



# Esau

“In the Beginning”

*“And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came. . . And Jacob said ‘Receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.’”* Selected portions of Genesis 33

Esau was the son of Isaac and Rebekah, a twin. But these twins were nothing alike. Esau was an expert hunter, a sportsman. Jacob was a quiet man and liked to dwell in tents. Esau had a hairy body, but Jacob was smooth skinned. The parents took sides with them. Isaac loved Esau; Rebekah loved Jacob. The Bible says that from the time they were in the womb of Rebekah they were fighting.

One day Jacob had some food. Esau came in from the field and was faint because he had not eaten for a while. He asked Jacob for his food and Jacob told him that he would give him the food if Esau gave him the birthright. Esau found the food more important and said, “Behold, I am at the point to die, what profit shall this birthright do to me.” So he gave it to Jacob. At this point Esau showed a weakness according to many sources. The food was more important to him.

At a later time, when Isaac was getting old he called Esau and told him “I am now an old man and don’t know the day of my death. Now then, get your equipment—your quiver and bow—and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die.”

Again Rebekah interfered and told Jacob “Look, I 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.’ Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies.”

Jacob protested that his skin was not like his brother’s hairy skin, but Rebekah had that covered also. She dressed him in hairy clothes and had him deceive Isaac into giving him the blessing.

This angered Esau. When he saw Jacob with the blessing, he set out to kill his brother as soon as Isaac had died. Rebekah told Jacob to flee for his life. Jacob fled to the land that belonged to his uncle. Esau stayed. He asked his father if he had only one blessing. The Bible says that Isaac wept and responded that that Esau would never be able to have the blessings he had given Jacob. He would be a servant to Jacob and he would live by the sword. Esau knew that his father did not want them to marry a woman from Canaan, so that is exactly what he did.

Esau did well. When they were older, the Lord told Jacob to go to his home land. Jacob feared Esau because he knew that his brother had threatened to kill him, but the Lord told him he would be protected. So, Jacob did as the Lord commanded. When he met Esau, Esau threw his arms around him and forgave him; and the two of them wept. Jacob offered gifts, but Esau was satisfied with what he had.

Then Esau went to another part of the land but his descendents were never blessed as were the descendents of Jacob, because Esau had sold his birthright. His descendents were eventually destroyed by the tribes of Israel.

But it was Esau that welcomed his brother in later years, when Jacob was afraid of him. Jacob sent all kinds of food, animals, even his wives ahead of him when Esau went to greet him. Esau did not harm him. Instead he welcomed him and forgave him. Then Jacob offered him many gifts, but Esau said he didn’t need them. He was o.k. with what he had. It is important to remember that Esau sold the birthright in the first place for food. But, to was also Esau that welcomed his brother Jacob back with open arms.

When Isaac died, Jacob and Esau buried him near the tomb of his parents, Abraham and Sarah.

Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, we thank You for the wonderful gift of eternal life You have given us. We often sin, but help us never to forsake You. Help us to not hold earthly good above Your love and to realize that You will provide everything we need if we only ask. Amen.

1. Why did Esau sell his birthright? Was it justified? Remember we are told that he was the sportsman of the two.
2. Is the older always the stronger sibling in the family?
3. Was it right for Rebekah to tell Jacob to flee for his life?
4. How did Esau receive Jacob when he returned to the land of his father?
5. Do we have relatives or close friends that we should go to see and welcome the friendship again with love?
6. Why did God allow Isaac to bless Jacob when Esau was really the one that was to have the birthright in the first place?

Esau: Esau, the twin of Jacob, is also first mentioned at his birth in Genesis 25:25. His life is predominantly told in chapter 25 through 33 of Genesis, but his family and some other comments about him continued through Genesis 36 and other references to him in Deut. 2 In the New Testament he is mentioned three times – Romans 8:13; Hebrews 11:20; and Hebrews 12:16.

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