

## Jacob and Esau Gen. 25:29-33:17

### Introduction:

From the time of Abraham to the time of Christ, Jacob was the most prominent figure in the Bible. He was the father of the 12 tribes of Israel (Jacob's new name – Gen. 32:28). In fact, from Gen. 25 until the middle of the book of Acts, we read about Jacob and his children.

Esau, on the other hand, was a character that we do not know much about. He was the older brother of Jacob. He sold his birthright to Jacob because he was hungry (Gen. 25:29-34). He also had to settle for the lesser blessing when Jacob deceived Isaac (Gen. 27:1-40).

Even though Esau was not as well known as his brother, God still protected and provided for him and his descendants. In Deut. 2:4-5, as the children of Israel are coming out of the land of Canaan, they are told not to attach the descendants of Esau in Seir (which is Edom). In fact, God says that He would not allow Israel to take their land.

Today we will look at the two incidents that determined the outcome of both Jacob and Esau. We will look at the occasion when Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. We will also look at the time when Jacob deceived Isaac (father of Jacob and Esau). Finally, we will notice some practical applications that we can learn from this story. As we begin, it is important to note that it is not the goal of this lesson to be comprehensive of the lives of Jacob and Esau. We merely look at these two incidents in their lives so that we can learn from them.

### I. Notice the two incidents that defined these two characters.

- A. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob (Gen. 25:29-34).
  1. Esau is very hungry when he comes in from a hunt.
  2. He wants Jacob to give him a bowl of stew, but Jacob says that he will only do it if he will sell him his birthright.
  3. Esau sells his birthright to Jacob for that pot of stew.
- B. Jacob steals the blessing of Esau by deceiving Isaac (Gen. 27:1-40).
  1. Isaac commands Esau to go into the fields and hunt him some food.
  2. The idea is that when he returns with the food, Isaac is going to bless Esau.
  3. Rachel overhears the plan and prepares a meal for Isaac just like Esau would.
  4. She covers Jacob with goats hair and sends him in with the food.
  5. Isaac hears the voice of Jacob but feels the skin of Esau.
  6. Isaac blesses Jacob with the prominent blessing while Esau is left with, in comparison, a minor blessing.
- C. Esau wants to kill Jacob, and plans on doing just that (Gen. 27:41-28:5).

1. Rachel, for fear that Esau will kill Jacob, tells Isaac that she does not want Jacob to marry one from the land of Canaan.
  2. Isaac, in response to Rachel, sends Jacob to Rachel's family (to the house of Laban).
- D. The point of this lesson is not to point out the deceit of Jacob and Rachel, but rather to look at what happens after this deceit has taken place.
1. There was a decision that each of them had to make.
    - a. Jacob: deceive Esau and take his blessing.
    - b. Esau: in anger, try to kill his brother.
  2. Life is 10% what happens and 90% how I react to it.

There are many lessons that we can gain from this passage. Notice two.

## II. Jacob ran from his problems.

- A. After Jacob deceived Esau, he ran to his mother's house (27:41-28:5).
1. His brother was trying to kill him, so he ran.
  2. Instead of facing his problems, he ran.
  3. Jacob had to make a life and death decision.
  4. For us, very few decisions are life and death.
- B. We all have done things that we are not proud of.
1. We know that we are going to make mistakes.
    - a. Rom. 3:23 - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
    - b. I Jn. 1:8, 10 - If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. {10} If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.
  2. We are responsible for ourselves.
    - a. We must stand before God one day.
    - b. II Cor. 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.
  3. Instead of trying to cover up our actions or running from them, we need to face them and overcome them.
    - a. It is important for us to make things right with others while there is still time for us.
    - b. Any way we look at it, it is our responsibility to make things right.
      - 1) Mt. 5:23-24 - Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, {24} leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.
      - 2) Mt. 18:15 - Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.
- C. Far too often we try to run from our sins, just like Jacob.

### III. Jacob and Esau teach us the value of forgiveness.

- A. Notice what happens when Jacob and Esau reunite after at least 20 years (Gen. 32:1-33:17).
  - 1. When Jacob returns to Esau, he sends him many gifts (32:13-15).
    - a. Jacob sent gifts to Esau because of what happened between them and the 400 men that Esau had to meet him.
    - b. Notice the gifts (32:14-15).
    - c. Remember that in the time of Jacob and Esau, possessions meant great riches.
    - d. All of these valuable gifts were given in an attempt to ask for forgiveness.
  - 2. Notice what happens when Esau is given these gifts (33:8-11).
    - a. At first he refuses these gifts.
    - b. At the urging of Jacob, he accepts these gifts.
- B. Because we all sin, we all need forgiveness.
  - 1. Without the forgiveness that comes from God, we could not have a home in heaven.
  - 2. We all need forgiveness.
- C. Not only do we need forgiveness, we need to be willing to forgive others.
  - 1. If we are not willing to forgive others, we ourselves cannot be forgiven.
  - 2. Mt. 6:14-15 - For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. { 15 } But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.
  - 3. No matter what happens to us, we always need to be willing to forgive others.
    - a. Lk. 23:34 - Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."
    - b. Acts 7:60 - Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin."
- D. We, today, need to understand the value of forgiveness.

Conclusion:

Even after 20 years, Jacob was able to receive forgiveness for his actions. Esau was willing to forgive him for what he had done.