

Lesson 2: Jacob and Esau

Central Point: He who began a good work in you will carry it unto completion

JA'COB (ja'kob; "heel-catcher, supplanter"; by popular etymology, but perhaps "he whom God protects," from Arab. and Ethiopic `akaba, "guard, keep").

The second born of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, their conception being supernatural in answer to Isaac's prayer. Jacob was born when his father was sixty years old, probably at Beersheba in Genesis 25:21-26, about 2001 BC. The fact Jacob as a new born baby was grasping his brother's heel would be significant later on in life.

Genesis 25:26

After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them.

- Talk about sibling rivalry that existed between Jacob and Esau
- It is recorded that Jacob grew up to be "a peaceful man, living in tents" – a homebody
- Unlike the active dangerous career of a hunter that Esau pursued
- Jacob was the favorite of his mother, whereas Isaac showed partiality toward Esau
- **Question:** "Family dysfunction is everywhere, how has that played out in your life?"

The first incident mentioned in the Bible is his purchase of Esau's birthright for the insignificant sum of a pot of stew, thus making use of his brother's hunger to advance his own ambition.

- **Please Read:** Genesis 25:29-34
- You may wonder why the birthright is important - Deuteronomy 21:17
- The birthright consisted afterward in a double portion of the father's inheritance

However, with the patriarchs it embraced the chieftainship, rule over the brethren and the entire family- Genesis 27:29. Not to mention the title to the blessing of promise (27:4, 27-29), which included the future possession of Canaan and of covenant fellowship with Jehovah.

Genesis 28:4

"May he give you and your descendants the blessing given to Abraham, so that you may take possession of the land where you now live as an alien, the land God gave to Abraham."

I wonder if Jacob somehow felt cheated being the second twin emerging from the womb; as a result, it emboldened him to scheme and deceive.

- The hard truth is that Esau, despised his birthright according to **Genesis 25:34**
- In other words, spiritual things just were not a priority for him- would rather go hunting
- This is the root of Esau disqualifying himself to carry on the covenant with God
- **Please Read: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27**
- **Question:** "What benefits did you receive from participating in competitive sports?"
- **1 Timothy 4:8-** training in godliness is profitable for this life and the one to come

Hebrews 12:1, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

- The pleasure of sin for a short time is not worth forfeiting God's best- **Hebrews 11:25**
- Satan offers short term and temporary pleasure; resulting in long term pain and regret
- **Please Read: Hebrews 12:16-17**
- **Hebrews 11:6-** Faith is what pleases God and when we diligently seek him
- God does not cater to the casual, flippant, careless and lukewarm pursuit of Him
- We need to seek God like a rare pearl or great treasure- **Matthew 13:44-45**

Jacob gets Isaac's Blessing

Isaac, now aged, was about to pronounce his blessing upon Esau, his elder son, but was undermined by the deception practiced upon him by Rebekah and Jacob. Jacob impersonated Esau and lied to his father. Thus Jacob received his father's blessing instead of Esau.

- **Please Read: Genesis 27:1-29 & Please Read: Romans 9:10-13**

God who knows the heart, chose Jacob over Esau to continue His covenant through Jacob's lineage. God foreknew that Esau would sell his birthright for some lentil soup- despising it. The Bible refers to Esau as godless, following after the flesh in contrast to Jacob esteeming the covenant- even though initially it appears to be for selfish reasons. Later on God does a work on Jacob's heart and establishes a covenant relationship with him- a diamond in the rough.

Once the blessing was given, it could not be retracted; another example of the power of words! Understandably Esau was in shock, grief and then in a rage over what Jacob had done. It is ironic that just as Jacob deceived his father Isaac in pretending to be Esau, Jacob's sons deceive Jacob concerning the so-called accidental death of Joseph. Not to mention how his uncle Laban also deceived him on more than one occasion- a classic case of reaping & sowing.