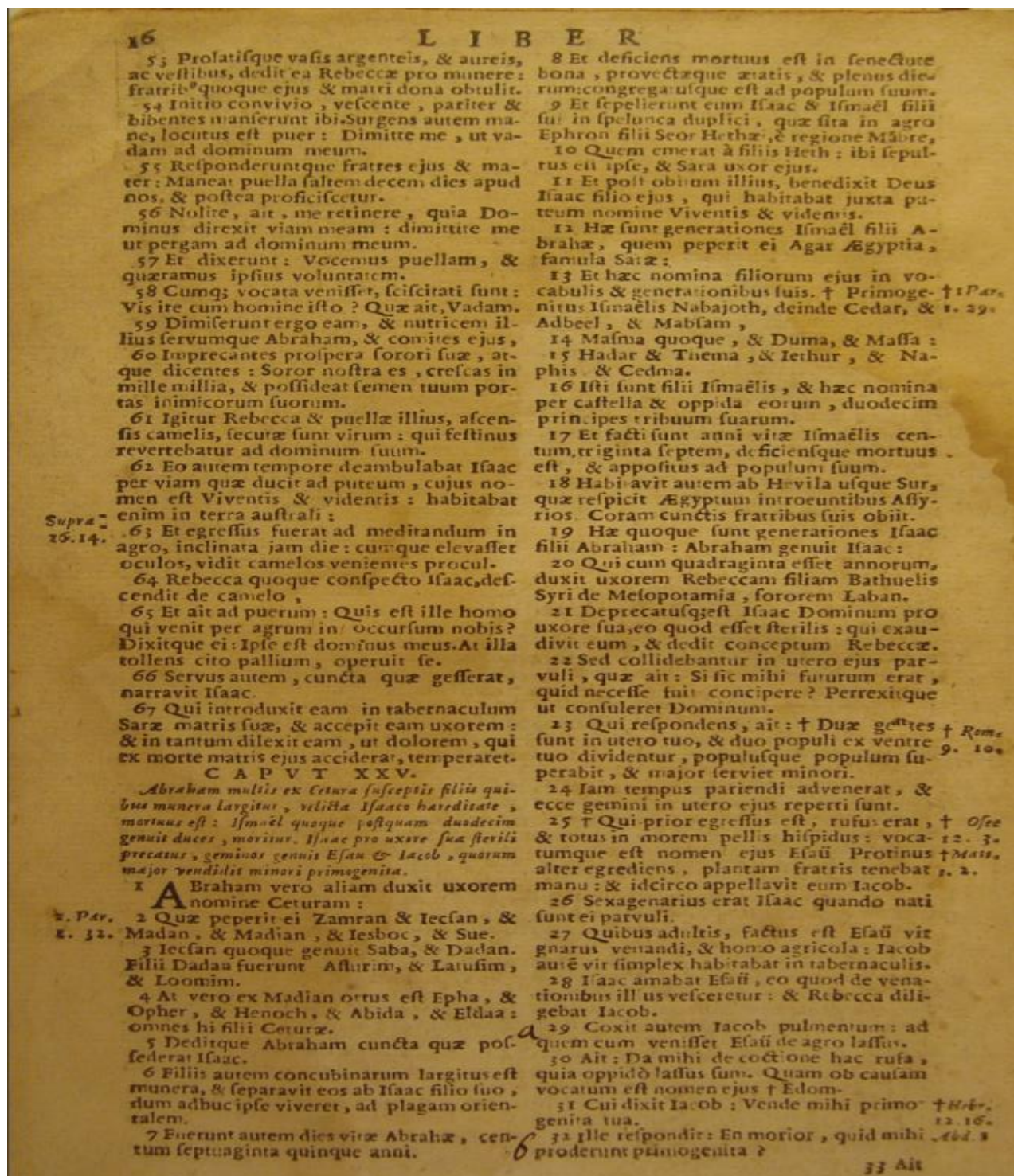
(g) The ſinne brought of ſinne, wherof we myght ſay we here chyl by ſinne.

⁴⁵² The Holi Bible. Early English Books Tract Supplement, E1:3151a. London: R. Jugge, 1569.

8 # THE ORIGINAL KING JAMES BIBLE [Gene 27] – (1611 CE)⁴⁵³

<h2>Eſau mourneth. Chap.xxviij. Iacob is ſent away.</h2>	
<p>29 Let people ſerue thee, and nations bow downe to thee: bee lord ouer thy brethren, & let thy mothers ſonnes bow downe to thee: Curſed bee euery one that curſeth thee, and bleſſed be hee that bleſſeth thee.</p> <p>30 And it came to paſſe, as ſoone as Iſaac had made an ende of bleſſing Iacob, and Iacob was yet ſcarce gone out from the preſence of Iſaac his father, that Eſau his brother came in from his hunting.</p> <p>31 And hee alſo had made ſauoury meate, and brought it vnto his father, and ſaid vnto his father, Let my father ariſe, and eat of his ſonnes veniſon, that thy ſoule may bleſſe me.</p> <p>32 And Iſaac his father ſaid vnto him, who art thou: and he ſaid, I am thy ſonne, thy firſt borne Eſau.</p> <p>33 And Iſaac trembled very exceedingly, and ſaid, who: where is he that hath taken veniſon, and brought it me, and I haue eaten of all before thou cameſt, and haue bleſſed him: yea and he ſhalbe bleſſed.</p> <p>34 And when Eſau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and ſaid vnto his father, Bleſſe mee, euen me alſo, O my father.</p> <p>35 And hee ſaid, Thy brother came with ſubtilty, and hath taken away thy bleſſing.</p> <p>36 And he ſaid, Is not he rightly named Iacob: for he hath ſupplanted me theſe two times: hee tooke away my birthright, and behold, now he hath taken away my bleſſing: and hee ſaid, haſt thou not reſerued a bleſſing for mee:</p> <p>37 And Iſaac answered and ſaide vnto Eſau, Behold, I haue made him thy lord, and all his brethren haue I giuen to him for ſeruants: and with corne and wine haue I ſuſtained him: and what ſhall I doe now vnto thee, my ſonne:</p> <p>38 And Eſau ſaid vnto his father, haſt thou but one bleſſing, my father: bleſſe mee, euen mee alſo, O my father. And Eſau liſt by his voyce, and wept.</p> <p>39 And Iſaac his father answered, and ſaid vnto him, Behold, thy dwelling ſhall be the fatneſſe of the earth, and of the dew of heauen from aboue.</p> <p>40 And by thy ſword ſhalt thou liue, and ſhalt ſerue thy brother: and it ſhall come to paſſe when thou ſhalt haue thy</p>	<p>dominion, that thou ſhalt breake his yoke from off thy necke.</p> <p>41 And Eſau hated Iacob, becauſe of the bleſſing, wherewith his father bleſſed him: and Eſau ſaid in his heart, The dayes of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I ſlay my brother Iacob.</p> <p>42 And theſe words of Eſau her elder ſonne were told to Rebekah: And ſhee ſent and called Iacob her yonger ſonne, and ſaid vnto him, Behold, thy brother Eſau, as touching thee, doeth comfort himſelfe, purpoſing to kill thee.</p> <p>43 Now therefore my ſonne, obey my voice: and ariſe, flee thou to Laban my brother, to Haran.</p> <p>44 And tary with him a few dayes, vntill thy brothers furie turne away:</p> <p>45 Untill thy brothers anger turne away from thee, and hee forget that which thou haſt done to him: then I will ſend, and fetch thee from thence: why ſhould I be deſerued alſo of you both in one day:</p> <p>46 And Rebekah ſaid to Iſaac, I am weary of my life, becauſe of the daughters of heath: If Iacob take a wife of the daughters of heath, ſuch as theſe which are of the daughters of the land, what good ſhall my life doe me:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C H A P. XXVIII.</p> <p>1 Iſaac bleſſeth Iacob, and ſendeth him to Padan Aram. 6 Eſau marrieth Mahalal the daughter of Iſhmael. 10 The Viſion of Iacobs ladder. 18 The ſtone of Bethel. 20 Iacobs vow.</p> <p>AND Iſaac called Iacob, and bleſſed him, and charged him, and ſaide vnto him, Thou ſhalt not take a wife, of the daughters of Canaan.</p> <p>2 * Ariſe, goe to Padan Aram, to the houſe of Bethuel thy mothers father, and take thee a wife from thence, of the daughters of Laban thy mothers brother.</p> <p>3 And God Almighty bleſſe thee, and make thee fruitfull, and multiply thee, that thou mayeſt be a multitude of people:</p> <p>4 And giue thee the bleſſing of Abraham, to thee and to thy ſeede with thee, that thou mayeſt inherit the lande wherein thou art a ſtranger, which God gaue vnto Abraham.</p>
<p>† Hebr. trembled with a great trembling greatly. † Hebr. hunted.</p> <p>† That is, a ſupplanter.</p> <p>† Or, ſupported.</p> <p>* Heb. 12. 17. * Verſe 28. † Or, of the fatneſſe.</p>	<p>* Obad. 10.</p> <p>* Chap. 26. 35.</p> <p>* Ofc. 12. 12.</p> <p>† Hebr. an aſſembly of people.</p> <p>† Hebr. of thy ſeruant-ſhips.</p>

⁴⁵³ The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, And The New. Appointed to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker. Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majestic. 1611.

#9 # CATHOLIC LATIN VULGATE [Gene 25] – (1685 CE)⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁵⁴ The Holy Bible Containing The Old And New Testaments, with the Apocryphal books, in the earliest English versions made from the Latin Vulgate. Oxford, at the University Press, 1850.

10 # THE KING JAMES BIBLE [Gene 25] – (1769 CE)⁴⁵⁵

<i>Rebekah beareth Esau and Jacob.</i>		C H A P. XXVI.	<i>Isaac goeth to Gerar :</i>
<p>Before CHRIST 1822. 1 ch. 16. 15. cir. 1800. 1 Chron. 1. 29.</p> <p>1 Or, Hadad, 1 Chron. 1. 30.</p> <p>1 ch. 17. 20.</p> <p>1773.</p> <p>1 ver. 8.</p> <p>1 Sam. 15. 7.</p> <p>† Heb. fell, Pf. 78. 64. 1 ch. 16. 12.</p> <p>1 Mat. 1. 2. 1857.</p> <p>1 ch. 22. 23. 1 ch. 24. 29.</p> <p>1838.</p> <p>1 Chron. 5. 20. 2 Chron. 33. 13. Ezra 8. 23. 1 Rom. 9. 10. 1 Sam. 9. 9. & 10. 22.</p> <p>1 ch. 17. 16. & 24. 60.</p> <p>1 Sam. 8. 14. 1 ch. 27. 29. Mal. 1. 3. Rom. 9. 12.</p> <p>1 ch. 27. 13. 16, 23.</p> <p>1 Hof. 12. 3. 1 ch. 27. 36. 1837. 1 ch. 27. 3. 1 Job. 1. 8. & 2. 3. Pf. 37. 37. 1 Heb. 11. 9. † Heb. or- nise was in his mouth. 1 ch. 27. 19. 25. 31. 1 ch. 27. 6.</p>	<p>Ishmael, Abraham's son, ¹whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham :</p> <p>13 And ^m these <i>are</i> the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations : the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth ; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam,</p> <p>14 And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa,</p> <p>15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah :</p> <p>16 These <i>are</i> the sons of Ishmael, and these <i>are</i> their names, by their towns, and by their castles ; ⁿ twelve princes according to their nations.</p> <p>17 And these <i>are</i> the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years : and ^o he gave up the ghost and died ; and was gathered unto his people.</p> <p>18 ^p And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that <i>is</i> before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria : and he † died ^q in the presence of all his brethren.</p> <p>19 ¶ And these <i>are</i> the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son : Abraham begat Isaac :</p> <p>20 And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, ^r the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, ^s the sister to Laban the Syrian.</p> <p>21 ¶ And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she <i>was</i> barren : ^t and the LORD was intreated of him, and ^u Rebekah his wife conceived.</p> <p>22 And the children struggled together within her ; and she said, If <i>it be</i> so, why <i>am</i> I thus ? ^v And she went to enquire of the LORD.</p> <p>23 And the LORD said unto her, ^w Two nations <i>are</i> in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels ; and ^x <i>the one</i> people shall be stronger than <i>the other</i> people ; and ^y the elder shall serve the younger.</p> <p>24 ¶ And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, <i>there were</i> twins in her womb.</p> <p>25 And the first came out red, ^b all over like an hairy garment ; and they called his name Esau.</p> <p>26 And after that came his brother out, and ^c his hand took hold on Esau's heel ; and ^d his name was called Jacob : and Isaac <i>was</i> threescore years old when she bare them.</p> <p>27 ¶ And the boys grew : and Esau was ^e a cunning hunter, a man of the field ; and Jacob <i>was</i> ^f a plain man, ^g dwelling in tents.</p> <p>28 And Isaac loved Esau, because † he did ^h eat of <i>his</i> venison : ⁱ but Rebekah loved Jacob.</p>	<p>29 ¶ And Jacob sod pottage : and Esau came from the field, and he <i>was</i> faint :</p> <p>30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, † with that same red <i>pottage</i> ; for I <i>am</i> faint : therefore was his name called Edom.</p> <p>31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.</p> <p>32 And Esau said, Behold, I <i>am</i> † at the point to die : and what profit shall this birthright do to me ?</p> <p>33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day ; and he <i>swore</i> unto him : and ^k he sold his birthright unto Jacob.</p> <p>34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles ; and ^l he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way : thus Esau despised <i>his</i> birthright.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">C H A P. XXVI.</p> <p>1 Isaac because of famine goeth to Gerar. 2 God instructeth and blesseth him. 6 He denieth his wife, and is reproved by Abimelech. 12 He groweth rich, and the Philistines envy him. 18 He diggeth sundry wells. 23 God appeareth to him in Beer-sheba, and blesseth him. 26 Abimelech maketh a covenant with him there. 34 Esau's Canaanitish wives are a grief to his parents.</p> <p>AND there was a famine in the land, beside ^a the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac^r went unto ^b Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar.</p> <p>2 ¶ And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt ; dwell in ^c the land which I shall tell thee of :</p> <p>3 ^d Sojourn in this land, and ^e I will be with thee, and ^f will bless thee ; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, ^g I will give all these countries, and I will perform ^h the oath which I <i>swore</i> unto Abraham thy father ;</p> <p>4 And ⁱ I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries ; ^k and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed ;</p> <p>5 ^l Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.</p> <p>6 ¶ And Isaac dwelt in Gerar :</p> <p>7 And the men of the place asked <i>him</i> of his wife ; and ^m he said, She <i>is</i> my sister : for ⁿ he feared to say, <i>She is</i> my wife ; left, <i>said he</i>, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah ; because she ^o <i>was</i> fair to look upon.</p> <p>8 And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac <i>was</i> sporting with Rebekah his wife.</p>	<p>Before CHRIST 1837.</p> <p>† Heb. with that red, with that red pottage. † That is, red. cir. 1805. † Heb. go- ing to die.</p> <p>1 Hebr. 12. 16.</p> <p>1 Eccle. 8. 15. 1 Sai. 22. 13. 1 Cor. 15. 32.</p> <p>1 ch. 1804. 1 ch. 12. 10.</p> <p>1 ch. 20. 2.</p> <p>1 ch. 12. 1. 1 ch. 20. 1. Pf. 39. 12. Hebr. 11. 9.</p> <p>1 ch. 28. 15. 1 ch. 12. 1. 1 ch. 13. 15. & 15. 18. 1 ch. 22. 16. Pf. 105. 9. 1 ch. 15. 5. & 22. 17. 1 ch. 12. 3. & 22. 18.</p> <p>1 ch. 22. 16, 18.</p> <p>1 ch. 12. 13. & 20. 2. 13. 1 Prov. 29. 25.</p> <p>1 ch. 24. 16.</p>

⁴⁵⁵ The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testament: Translated out of the original tongues. London, OXFORD, 1769.

11 # BRENTON'S ENGLISH SEPTUAGINT (LXX) [*Gene 25–26*] – (1844)⁴⁵⁶

CHAP. XXV. v. 26.

G E N E S I S .

CHAP. XXVI. v. 20.

called his name Esau. ²⁶ And after this came forth his brother, and his hand took hold of the heel of Esau, and she called his name Jacob. And Isaac was sixty years old when Rebecca bore them. ²⁷ And the lads grew, and Esau was a man skilled in hunting, dwelling in the country, and Jacob a simple man, dwelling in a house. ²⁸ And Isaac loved Esau, because his venison was his food, but Rebecca loved Jacob.

²⁹ And Jacob cooked pottage, and Esau came from the plain, fainting. ³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, Let me taste of that red pottage, because I am fainting, therefore his name was called Edom. ³¹ And Jacob said to Esau, Sell me this day thy birthright. ³² And Esau said, Behold, I am going to die, and for what good does this birthright belong to me? ³³ And Jacob said to him, Swear to me this day, and he swore to him, and Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. ³⁴ And Jacob gave bread to Esau, and pottage of lentiles, and he ate and drank, and he arose and departed, so Esau slighted his birthright.

26. And there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine, which was in the time of Abraam, and Isaac went to Abimelech the king of the Philistines to Gerara. ² And the Lord appeared to him and said, Go not down to Egypt, but dwell in the land, which I shall tell thee of. ³ And sojourn in this land; and I will be with thee, and bless thee, for I will give to thee and to thy seed all this land, and I will establish my oath which I swore to thy father Abraam. ⁴ And I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and I will give to thy seed all this land, and all the nations of the earth shall be blest in thy seed. ⁵ Because Abraam thy father hearkened to my voice, and kept my injunctions and my commandments and my ordinances, and my statutes. ⁶ And Isaac dwelt in Gerara. ⁷ And the men of the place questioned

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him concerning Rebecca his wife, and he said, She is my sister, for he feared to say, She is my wife, lest at any time the men of the place should slay him because of Rebecca, because she was [†]fair. ⁸ And he remained [†]Gr. fair of countenance. there a long time, and Abimelech the king of Gerara leaned to look through the window, and saw Isaac sporting with Rebecca his wife. ⁹ And Abimelech called Isaac and said to him, Is she then thy wife? why hast thou said, She is my sister? And Isaac said to him *I did so*, for I said, lest at any time I die on her account. ¹⁰ And Abimelech said to him, Why hast thou done this to us? one of my kindred [†]within a little had [†]q.d. Had almost. lain with thy wife, and thou wouldst have brought a *sin of* ignorance upon us. ¹¹ And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, Every man that touches this man and his wife shall be liable to death. ¹² And Isaac sowed in that land, and he found in that year barley an hundred-fold, and the Lord blessed him. ¹³ And the man was exalted, and advancing he increased, till he became very great. ¹⁴ And he had cattle of sheep, and cattle of oxen, and many tilled lands, and the Philistines envied him. ¹⁵ And all the wells which the servants of his father had dug in the time of his father, the Philistines stopped them, and filled them with earth. ¹⁶ And Abimelech said to Isaac, Depart from us, for thou art become much mightier than we. ¹⁷ And Isaac departed thence, and rested in the valley of Gerara, and dwelt there.

¹⁸ And Isaac dug again the wells of water, which the servants of his father Abraam had dug, and the Philistines had stopped them, after the death of his father Abraam, and he gave them names, according to the names by which his father named them. ¹⁹ And the servants of Isaac dug in the valley of Gerara, and they found there a well of living water. ²⁰ And the shepherds of Gerara strove with the shepherds of

⁴⁵⁶ The Septuagint Version of The Old Testament, according to the Vatican text, translated into English. Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, Bart. Vol. I. London: Samuel Bagster And Sons. M.DCCC.XLIV.

12 # JULIA E. SMITH. THE HOLY BIBLE [*Gene 25*] – (1869 CE)⁴⁵⁷

am I thus? And she will go to inquire of Jehovah.

23 And Jehovah will say to her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two peoples shall be separated from thy belly: and a people shall be strong above a people, and the great shall serve the small.

24 And her days shall be completed to bring forth; and behold, twins in her belly.

25 And the first shall come forth red, wholly as a mantle of hair: and they will call his name Esau.

26 And after this, his brother will come forth, and his hand having laid hold upon Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaak the son of sixty years in her bringing them forth.

27 And the boys will become great; and Esau will be a man knowing the chase, a man of the country; and Jacob an upright man, dwelling in tents.

28 And Isaak will love Esau for the chase in his mouth: and Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob will boil a boiling, and Esau will come from the country, and he faint.

30 And Esau will say to Jacob, Give me now to eat from the red; this red, for I faint: for this he called his name Edom.

31 And Jacob will say, Sell this day thy birth-right to me.

32 And Esau will say, Behold, I am going to die, and what to me this birth-right?

33 And Jacob will say, Swear to me this day: and he will swear to him: and he will sell his birth-right to Jacob.

34 And Jacob gave Esau food, and the boiling of lentiles; and he will eat and drink and will rise and go forth: and Esau will despise the birth-right.

CHAPTER XXVI

AND a famine shall be in the land, besides the first famine which was in the days of Abraham. And Isaak will go to Abimelech king of the Philistines to Gerar.

2 And Jehovah will be seen to him, and will say, Thou shalt not go down to Egypt: dwell in the land which I shall say to thee.

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee, for to thee and to thy seed will I give all these lands; and I established the oath which I swore to Abraham thy father.

4 And I will increase thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and I will give to thy seed all these lands: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be praised.

5 Because that Abraham listened to my voice, and he will watch my watches, my commands, my statutes, and my precepts.

6 And Isaak dwelt in Gerar.

7 And the men of the place will ask concerning his wife; and he will say, She is my sister: for he will be afraid to say, My wife, lest the men of the place will kill me for Rebekah, because she is good in appearance.

8 And it was when the days there were long to him, and Abimelech king of the Philistines shall bend forward through the window, and will see, and behold, Isaak playing with Rebekah his wife.

9 And Abimelech will call to Isaak, and will say, Surely, behold, she thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaak will say to him, Because I said, Lest I shall die for her.

10 And Abimelech will say, What this thou didst to us? nearly one of the people lay with thy wife, and thou broughtest blame upon us.

11 And Abimelech will command all the people, saying, He touching this man and his wife, dying, shall die.

12 And Isaak will sow in that land, and will find in that year a hundred measures; and Jehovah will praise him.

13 And the man will become great, and went going, and he became great, until that he became very great.

14 And there will be to him possession of flocks, and possession of oxen, and service of many; and the Philistines will envy him.

15 And all the wells which his father's servants digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped them and filled them with dust.

16 And Abimelech will say to Isaak,

⁴⁵⁷ Smith, Julia E, Bible Collection (Library of Congress), and Cairns Collection of American Women Writers. *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments*. Hartford, Conn.: American Pub, 1876.

13 # THE ENGLISH REVISED VERSION [Gene 25] – (1885 CE)⁴⁵⁸

18	GENESIS.	24. 65.
<p>she said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant said, It is my master: and she took her veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.</p> <p>25 And Abraham took another wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. 6 But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. 8 And Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; the field which Abraham purchased of the children of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son; and Isaac dwelt by Beer-lahai-roi. 12 Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's handmaid, bare unto Abraham: and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebaioth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, and Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa; 15 Hadad, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: these are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their villages, and by their encampments; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: he abode in the presence of all his brethren. 19 And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham begat Isaac: and Isaac was forty years old</p> <p><small>1 Or, settled Heb, fell. 2 Or, over against</small></p>	<p>when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian, to be his wife. And Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, wherefore do I live? And she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, And two peoples shall be separated even from thy bowels: And the one people shall be stronger than the other people; And the elder shall serve the younger.</p> <p>24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came forth red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came forth his brother, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them. And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: and Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came in from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall the birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: so Esau despised his birthright.</p> <p>26 And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these lands; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my</p> <p><small>3 Heb. Aram-eau. 4 Or, wherefore am I thus? 5 Or, ruddy 6 That is, One that takes by the heel or supports. 7 Or, quiet Or, harmless Heb, perfect. 8 Heb, the red pottage, this red pottage. 9 That is, Edom. 10 Or, first of all</small></p>	<p><small>3 Heb. Aram-eau. 4 Or, wherefore am I thus? 5 Or, ruddy 6 That is, One that takes by the heel or supports. 7 Or, quiet Or, harmless Heb, perfect. 8 Heb, the red pottage, this red pottage. 9 That is, Edom. 10 Or, first of all 11 Or, bless themselves</small></p>

⁴⁵⁸ The Holy Bible: Containing The Old And New Testament. Comperred With The Most Ancient Authorities And Revised. Cambridge, AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1885.

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