

GENESIS 25:24-34 (HEAVEN'S RICHES FOR A MEAL)

Introduction: Last week, we looked at some details concerning the doctrines of election and predestination. Today, we'll see how the lives of these two babies fighting in the womb will prefigure Adam and Jesus as they grow up.

The question I want you to think about is this, "What good would all the things you have, or are looking forward to having, do for you if you were to die today?"

I didn't realize until I was almost done with preparing this sermon that I'd come an entirely wrong conclusion about what we should learn from the account. As usual, if we rely too heavily on other people's commentaries, we're bound to miss what we're actually supposed to know. Let's not make this mistake today!

Text Verse: For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* we may receive a full reward. 2 John 1:7, 8

There are deceivers and there are deceivers. Some people deceive to get ahead in life, some to hurt other's chances at doing so. But then there are those who go out to deceive the world by denying that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. What does this mean? That Jesus didn't live? No.

George Washington came in the flesh and nobody cares about that. He was a man who came from other men. This isn't speaking about someone actually existing, but rather it's speaking about the incarnation of Jesus Christ – the eternal God putting on flesh to replace the fallen deeds of Adam.

Jehovah's witnesses deny this, muslims deny this. In fact, denying the incarnation is so serious that John calls those who do so an antichrist. Jesus came for a specific purpose and to accomplish a specific task, a part of

which is prefigured in today's verses and so... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Jacob and Esau

To understand the context of what we'll see, let me read you the pertinent verses from last week –

Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If *all is well*, why *am I like this?*" So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her: "Two nations *are* in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; *One* people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger."

The foreknowledge of God has been relayed to Rebekah and His plans for the life of these boys and their posterity will come about just as He has spoken. History has borne out the prophecy.

²⁴ So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were twins* in her womb.

As we noted a moment ago from last week's account, Isaac pleaded with the Lord for Rebekah to have a child. In His grace, He didn't just bless her with one, but with two. God is abundantly good to us as He unfolds the future and reveals it in the present.

Rebekah's days were fulfilled and from conception to birth is 9 months or about 270 days – now the time has arrived. Here at the moment of delivery, mom is ready to meet her boys. For those of you who love the details, the word for "twins" here is the Hebrew word *thomim*.

If you listen closely, you'll hear the name of another noted biblical figure, the Apostle Thomas, the doubting one. *Thomim* or in its singular form

thaom is directly translated to Thomas. He is noted in John 11:16 by his other Greek name as well –

Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.” (NASB)

The word Didymus means the same thing, two-fold or twin, or as we might say “ditto.” So now, when you meet someone named Thomas, you have all sorts of things you can tell him.

²⁵ And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.

Esau is born first and so, without going any further, we know from the prophecy that he and his line will serve the next to be born. When he came out, he was red. It isn't stated whether the red is from the blood of birth adhering to his hair or if his hair was naturally red, but Charlie's guess is the latter. His hair is red.

One ancient Jewish scholar sees in this red color that he would be a shedder of blood, fierce, and cruel. This is born out by his descendants later in the Bible and so it's a good supposition.

What's also noted about him is that he was born with so much hair on his body that he looked like a hairy garment all over. This is a genetic occurrence known as hypertrichosis. Because of this, they named him Esau. Esau means “made.”

What the parents were implying then is that in the womb he was made more like a man than a child because of his premature development. Because of the early development, his youth would be more passionate and precocious than others his age.

What it also means for his future is that he is more earthly than spiritual. This will become perfectly evident as we go on and the pattern of what Esau points to is fulfilled in the writings of Paul in the New Testament. The

word describing him as “red” is used about only one other person in the Bible, the great King David –

And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him; for he was *only* a youth, **ruddy** and good-looking. 1 Samuel 17:42

David, like Esau was thought to be, was a man of blood. (Explain)

²⁶ Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau’s heel; so his name was called Jacob.

The one who will be served comes out last and as an indication of their future, he is holding Esau’s heel. Because of this, he was given the name of Ya’akov or Jacob. This name has a few different meanings which are based on the idiom “takes hold by the heel.”

The idea is that in grabbing someone by the heel, you will trip him up. But there is also the idea of a deceiver, one who supplants, or one who follows closely behind. All of these fit his life and circumstances. But grabbing the heel, or “following after,” is the idea that we want to get here. It points to Jesus.

There is a meaning and a mystery in the name of Jacob which looks forward to much of his life, both as one who deceives and one who gets deceived. But because he follows after Esau, there is also a wonderful pattern Paul will explain to us later.

As you’ll see in the verses ahead, the account of these boys picture fallen Adam and the risen Christ. Jacob’s first act in life is remembered by the prophet Hosea many generations later –

He took his brother by the heel in the womb,
And in his strength he struggled with God. Hosea 12:3

²⁶ (con't) **Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.**

Isaac was born in the year 2109AM and was married at the age of 40. Now 20 years later his children are born to them in the year 2169AM. Although Abraham's death has already been recorded, he will be alive for 15 more years and is probably a happy grandpa.

²⁷ **So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.**

In one verse, we've skipped over enough years to see the boys grown to where they are old enough to live and work alone. God only includes what is necessary to show us His thoughts and to lead us to Jesus. Here, in this first verse about their adulthood, God shows us two types or pictures in the two men.

The first picture is Esau. His name as I said means "made" just as Adam was *made* from the dust of the earth where a word similar to Esau's name is used in Genesis 1:26, *asah*, when God said, "let Us make man in our image." He was a complete man which is pictured by Esau in his exceptional birth – a developed man.

He is a hunter – one who obtains his living from the ground and he is a man of the ground. He is a picture of Adam who was taken from the ground and who was destined to obtain his sustenance from the ground that he came from. Esau can be summed up in the words from Genesis 3 which God spoke to Adam –

¹⁷ Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life. ¹⁸ Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. ¹⁹ In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return."

As a hunter, he is like Nimrod and Ishmael who came before him. Both of them, along with him, picture fallen man fighting to live off the toil of the earth; they are all earthly and unspiritual.

Jacob, on the other hand is a picture of Christ. He is noted as a mild man. In 2 Corinthians 10:1, Jesus is termed gentle and meek by the Apostle Paul. But the word used for “mild” here is the word *tam*. This word means more than mild, but specifically “blameless” or “perfect.” Just a perfect description of the Lord he pictures.

Jacob is also noted as one dwelling in tents. Again we see Christ, first dwelling in the tabernacle among the children of Israel, later He dwelt in the Temple in Jerusalem, and finally He put on a tabernacle of flesh and dwelt among us as John records –

And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth. (1:14)

The picture of Christ that Jacob makes as he dwelt in a tent is ultimately fulfilled in Revelation 21 –

“Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God.” (vs. 3)

Unlike Esau who hunted wild animals, Jacob is a shepherd, once again picturing the Good Shepherd who came to guide His flock from earth to their heavenly home. Esau is destructive in game; Jacob is constructive in sheep. And thus we see Adam and Christ.

²⁸ And Isaac loved Esau because he ate *of his* game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

The Hebrew literally says that Isaac loved Esau because of the venison in his mouth – very descriptive and showing his love for the meat as much as the boy. Rebekah, on the other hand loved Jacob, but no reason is given.

It could stem back to the prophecy that she was given before they were born, or it could simply be because Esau stunk like the dickens when he came home from hunting. We don't know, but please note it doesn't say either parent didn't love the other child.

They merely favored one over the other. Almost every commentator in the world seems to want to find fault with the parents here, but I don't see it that way. The Bible is simply commenting on the facts and very few are given.

The words of Malachi show us that if our thoughts about Isaac and Rebekah are negative, then our thoughts about the Lord's dealing with these two should be negative as well because the Lord deals much more harshly with Esau.

Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved; ³ But Esau I have hated, Malachi 1:2

In the end, opposites attract. Isaac wasn't an adventurer and Esau was. Rebekah made a great adventure, leaving her home and family to go to the land of promise, and Jacob is the type to stay home, read books, and watch TV. This is how it was and there is no need to point fingers and accuse. Just accept what is given.

II. Trading Heaven's Riches for a Bowl of Stew

²⁹ Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he *was* weary.

The words here for "cooked a stew" are *yazed nazid*, or boiled a boiling. Jacob was in the house cooking food. An ancient Jewish source connects this cooking with a time of mourning and states that it was most likely at the time of the death of Abraham.

If so, and this is completely speculation, then they would be 15 years old. As Jacob is cooking, Esau comes in wearily from the field. This once again aligns with the curse of Adam –

“Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life.”

He’s been in the field toiling and he is hungry and tired. Esau is Adam in our unfolding story. And Jacob is Jesus, at home and cooking up the greatest meal in all of history.

³⁰ And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red *stew*, for I *am* weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom.

I do mission work every Saturday and one of the people I’ve gotten to know is called 39. For a while I didn’t know why he was called that. Eventually I found out that he played football at the same high school I went to and he was number 39. The name stuck.

Esau looks at the red stuff in the soup bowl and he very well may not have even known what it was because he simply says, “Please with *the red, the red.*” Or in Hebrew, *na min ha’adom ha’adom*. He’s hungry and tired and he simply wants to eat, but because of the description, he gets a nickname, Edom.

It very well could be that people already called him that because of his color, but now the name sticks because of his exclamation. And here we see him again as a picture of Adam. Adam was taken from the red clay of the earth and thus received his name.

And here we have Edom, which is the identical root for the name Adam. Both are red, both are earthly, and both are tied to *the red, the red* ground from which they came and from which their sustenance comes.

³¹ But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”

Jacob intends to gain from what he knows is a quick-willed twin, and so he offers him *the red, the red* if he will sell his birthright. Under the Law of Moses, a birthright was a double portion of what the other children would get.

If there were six children, then the oldest would get 2/7th of the estate. This birthright is different than that. It included being the chief of the clan and receiving all authority and all title to the estate. Just as Isaac got everything from Abraham, this same birthright would then pass to Esau. Jacob wants this.

It also involved being in the family next to the parents, the parental blessing, the promises which would lead to the Messiah, and eventually to the inheritance of the promised land, as well as the right to the priestly functions of the family.

If you're able to see it, all of these things point to the position and status of Jesus. Jacob lets Esau know that if there was to be a meal, it would involve a transfer of these rights to Jacob.

Jacob is looking for an exchange – that which is earthly for that which is spiritual. Esau like Adam was willing to give up his spiritual inheritance for what is earthly and Jesus was willing to give up what was earthly for that which is heavenly. This is where Jacob first finds a fulfillment in his name – heel grabber.

He is looking to grab the position of the older by obtaining the birthright. And this refers back to the play on words concerning the soup. The word boil is *yazed* and comes from the word *zid* or *zed*, to boil in a literal sense. But just as we in English use boil to mean “rage,” the word in Hebrew means to “act proudly or presumptuously.”

Jacob is taking advantage of the situation which has presented itself to obtain the deed to the estate and all that goes along with it. Jesus will take advantage of another situation to obtain fallen man's title deed and all that goes along with it.

And so Jacob tells Esau to sell him the birthright this day. In other words, in the open and in complete and full terms. If that is agreed on, then Esau gets his soup. Does anyone see Jesus and the Lord's Supper here? Jesus has come to receive the promises of Adam. His red blood is the item of transfer.

If we, in Adam, want what His cup offers, we must give up any attempt at obtaining those things ourselves. We cede our right to Him to be our priest, to having claim on our estate, to all the promises of the Messiah and the rightful ownership of the Promised Land.

If we accept His offer – His blood – for us ceding our rights, the transfer is made. However, in our case, what we lose is gained in being granted *life*. This isn't stretching this at all, and the next verse confirms it...

³² And Esau said, “Look, I *am* about to die; so what *is* this birthright to me?”

Anokhi holekh lamut – “I am to die.” Esau was a real whiner about his stomach and the importance of having a meal – ask my wife,,, that's me to a T.

I want you to not misunderstand me, there is a real occurrence which the Bible later condemns, and there is a spiritual occurrence that we need to note, as sons of Adam, and hold fast to.

In the real occurrence, Esau is giving up the treasures of heaven for a mere bowl of soup. The Bible will later call him a profane person because of this. To Esau, the prospect of his physical life was of more value than the spiritual things he would have received. In his thinking if he died, they wouldn't have mattered anyway.

It could be that he truly was hungry and exhausted and his thought is “Well, if I die, Jacob will get the birthright anyhow.” But there is nothing to show that he was a step away from death except his own words and there is every reason to believe this isn't really the case.

The birthright is as much a spiritual thing as it is an earthly blessing and so it would only be of value to someone with faith to understand it. If we were to look at a modern parallel, it would be education. If we are willing to look forward and understand the benefits of an education, then we will pursue it.

A better example might be someone who is willing to read and study their Bible. Unless you understand the spiritual aspect of the book and your necessity to grasp it, it means nothing to you.

It is the place where all of heaven's treasures are revealed and yet we sell it off for TV or playing on the Wii. The most glorious heavenly treasure on earth is sold for soup.

The Geneva Bible says this about this verse – “The reprobate do not value God's benefits unless they feel them presently, and therefore they prefer present pleasures.”

What I want you to know though, and I don't want you to miss it, is that the spiritual aspect of what we see here is exactly the opposite. *Anokhi holekh lamut* – “I am to die.”

We are all destined to die. We are all Esau, walking in and looking for soup. When we die, none of our treasures will matter. Like Esau figured, someone else will get them anyway. Solomon explains this in Ecclesiastes 2 –

Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. ¹⁹ And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also *is* vanity. ²⁰ Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. ²¹ For there is a man whose labor *is* with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also *is* vanity and a great evil.

The question we have to ask is, “Am I willing to give up *everything* for one meal?” If that meal *will* give us life, then isn't the exchange worthwhile? And there is only one meal which will satisfy. You see, in this meal we move from Esau to Jacob; from the authority of Adam to the authority of Jesus.

Just as Edom became subservient to Jacob, we too, sons of Adam, must cede our rights and authority to Jesus in order to have life. Now, hopefully

now, you can understand Jesus' words to His disciples in John 6 about *the red, the red* meal we're looking at –

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.”

³³ Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

The 16th Century bishop, satirist, and moralist Joseph Hall had this wise thought, “There was never any meat, except the forbidden fruit, so dear bought, as this broth of Jacob.”

For nothing more than a lunch which was as much water as it was lentils, all of Esau's treasures were sworn away. And for the same soup Jacob inherited many glories in the years ahead. And each one of them, we need to remember, is still noted today. This wasn't just a walk in life which ended when they did.

Instead it was an account which people around the world still read about 4000 years later. The question that should come up in our own minds is, “What will I most be remembered for?” Who knows, maybe our life's mistakes or victories will be seen by everyone who comes after us as well.

And even if they're not, we still are living in God's sight and he knows the moral state we're in, even if others don't. Again, I'll turn to the Geneva Bible for their thoughts, “Thus the wicked prefer their worldly conveniences over God's spiritual graces: but the children of God do the opposite.”

³⁴ And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

This is the first time bread is mentioned in the entire chapter. Esau gave up his birthright for bread and *the red, the red* that would keep him alive for a

few more hours. We have been asked to give up our birthright for Bread and the Red that will give eternal life.

Without trying to sensationalize the life and lessons we should get from Esau, we need to at least note the attitude he presents. As I said, there is a physical aspect and a spiritual aspect to this story. And although the two are diametrically opposed in how we handle them, they come from the same account.

For the physical lesson, the author of Hebrews tells us the type of person that Esau really was. The morality he displayed becomes an example to each of us of how not to live, especially considering spiritual matters –

Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: ¹⁵ looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; ¹⁶ lest there *be* any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. ¹⁷ Hebrews 12

Paul writes in Philippians 3 about those who set their mind on the things of the world. What he says so closely resembles Esau, that it needs to be considered –

¹⁷ Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. ¹⁸ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹ whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

However, in the spiritual aspect of what we see in today's story, we actually do *have to be willing* to sell everything for a single meal – a spiritual meal. Continuing on in the same passage from Philippians, Paul explains to us what we receive when we give up our rights to this world –

²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it

may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. DISCUSS

I said a while ago that being the firstborn granted the birthright. This would make one chief of the clan and they would receive all authority and all title to the estate. In today's passage, this authority was passed from Esau to Jacob.

This transfer is a picture of the transfer from Adam to Christ. As a son of Adam, we have a right to our own birthright this fallen world – it is our inheritance. Adam had the title to the Eden and gave it up for a bite of fruit. Edom did the same thing for a bowl of soup. Both meals were temporary and unsatisfying.

Jacob received the birthright through a vow sworn by Esau and it was irrevocable. Jesus now asks each of us to give up our inheritance here in the earthly realm under Adam and submit to His rule and authority. Jacob replaced the firstborn Esau. and Paul clearly explains that Jesus replaces the first man, Adam –

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man *was* of the earth, *made* of dust; the second Man *is* the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As *was* the *man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are made* of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *Man*, so also *are* those *who are* heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man*.

The question for Adam's seed is, "Do we want to live an ungodly and profane life like Esau and give up heaven's riches for what is earthly and temporary, or do we want to sell our earthly riches for a spiritual meal which will grant us heaven and eternity."

Remember what the prophecy about these two stated –

Two nations *are* in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; *One* people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger.

There are two people groups on earth right now. One is serving the older and one is serving the younger. I never fully grasped God's words through Malachi until I wrote this sermon. Remember when I read them earlier –

*Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" Says the LORD. "Yet Jacob I have loved;
³ But Esau I have hated,*

The Bible says that we are children of wrath by nature. We are earthly and serving the first man, who is Adam, but we can become heavenly and serve the second, who is Christ. When we make that choice – all symbolized in the Lord's Supper, we go from being children of wrath, to adopted Son's of God and beloved.

Closing Verse: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2 (see verse 33) "Swear to me as of this day."

Next Week: Genesis 26:1-14 (A Famine in the Land)

Heaven's Riches for a Meal (A Double Entendre)

When Rebekah's days were fulfilled to give birth
Indeed there were twins in her womb
The first came out red, like the clay of the earth
He was hairy as a garment, like mohair I presume
So they called his name Esau because like a man he was made
I wonder if those who saw him stood back and were dismayed?
After Esau his younger brother then came out
And his hand took hold of Esau's heel
So his name was Jacob because with no doubt
He was a heel grabber and supplanting was his deal
When Rebekah bore them, Isaac was sixty years of age
And his life was now turning a brand new page
So the boys grew and Esau was a skillful hunter
A man of the field was his type of life
But Jacob was a mild man and not a physical grunter

He dwelt in tents; instead of arrows he used a butter knife
And Isaac love Esau because he ate of his game
But Rebekah loved Jacob and the man he became
Now Jacob cooked a stew
And Esau came in weary from the field
And Esau said to Jacob, "I'm famished through and through
Please feed me some of that red stew before my life I yield
Therefore Edom was called his name
Both his color and the color of the soup were the same

But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day
And Esau said, "Look I'm about to die."
So what is this birthright to me, tell me I pray?
Then Jacob said, Swear as of this day between you and I
So he swore to him and to Jacob he sold his birthright
And Jacob gave Esau bread and some lentil stew
Then he ate and drank, arose, and went out of sight
Thus Esau despised his birthright, he told it "Adieu!"
Here we are pictured by these boys
And we have choices in this world to make
Will we pursue all the earthly toys?
Or will we give them up for heaven's sake?
We can sell our birthright for that which perishes
Or we can sell it for the thing that God most cherishes
If we sell it for a bowl of soup that Adam did make
Then it is a sad choice that we have made
But if we sell it for the heavenly cake
Then by God above it was a glorious trade
Eat of the bread and drink of the blood
Of the Lord Jesus provided freely to all
And when you do it shall be understood
That through this act Christ in you has reversed Adam's fall

Great and glorious, splendid God above
Let us shout out to You with praises and love

Hallelujah and Amen...