

**RaYBaSH's Weekly Way**  
**Parashah #6 Toldot: "Generations/History"**  
**B'reshit/Genesis: 25:19-28:9**  
**Haftarah: Malachi 1:1-2:7**  
**Brit Chadasha: Rom. 9:6-13**  
**By: Yehudah ben Shomeyr – Kris Shoemaker**

Growing up in Christianity I never liked how Christianity put Jacob in a bad light due to the misunderstanding of Jacob's name and activities regarding Esau and even some sympathy is given to Esau and a few chapters later Christians praise Jacob and condemn Esau. What does the Brit Chadasha (New Testament) say? He that is double minded is unstable in all he does (James 1:8).

Christians say Jacob means, supplanter or deceiver. Now tell me what parent would name their child such a name? Names are prophetic; kind of like "you are what you eat," if you call or name a child a deceiver they will become what you name or call them. A more appropriate name is "heel catcher" or "one who takes hold of." Much like the Native American custom, Hebrews named their children after events or Characteristics they see in the newborn. Clearly Jacob was named after the event surrounding his birth, he grabbing his brother's (Esau's) heel when he was born. This was seen as an omen of things to come.

Jacob catching his brother's heel showed he wasn't a quitter and was full of ambition. This proves true when he takes the lemons his father-in-law Laban gives him and makes lemonade; how he never gives up in his wrestling match with the "angel" and then his name is changed from that of a wrestler to that of a victor. If Jacob really was a supplanter as Christians say, why would God determine to have such a cad to carry on the covenant!?

It is wrongly assumed that Jacob steals the birthright, but Esau sold it and Jacob purchased it in a legal transaction. He obtained it to guard that which was precious (birthright) and legally bought it from one who couldn't care less and failed in character and responsibilities as firstborn and he failed to appreciate and care for what he had. Jacob knew his family name, honor and future hung in the balance.

Christians say Jacob deceived his father to obtain the Blessing Esau would have abused and squandered like a prodigal son. First off, this wasn't Jacob's idea, it was his mother's, Rebecca. Jacob kept the Torah by obeying his mother and Jacob's fear of repercussions was eased by Rebecca accepting any ill that may come as a result of this necessary ruse. What Rebecca did was not wrong, but

necessary, because Isaac was going to disobey what God told Rebecca regarding the sons, that Jacob was to get the Blessing anyhow, that the elder was to serve the younger. It was a necessary war type strategy for keeping something precious from falling into the wrong hands. Jacob was NOT an underhanded, sneaky deceiver.

In Malachi 1:1-2:7, our Haftarah portion does G-d condemn Jacob's actions, calling him a cheat? No. He says that His love for Esau looks like hate compared to His love for Jacob; that He hates what Esau does.

This is reiterated in Romans 9:6-13. Hebrews 11:20, in light of the Torah portion hints that Isaac may have known he was Blessing Jacob all along and was shocked with assurity when Esau came to be blessed after Jacob was out the door. Because Isaac knew what the L-RD told Rebecca and even though he intended to bless Esau , by faith he properly blessed Jacob instead.

Clearly Jacob was more righteous than Christians tend to credit to the Patriarch.

Shabbat Shalom and Shavuah Tov!

-- Yehudah ben Shomeyr