

Jacob and Esau

Key Verse: *“The LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”*
—Genesis 25:23

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 25:19-34

his name was called Jacob.” “The boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents.” (vss. 24-27) Their father, Isaac, who was now well up in years, “loved Esau” because he brought him venison to eat; “but Rebekah loved Jacob.” (vs. 28) This created a situation which would lead to the fulfillment of the promise made in our Key Verse.

Esau, returning from one of his hunting trips, was very hungry to the point of fainting. He said to Jacob, who had prepared a meal of red pottage—a boiled soup of lentils—“Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore, was his named called

AFTER REACHING MANHOOD, Isaac chose Rebekah to be his wife, by arrangement of his father, Abraham. (Gen. 24:1-67) Rebekah, like her mother-in-law, Sarah, was childless for many years after her marriage to Isaac. Thus, Isaac “intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren.” (Gen. 25:21) A miracle took place; Rebekah conceived and bore twin sons.

The firstborn was “red all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.” The second son was born, and “his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and

Edom,” meaning “red.” Jacob, seeing an opportunity, offered to feed Esau in exchange for his birthright, which belonged to Esau as the firstborn. Esau responded, “Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?” He accepted Jacob’s offer and sold to him his birthright, the record stating, “Thus Esau despised his birthright.”—vss. 29-34

Rebekah was conscious of the fact that God had performed a miracle in enabling her to give birth to these twins. She also recalled what the Lord said to her before they were born, that the elder, Esau, would serve the younger, Jacob. Rebekah and Jacob saw in the family birthright the assurance of being heir to the promises God had made to Abraham. Since God had indicated before he was born that Jacob was to be the favored son, it was quite proper to secure the birthright by a legitimate purchase agreed to by Esau.

According to the custom of the times, the parental blessing also belonged to the firstborn son. To obtain this before the father died was a confirmation of the birthright. Thus, when “Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see,” he asked Esau to go hunt and bring him venison for a meal, “that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.”—Gen. 27:1-4

Esau went back on the promise to sell his birthright and proceeded to fulfill his father’s wishes. Rebekah was watching the interests of Jacob, whom she knew the Lord favored and had chosen. She produced her own plan to have Jacob receive Isaac’s blessing. Since Isaac’s eyesight was poor, and having overheard the instructions given to Esau by his father, Rebekah instructed Jacob to bring two kids of the goats, and she would make “savory meat.” Since Esau was covered with hair, Jacob also put the hairy skins of the goats on his hands and neck. (Gen. 27:1-18) Jacob went in to see his father, who thought he was Esau. Thus, Jacob received his father’s blessing just as God had promised.—vss. 19-29; Rom. 9:9-12 ■