

ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT TO JACOB

BIBLE TEXT: Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-40

LESSON 22 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Proverbs 15:3).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Genesis 25:27-34;

²⁷ And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents.

²⁸ And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹ ¶ And Jacob *sod* pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint:

³⁰ 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.

³¹ And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.

³² And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?

³³ And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.

³⁴ Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

Genesis 27:1-40.

¹ And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, *here am I*.
² And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death:

³ Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy

NOTES:

Abraham had lived for a while at Haran. And later when he wanted a wife for Isaac, his son, he sent his servant back to his relatives there to select her. The servant asked the Lord to direct him in choosing the proper girl, and Rebekah fulfilled all the requirements. She was willing to go to the land where Abraham and Isaac lived; and she became Isaac's wife.

Taking Time to be Holy

Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, but they were not at all alike. Esau, who was the first-born, loved the woods and spent his time hunting, while Jacob preferred to stay around home and farm. One day when Esau came in from a hunting trip he was tired and very hungry. He thought he would starve to death if he did not eat right away, so he asked Jacob for some of his food. That is a trick of the enemy of our souls: he will tell a person that something must be done in such a hurry that there is not time to consult the Lord as to whether it is the right thing or not. Jesus wants us to take time to wait upon the Lord and be sure that what we do is according to His will. Esau would not have died in that one hour more that it might have taken to prepare his own dinner.

An Expensive Bargain

During the patriarchal period the eldest son of the family was entitled to a double share of his father's property. That was called a birthright. Many other blessings and responsibilities went with the birthright, and the eldest son was really the ruler over his whole clan upon the death of his father.

Jacob realised what an important thing the birthright was, and he saw his chance to get it for himself. He promised to give Esau of his pottage if he would swear to give him the birthright. Esau considered his livelihood at the moment more important than his blessings and responsibilities in the future; and the Word says, "Esau despised his birthrights."

You may think that was a terrible thing to do, and you certainly would never be so foolish. But stop and consider a moment. We have a birthright, too. Jesus died to give us a right to eternal life. Through the Blood He shed we can be born into the family of God if we will. But how many millions of people are despising that birthright and are refusing to be saved because of some little sin in their lives they do not want to give up. Some young girls and women will consider the fashions of the world more important than their birthright. Perhaps a little restitution will hinder another from claiming his birthright. Are those matters any more important than Esau's mess of pottage? Nothing more was said about Jacob's birthright for some years.

Jacob's Folly

When Isaac thought his time to die had come, he called Esau to him to give him the first blessing. He asked him to go out and shoot a deer and prepare the venison for him; then when he had eaten and was satisfied he would bless Esau. Rebekah heard the order, and as she wanted the blessing for her favourite son, she persuaded Jacob to deceive his father. He succeeded, but he suffered until the day of his death because of his deceit.

God had promised that both Jacob and Esau would be leaders of nations, and had also ordained that the elder would serve the

bow, and go out to the field, and take me *some* venison;

⁴ ¶ And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.

⁵ And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt *for* venison, *and* to bring *it*.

⁶ ¶ And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying,

⁷ Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death.

⁸ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.

⁹ Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth:

¹⁰ And thou shalt bring *it* to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.

¹¹ And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother *is* a hairy man, and I *am* a smooth man:

¹² My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.

¹³ And his mother said unto him, Upon me *be* thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me *them*.

¹⁴ And he went, and fetched, and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved.

¹⁵ And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which *were* with her in the house,

younger. God always brings His will to pass, and does not need the help of His creatures to do it. Jacob would probably have had his inheritance much sooner if he had waited for God to work out His plans. As it was, he had to suffer many years of privation away from his home before he reached the place where God could use him.

Perhaps there was something of Peter's nature in Jacob. He wanted to do the will of God, but was not willing to await God's time. Before the Day of Pentecost Peter was often guilty of impetuosity, for which Jesus had to reprove him. But after the power fell on him, he became a leader in the church, and he lived up to all the promises he had made to the Saviour and of which he had failed so miserably in his weak condition. Jacob eventually became the father of the twelve tribes of Israel through whom the Messiah came in the fullness of time.

Too Late

After Jacob had received the blessing, Esau came in with the venison he had so joyfully prepared in anticipation of the blessings he would receive from his father. When he found that Jacob had been there ahead of him, and had received the blessing Esau considered his, he wept bitterly. At the time he sold his birthright he did not seem at all sorry, but when he lost the blessing he shed tears. Such is the case with many sinners. Their sins do not bother them particularly. But how they mourn when their sins get them into trouble! They are not sorry they have sinned, but that their sins have found them out.

In Hebrews 12:17 we read: "Afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." We find other instances in the Bible where people sinned against God too long, and never did have an opportunity to repent. As an instance, the Egyptians refused to let the Children of Israel leave their country, although God had sent severed plagues upon them. Finally, after they started out, the Egyptians followed them. The Children of Israel miraculously went through the Red Sea. The enemy came along right behind; and when God's people were across, the waters came back and drowned all the Egyptians. They had no chance to repent.

Saul was the first king of Israel, a man chosen of God to lead His people. In the beginning he was humble and obeyed the voice of God, but in later years his sins became so great that God rejected him from being king (**I Samuel 15:23**; ²³ For rebellion *is as* the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from *being* king). Saul prayed many times after that, but the Word of God never says that he ever repented. Just being sorry because he got into trouble did not save him. In the end he committed suicide, so we know he did not go to Heaven.

How sad will be the cry of the sinner who waits too long to repent: "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

The Promise to Esau

In Esau's bitterness of heart, he inquired of his father if there was not one blessing left that could still be his. Isaac blessed him with temporal blessings, and assured him that though he must serve his brother for a time, eventually that yoke would be broken from his neck. That time came when the Edomites, who were Esau's posterity, revolted against Judah, who were descendants of Jacob (**II Kings 8:20-22**; ²⁰ ¶ In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves. ²¹ So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. ²² Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. Then Libnah revolted at the same time).

and put them upon Jacob her younger son:

¹⁶ And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck:

¹⁷ And she gave the savoury meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

¹⁸ ¶ And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I; who *art* thou, my son?

¹⁹ And Jacob said unto his father, I *am* Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me.

²⁰ And Isaac said unto his son, How *is it* that thou hast found *it* so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought *it* to me.

²¹ And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou *be* my very son Esau or not.

²² And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau.

²³ And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.

²⁴ And he said, *Art* thou my very son Esau? And he said, I *am*.

²⁵ And he said, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

²⁶ And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.

²⁷ And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son *is*

QUESTIONS

1. Which was Rebekah's favourite son, Jacob or Esau?
2. For what did Esau sell his birthright?
3. Later on, did Esau regret having done this?
4. What lesson does that teach us?
5. Who caused Jacob to deceive his father?
6. How many times did Jacob lie to his father?

as the smell of a field which the LORD hath blessed:

²⁸ Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine:

²⁹ Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed *be* every one that curseth thee, and blessed *be* he that blesseth thee.

³⁰ ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

³¹ And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me.

³² And Isaac his father said unto him, Who *art* thou? And he said, I *am* thy son, thy firstborn Esau.

³³ And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where *is* he that hath taken venison, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, *and* he shall be blessed.

³⁴ And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also, O my father.

³⁵ And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing.

³⁶ And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

³⁷ And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?

³⁸ And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, *even* me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.

³⁹ And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;

⁴⁰ And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.