

~ESAU (597)

(E'sau) [Hairy]

- Disdain For Spiritual Matters
- Bestowal Of Jacob's Blessing
- Later Events
- Divine Principles Illustrated

• The firstborn of Isaac and Rebekah, the twin brother of Jacob and the forefather of the Edomites. He was given the name **Esau** because of his unusual hairy appearance at birth, but he got the name **Edom**, meaning **Red**, from the **red** lentil stew for which he sold his birthright.

• Then the first came out **red all over like an official garment of hair**, so they called his name **Esau**. (**Genesis 25:25**)

• And after that his brother came out and his hand was holding onto the heel of **Esau**, so he called his name Jacob. And Isaac was sixty years old at her giving them birth. (**Genesis 25:26**)

• So **Esau** said to Jacob; Quick, please, give me a swallow of the red, the red there, for I am tired! That is why his name was called **Edom**. (**Genesis 25:30**)

• Even before the birth of the twins in **1858 B.C.E**, when Isaac was 60 years of age, the infants struggled in their mother's womb. Answering Rebekah's inquiry concerning the meaning of this, Yehowah revealed to her that two national groups would be separated from her inward parts and that the older would serve the younger.

• And the sons within her began to struggle with each other, so that she said; If this is the way it is, just why am I alive? With that she went to inquire of Yehowah. (**Genesis 25:22**)

• And Yehowah proceeded to say to her; Two nations are in your belly, and two national groups will be separated from your inward parts, and the one national group will be stronger than the other national group, and the older will serve the younger. (**Genesis 25:23**)

- Disdain For Spiritual Matters

- **Esau** became a skilled and adventurous hunter, a wild man. Unlike his brother, blameless Jacob, **Esau** was fleshly-minded and materialistic.
- And the boys got bigger, and **Esau** became a man knowing how to hunt, a man of the field, but Jacob a blameless man, dwelling in tents. (**Genesis 25:27**)
- But Isaac loved **Esau**, because it meant game in his mouth.
- And Isaac had love for **Esau**, because it meant game in his mouth, whereas Rebekah was a lover of Jacob. (**Genesis 25:28**)
- One day **Esau**, tired and hungry, came along from the field while Jacob was boiling up some stew. In response to **Esau's** request, Quick, please, give me a swallow of the red the red there, Jacob asked him to sell his birthright.
- Having no appreciation for sacred things, namely, the promise of Yehowah to Abraham respecting the seed through whom all nations of the earth would bless themselves, **Esau** impetuously, by sworn oath, sold his birthright to Jacob for one meal of lentil stew and bread.
- By thus despising the birthright, viewing it as of little value, **Esau** showed a complete lack of faith. He perhaps wanted no part in suffering the fulfillment of God's word concerning Abraham's seed, Your seed will become an alien resident in a land not theirs, and they will have to serve them, and these will certainly afflict them for four hundred years.
- And he began to say to Abram; You may know for sure that your seed will become an alien resident in a land not theirs, and they will have to serve them, and these will certainly afflict them for four hundred years. (**Genesis 15:13**)
- Once Jacob was boiling up some stew, when **Esau** came along from the field and he was tired. (**Genesis 25:29**)
- So **Esau** said to Jacob; Quick, please, give me a swallow of the red, the red there, for I am tired! That is why his name was called Edom. (**Genesis 25:30**)
- To this Jacob said; Sell me, first of all, your right as firstborn! (**Genesis 25:31**)

- And **Esau** continued; Here I am simply going to die, and of what benefit to me is a birthright? (**Genesis 25:32**)
- And Jacob added; Swear to me first of all! And he proceeded to swear to him and to sell his right as firstborn to Jacob. (**Genesis 25:33**)
- And Jacob gave **Esau** bread and lentil stew, and he went to eating and drinking. Then he got up and went his way. So Esau despised the birthright. (**Genesis 25:34**)
- That there may be no fornicator nor anyone not appreciating sacred things, like **Esau**, who in exchange for one meal gave away his rights as firstborn. (**Hebrews 12:16**)
- At the age of 40, **Esau** made his own arrangements for marriage. By choice he became a polygamist, and unlike his father Isaac, who had let his father Abraham arrange for a wife from the worshipers of Yehowah, **Esau** took two pagan Hittite women, Judith or Oholibamah? and Basemath or Adah, as wives. These women proved to be a source of bitterness of spirit to both Isaac and Rebekah.
- And **Esau** grew to be forty years old. Then he took as wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite and also Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. (**Genesis 26:34**)
- And they were a source of bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah. (**Genesis 26:35**)
- **Esau** took his wives from the daughters of Canaan. Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite. (**Genesis 36:2**)
- Now Abraham was old, advanced in years, and Yehowah had blessed Abraham in everything. (**Genesis 24:1**)
- Hence Abraham said to his servant, the oldest one of his household, who was managing all he had; Put your hand, please, under my thigh. (**Genesis 24:2**)
- As I must have you swear by Yehowah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites in among whom I am

dwelling. (**Genesis 24:3**)

- But you will go to my country and to my relatives, and you will certainly take a wife for my son, for Isaac. (**Genesis 24:4**)
- Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said; From Yehowah this thing has issued. We are unable to speak bad or good to you. (**Genesis 24:50**)
- Here is Rebekah before you. Take her and go, and let her become a wife to the son of your master, just as Yehowah has spoken. (**Genesis 24:51**)

See Also BASEMATH 1

See Also JUDITH

.. Bestowal Of Jacob's Blessing

- When Isaac was advanced in years he desired to give his blessing to his older son **Esau**. First Isaac directed **Esau** to hunt some venison and to make a tasty dish for him. This **Esau** proceeded to do with a view to receiving the blessing as firstborn, though he actually was no longer entitled to that blessing by reason of his having sold his birthright.
- Thus, he was willing to break his oath-bound covenant made at the sale of the birthright. Knowing what Yehowah had said to her before the birth of her twins, Rebekah intervened, advising Jacob to present himself before his father as **Esau** and thus procure the blessing that was rightfully his.
- When presenting himself before his blind father, Jacob was dressed in **Esau's** garments, with the skins of kids on his hands and on the hairless part of his neck. Hence, Isaac did not recognize him.
- And Yehowah proceeded to say to her; Two nations are in your belly, and two national groups will be separated from your inward parts, and the one national group will be stronger than the other national group, and the older will serve the younger. (**Genesis 25:23**)
- Now it came about that when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see he then called **Esau** his older son and said to him; My son! at which he said to him; Here I am! (**Genesis 27:1**)

- And he went on to say; Here, now, I have become old. I do not know the day of my death. ([Genesis 27:2](#))
- So at this time take, please, your implements, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt some venison for me. ([Genesis 27:3](#))
- Then make me a tasty dish such as I am fond of and bring it to me and, ah, let me eat, in order, that my soul may bless you before I die. ([Genesis 27:4](#))
- However, Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to **Esau** his son. And Esau went on out into the field to hunt game and to bring it in. ([Genesis 27:5](#))
- And Rebekah said to Jacob her son; Here I just heard your father speaking to **Esau** your brother, saying; ([Genesis 27:6](#))
- Bring me some game and make me a tasty dish and, ah, let me eat, that I may bless you before Yehowah before my death. ([Genesis 27:7](#))
- And now, my son, listen to my voice in what I am commanding you. ([Genesis 27:8](#))
- Go, please, to the herd and get me from there two kids of the goats, good ones, that I may make them up into a tasty dish for your father such as he is fond of. ([Genesis 27:9](#))
- Then you must bring it to your father and he must eat it, in order, that he may bless you before his death. ([Genesis 27:10](#))
- And Jacob proceeded to say to Rebekah his mother; But **Esau** my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man. ([Genesis 27:11](#))
- What if my father feels me? Then I shall certainly become in his eyes like one making a mockery, and I shall certainly bring upon myself a malediction and not a blessing. ([Genesis 27:12](#))
- At this his mother said to him; Upon me be the malediction meant for you, my son. Only listen to my voice and go, get them for me. ([Genesis 27:13](#))

- Accordingly he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made a tasty dish such as his father was fond of. (**Genesis 27:14**)
- After that Rebekah took garments of **Esau** her older son, the most desirable ones which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. (**Genesis 27:15**)
- And the skins of the kids of the goats she put upon his hands and upon the hairless part of his neck. (**Genesis 27:16**)
- Then she gave the tasty dish and the bread that she had made into the hand of Jacob her son. (**Genesis 27:17**)
- So he went on in to his father and said; My father! To which he said; Here I am! Who are you, my son? (**Genesis 27:18**)
- And Jacob went on to say to his father; I am **Esau** your firstborn. I have done just as you have spoken to me. Raise yourself up, please. Sit down and eat some of my game, in order, that your soul may bless me. (**Genesis 27:19**)
- At that Isaac said to his son; How is it that you have been so quick in finding it, my son? In turn he said; Because Yehowah your God caused it to meet up with me. (**Genesis 27:20**)
- Then Isaac said to Jacob; Come near, please, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son **Esau** or not. (**Genesis 27:21**)
- So Jacob came near to Isaac his father, and he went feeling him, after which he said; The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of **Esau**. (**Genesis 27:22**)
- And he did not recognize him, because his hands proved to be hairy like the hands of **Esau** his brother. Hence he blessed him. (**Genesis 27:23**)
- No sooner had Isaac finished blessing Jacob than **Esau** came in from the hunt and proceeded to prepare a tasty dish for his father. On coming in before his father to receive the blessing dishonestly and learning that Isaac had blessed Jacob, Esau began to cry out in an extremely loud and bitter manner.

- Earnestly, but with selfish motive, he sought a blessing from his father, but even his breaking out in tears did not change Isaac's mind and cause him to retract the blessing that he had pronounced upon Jacob. Likely Isaac recognized Yehowah's leading in the matter. He then proceeded to say to Esau;
- Behold, away from the fertile soils of the earth your dwelling will be found, and away from the dew of the heavens above. And by your sword you will live, and your brother you will serve. But it will certainly occur that, when you grow restless, you will indeed break his yoke off your neck.
- And Jacob added; Swear to me first of all! And he proceeded to swear to him and to sell his right as firstborn to Jacob. ([Genesis 25:33](#))
- Now it came about as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, yes, it indeed came about when Jacob had barely come out from before the face of Isaac his father, that **Esau** his brother came back from his hunting. ([Genesis 27:30](#))
- And he too went about making a tasty dish. Then he brought it to his father and said to his father; Let my father get up and eat some of his sons game, in order, that your soul may bless me. ([Genesis 27:31](#))
- At this Isaac his father said to him; Who are you? To which he said; I am your son, your firstborn, **Esau**. ([Genesis 27:32](#))
- And Isaac began to shake with a great trembling in extreme measure, and so he said; Who, then, was it that hunted for game and came bringing it to me, so that I ate of everything before you could come in and I blessed him? Blessed too he will become! ([Genesis 27:33](#))
- On hearing his father's words **Esau** began to cry out in an extremely loud and bitter manner and to say to his father; Bless me, even me too, my father! ([Genesis 27:34](#))
- But he went on to say; Your brother came with deception that he might get the blessing meant for you. ([Genesis 27:35](#))
- At this he said; Is that not why his name is called Jacob, in that he should supplant me these two times? My birthright he has

already taken, and here at this time he has taken my blessing!
Then he added; Have you not reserved a blessing for me?
(Genesis 27:36)

- But in answer to **Esau** Isaac continued; Here I have appointed him master over you, and all his brothers I have given to him as servants, and grain and new wine I have bestowed for his support, and where is there anything I can do for you, my son?
(Genesis 27:37)
- Then **Esau** said to his father; Is there just one blessing that you have, my father? Bless me, even me too, my father! With that Esau raised his voice and burst into tears. (Genesis 27:38)
- So in answer Isaac his father said to him; Behold, away from the fertile soils of the earth your dwelling will be found, and away from the dew of the heavens above. (Genesis 27:39)
- And by your sword you will live, and your brother you will serve. But it will certainly occur that, when you grow restless, you will indeed break his yoke off your neck. (Genesis 27:40)
- For you know that afterward also when he wanted to inherit the blessing he was rejected, for, although he earnestly sought a change of mind with tears, he found no place for it. (Hebrews 12:17)
- **Esau** knew that Jacob was entitled to the blessing because he had legally acquired the birthright. Archaeological testimony confirms that among ancient peoples of the Middle East the practice existed of exchanging a birthright for something material.
- For example, a text from Nuzi tells of one brother's receiving three sheep in exchange for his share of the inheritance. But **Esau**, like Cain, harbored animosity toward his brother Jacob and was waiting for an opportunity to put him to death.
- Therefore, Rebekah, on learning of this, advised Jacob to run away to her brother Laban at Haran. When seeking Isaac's consent in this matter, she kindly chose not to reveal to Isaac the murderous intention of **Esau** but voiced her feelings as to how she would be affected if Jacob ever took a wife like the daughters of Heth.

- Isaac then called Jacob, blessed him, and directed him to go to Paddan-aram to Rebekah's relatives to obtain a wife. When Esau saw this, he was prompted to take a third wife, Mahalath or Basemath, the daughter of Abraham's son Ishmael.
- For you know that afterward also when he wanted to inherit the blessing he was rejected, for, although he earnestly sought a change of mind with tears, he found no place for it. ([Hebrews 12:17](#))
- And Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth. ([Genesis 36:3](#))

See Also BASEMATH 2

.. Later Events

- Sometime during the 20 years that Jacob was away, **Esau** began to establish interests in Seir, the field of Edom.
- Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to **Esau** his brother to the land of Seir, the field of Edom. ([Genesis 32:3](#))
- Then to Isaac I gave Jacob and **Esau**. Later to Esau I gave Mount Seir to take possession of it, and Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt. ([Joshua 24:4](#))
- It appears that it was years later that he made the complete move, taking his family and all of his possessions to Seir.
- After that **Esau** took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all the souls of his house and his herd and all his other beasts and all his wealth, which he had accumulated in the land of Canaan, and went to a land away from Jacob his brother. ([Genesis 36:6](#))
- Because their goods had become too great for them to dwell together and the land of their alien residences was not able to sustain them as a result of their herds. ([Genesis 36:7](#))
- So **Esau** took up dwelling in the mountainous region of Seir. Esau is Edom. ([Genesis 36:8](#))
- When Jacob returned to Canaan, he became quite alarmed upon receiving word from the messengers he had sent that **Esau**, along with

400 men, was on his way to meet him. **Esau's** reason for coming with a band of 400 men may have been to impress his brother with his superior strength or possibly to show that he was a mighty chieftain.

- Jacob, after praying to Yehowah, sent ahead a generous gift of more than 550 head of livestock. On seeing **Esau**, Jacob, in humility, proceeded to bow down to the earth seven times until he got near to his brother. **Esau** then went running to meet him, embraced Jacob, fell upon his neck, and kissed him.

- Both of them burst into tears. **Esau** at first refused to accept Jacob's gift of livestock, saying; I have a great many, my brother. Let continue yours what is yours. However, at Jacob's urging, **Esau** finally accepted the gift. He then offered to accompany Jacob, but his brother tactfully declined this as well as **Esau's** later proposal to place some of his men at Jacob's disposal, likely for protection.

- **Esau** and his men then departed and returned to Seir. The Bible record mentions that, about 23 years later, at the death of Isaac, **Esau** and Jacob buried their father.

- In time the messengers returned to Jacob, saying; We got to your brother **Esau**, and he is also on his way to meet you, and four hundred men with him. (**Genesis 32:6**)

- And Jacob became very much afraid and grew anxious. So he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the cattle and the camels into two camps. (**Genesis 32:7**)

- I am unworthy of all the loving kindnesses and of all the faithfulness that you have exercised toward your servant, for with but my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps. (**Genesis 32:10**)

- Deliver me, I pray you, from my brothers hand, from **Esau's** hand, because I am afraid of him that he may come and certainly assault me, mother together with children. (**Genesis 32:11**)

- And you, you have said; Unquestionably I shall deal well with you and I will constitute your seed like the grains of sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. (**Genesis 32:12**)

- And he kept lodging there on that night. And from what came to his hand he proceeded to take a gift for **Esau** his brother:

(Genesis 32:13)

- Two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred female sheep and twenty rams. **(Genesis 32:14)**
- Thirty camels giving suck and their young ones, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten full-grown asses. **(Genesis 32:15)**
- In time Jacob raised his eyes and looked, and here **Esau** was coming and with him four hundred men. Consequently he divided off the children to Leah and to Rachel and to the two maidservants. **(Genesis 33:1)**
- And he put the maidservants and their children foremost and Leah and her children after them and Rachel and Joseph to the rear of them. **(Genesis 33:2)**
- And he himself passed on ahead of them and proceeded to bow down to the earth seven times until he got near to his brother. **(Genesis 33:3)**
- He now said; What do you mean by all this camp of travelers that I have met? To this he said; In order to find favor in the eyes of my lord. **(Genesis 33:8)**
- Then **Esau** said; I have a great many, my brother. Let continue yours what is yours. **(Genesis 33:9)**
- Take, please, the gift conveying my blessing which was brought to you, because God has favored me and because I have everything. And he continued to urge him, so that he took it. **(Genesis 33:11)**
- Later on he said; Let us pull out and go, and let me go in advance of you. **(Genesis 33:12)**
- But he said to him; My lord is aware that the children are delicate and sheep and cattle that are giving suck are in my charge, and should they drive them too quickly for one day, then the whole flock will certainly die. **(Genesis 33:13)**
- Let my lord, please, pass on ahead of his servant, but may I myself continue the journey at my leisure according to the pace of the livestock that is before me and according to the pace of

the children until I shall come to my lord at Seir. ([Genesis 33:14](#))

- When **Esau** said; Let me, please, put at your disposal some of the people who are with me. To this he said; Why this? Let me find favor in the eyes of my lord. ([Genesis 33:15](#))
- So on that day **Esau** turned back on his way to Seir. ([Genesis 33:16](#))
- After that Isaac expired and died and was gathered to his people, old and satisfied with days, and **Esau** and Jacob his sons buried him. ([Genesis 35:29](#))

•• Divine Principles Illustrated

- The personality of **Esau** clearly shows that the choosing of Jacob as a forefather of the promised Seed was no arbitrary choice or unreasonable favoritism on the part of Yehowah God. **Esau's** lack of appreciation for spiritual things, coupled with his strong tendency toward satisfying fleshly desires, made **Esau** unfit to be in the direct line of the promised Seed.
- Hence, Yehowah's words, through his prophet Malachi; But I loved Jacob, and **Esau** I have hated. **Esau** is excluded from among the faithful cloud of witnesses listed in. ([Hebrews, Chapter 11](#)), when Paul says; By faith Abraham, dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the very same promise.
- I have loved you people; Yehowah has said. And you have said; In what way have you loved us? Was not **Esau** the brother of Jacob, is the utterance of Yehowah? But I loved Jacob. ([Malachi 1:2](#))
- And **Esau** I have hated, and I finally made his mountains a desolated waste and his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness. ([Malachi 1:3](#))
- By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed in going out into a place he was destined to receive as an inheritance, and he went out, although not knowing where he was going. ([Hebrews 11:8](#))
- By faith he resided as an alien in the land of the promise as in a foreign land, and dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the very same promise. ([Hebrews 11:9](#))

- So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. ([Hebrews 12:1](#))

- Yehowah's selection of Jacob over **Esau** shows that God's choosing does not depend on man's dictates. The apostle Paul uses this incident as an illustration of the fact that the true children of Abraham are not necessarily those of fleshly descent, nor those who depend on their own works, but those of the faith of Abraham.

- However, it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who spring from Israel are really Israel. ([Romans 9:6](#))

- Neither because they are Abraham's seed are they all children, but; What will be called your seed will be through Isaac. ([Romans 9:7](#))

- That is, the children in the flesh are not really the children of God, but the children by the promise are counted as the seed. ([Romans 9:8](#))

- For the word of promise was as follows; At this time I will come and Sarah will have a son. ([Romans 9:9](#))

- Yet not that case alone, but also when Rebekah conceived twins from the one man, Isaac our forefather. ([Romans 9:10](#))

- For when they had not yet been born nor had practiced anything good or vile, in order, that the purpose of God respecting the choosing might continue dependent, not upon works, but upon the One who calls. ([Romans 9:11](#))

- It was said to her; The older will be the slave of the younger. ([Romans 9:12](#))

- **Esau** is set forth as a warning example to Christians so that they will not be guilty, as was **Esau** the materialist, of lack of appreciation for sacred or spiritual things.

- That there may be no fornicator nor anyone not appreciating sacred things, like **Esau**, who in exchange for one meal gave away his rights as firstborn. ([Hebrews 12:16](#))

See Also EDOM, EDOMITES