

The First Family

Date: 4.19.2026 | Esau Sells His Birthright
Scripture: Genesis 25:27-34

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God keeps His promises and loves me, even when people make wrong choices.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God keeps His promises, even when people make wrong choices, and He sent Jesus to rescue us.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

God's plans are based on His grace, not our goodness, and He keeps His promises by sending Jesus to save us.

STUDENTS:

God's redemptive plan is not dependent on human perfection but on His sovereign grace, which is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

ADULTS:

God sovereignly accomplishes His covenant purposes through flawed people by grace alone, ultimately fulfilling His promise of redemption through Jesus Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Genesis 12:2-3



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

Election - The eternal act of God with respect to all who are saved, by which out of pure grace and for Christ's sake He purposed to endow them in time with the spiritual blessings of conversion, justification, sanctification, and perseverance unto eternal life. Christian Dogmatics, 585

BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS



Though Isaac is described in Scripture as a man of faith and commendable character, he is not without sin. One of his significant failures is a common one in families: favoritism. Isaac favored Esau, while Rebekah favored Jacob (*Genesis 25:28*). This division within the home fueled rivalry, deception, and long-lasting conflict between the brothers.

Isaac loved Esau because Esau was a skillful hunter and provided him with game, while Rebekah loved Jacob, who was quieter and stayed among the tents. This split affection repeated a destructive pattern that would later appear in Jacob's own family, as he favored Joseph and Benjamin over his other sons (*Genesis 37:3*) and preferred Rachel over Leah in his marriage (*Genesis 29:30-31*). Scripture consistently shows that favoritism fractures families and deepens the effects of sin.

From the very beginning, conflict marked the relationship between Esau and Jacob. Even in the womb, the twins struggled violently (*Genesis 25:22*). When Rebekah inquired of the Lord, God revealed that two nations were forming within her and that their descendants would be marked by ongoing hostility. God also declared, contrary to cultural custom, that "the older shall serve the younger" (*Genesis 25:23*). This divine announcement pointed to God's sovereign purposes, which do not depend on human tradition or expectations.

In the ancient world, the firstborn son normally received significant privileges: leadership of the family, a double portion of the inheritance, and the responsibility of carrying on the family name and legacy. However, God made clear that His redemptive plan would not be governed by human customs. As Paul later explains, God's choice was made before the twins were born and before either had done good or evil, "in order that God's purpose of election might continue" (*Romans 9:6-12*).

The tension between the brothers becomes visible in *Genesis 25:29–34*, when Esau returns from the field exhausted and sells his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. While Jacob's actions reveal manipulation and selfish ambition, Esau is also clearly at fault. Scripture tells us that Esau “despised his birthright” (*Genesis 25:34*). He treated lightly something sacred—his God-given position connected to the covenant promises made to Abraham. Hebrews later describes Esau as “unholy” and “profane” because he traded eternal spiritual privilege for temporary physical satisfaction (*Hebrews 12:16–17*).

Verse 30 introduces Esau's nickname, “Edom,” which is related to the Hebrew word for “red.” This name reflects both his red appearance at birth (*Genesis 25:25*) and the red stew for which he sold his birthright. From this moment forward, Esau's descendants would be known as the Edomites, forever linked to this act of contempt for God's covenant blessings.

Esau's disregard for spiritual things continues in *Genesis 26:34*, where he marries Hittite women who worship false gods. These marriages brought grief and bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah, revealing Esau's continued lack of concern for God's ways or the covenant family he belonged to. His choices demonstrated a heart oriented toward earthly desires rather than faithfulness to the Lord.

Later Scripture reflects on God's sovereign choice between the brothers. *Malachi 1:2–3* speaks of God's love for Jacob and rejection of Esau. This language does not describe emotional favoritism but covenantal purpose. God chose Jacob to carry forward the messianic promise, while Esau was passed over for this redemptive role. Though both were sinners, God sovereignly determined which family line would serve as the vehicle for His plan of salvation.

This narrative points beyond Jacob and Esau to the heart of the gospel. God's redemptive purposes do not depend on human merit, moral superiority, or birth order. Both brothers fail in different ways—Jacob through deception, Esau through indifference—but God's plan moves forward by grace alone. Ultimately, the covenant line preserved through Jacob leads to Jesus Christ, the true Firstborn, who never despised His inheritance and perfectly fulfilled God's will. Through Him, God brings salvation to the world, demonstrating that His purposes cannot be thwarted by human sin, failure, or dysfunction.

TELL THE STORY



Genesis 25:27-34

Read directly from scripture, use the simple summary below, or Hey-O! Stories of the Bible.

- Hey-O! Stories of the Bible - Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19-34; 27-28:5; 29:9-13; 31:2-3; 32-33:11)

After Isaac and Rebekah were married, Rebekah was not able to have a baby. So Isaac prayed she would have a baby, and God answered his prayer. Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons named Jacob and Esau. Esau was born right before Jacob was, which meant Esau was the firstborn son.

When the boys grew up, Esau became a hunter, but Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. Their father, Isaac, loved Esau because he hunted and brought him wild animals to eat. But Rebekah loved Jacob.

One day, Esau came home from the field feeling very hungry. Jacob was cooking stew, and Esau asked him to have some. Jacob said, "First, sell me your birthright." The birthright meant that Esau, as the firstborn, was supposed to receive a larger share of all the family had and become the family leader after his father died. Esau thought he would die of hunger, so he agreed to give Jacob his birthright to have some of the stew.

Many years later, Jacob and Esau's father, Isaac, was old and knew he was near the end of his life. He also could not see very well. Isaac called Esau to him and asked him to go hunt a wild animal for him to eat. Then Isaac would give him his blessing. The blessing was the way a father passed on the family's leadership to his oldest son.

Rebekah heard what Isaac said and made a plan to trick him. She told Jacob to bring her two goats, and she made a delicious meal for Isaac. She told Jacob to take the meal to his father, Isaac, and pretend to be Esau.

Jacob was afraid he would be caught trying to trick his father. Even though Isaac could not see very well, Esau was much hairier than Jacob. Jacob was worried that Isaac would feel his smooth skin and know that he was not Esau.

Rebekah took Esau's clothes and put them on Jacob so that he would smell like Esau. She also took some of the goats' skin and put it over Jacob's neck and hands so he would feel hairy like Esau. Then she gave Jacob the food, and he brought it to Isaac. Isaac was tricked, and he blessed Jacob instead of Esau.

When Esau got home from hunting, he learned that Isaac had given his blessing to Jacob instead of to him. Esau had been cheated out of his blessing, and he was very angry.

God's covenant with Abraham continued to the next generation. Esau sold his birthright, giving Jacob the right to the wonderful blessings God promised to his father Abraham. Through Jacob's family, God would send the promised Savior to bring blessing and salvation to the world.

REBUILD THE STORY



1. Who were the parents of Esau and Jacob, and what challenge did Rebekah face before having children? (*Genesis 25:19–21*)

2. What caused Rebekah to ask the Lord for help during her pregnancy? (*Genesis 25:22*)

3. What did God reveal to Rebekah about the children in her womb? (*Genesis 25:23*)

4. What surprising promise did God make about the relationship between the two sons? (*Genesis 25:23*)

5. How are Esau and Jacob described at birth, and what detail stands out about Jacob's birth? (*Genesis 25:25–26*)

6. How did Isaac and Rebekah show favoritism toward their sons? (*Genesis 25:28*)

7. What did Esau trade to Jacob, and what was he given in return?

(Genesis 25:29–31)

8. How does Scripture describe Esau's attitude toward his birthright?

(Genesis 25:34)

9. Why do you think God chose Jacob before either brother had done anything good or bad? What does this teach us about God's grace and sovereignty?

(Genesis 25:23; Romans 9:11–12)

10. Esau traded something valuable for something temporary. What are modern examples of people making similar choices, and why are those choices tempting?

11. Jacob tried to take God's promise through manipulation rather than trust. How do we sometimes try to force outcomes instead of waiting on God?

12. How does this story prepare us for the gospel—that salvation is not earned by birth order, good behavior, or effort, but given by grace through Jesus?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

The story of Esau and Jacob reminds us that God's redemptive plan has never depended on perfect people, but on His sovereign grace. From the beginning, this family is marked by sin—favoritism, deception, pride, and disregard for spiritual things. Isaac and Rebekah fail as parents, Esau despises his birthright, and Jacob schemes to get what God already promised him. Yet none of these failures derail God's purposes. Long before either brother was born, God declared that His covenant promises would move forward according to His will, not human custom, effort, or merit. These point us directly to the gospel. Like Jacob and Esau, we are sinners who cannot earn God's favor. But just as God faithfully carried His promise through Jacob's imperfect life, He ultimately fulfilled that promise by sending Jesus—the true and perfect Son. Jesus never



despised His inheritance, never acted in selfish ambition, and never failed to trust the Father. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Jesus accomplished what no human ever could: salvation by grace alone. This story teaches us that our hope is not found in our choices or performance, but in a faithful God who keeps His promises and rescues sinners through Christ.

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use your Attributes of God poster as a guide.

PRAYER PROMPTS

God, thank You for using imperfect people to do Your great work in the kingdom. Thank You for Your sovereignty in our lives.



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Genesis 26