



Daily Verse and Comment

[Genesis 25:34](#)

(34) Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.
So Esau despised his birthright.

New International Version

We all shake our heads in disbelief when we think about the well-known story of Esau selling his birthright for a measly bowl of lentil stew. How could he do such a thing? But are we any better today? Paul reminds us that the stories [God](#) includes in the [Old Testament](#) are there to help us avoid making the same mistakes ([I Corinthians 10:11-12](#)).

We have another advantage: Esau was not converted, and we are. Through the indwelling of God's Holy Spirit, we have help he never had. We can use this godly insight and power to learn and grow in the way of living that will please God.

What did Esau give up? Of course, we understand that God had prophesied that the older would serve the younger. Perhaps Jacob was aware of this and was trying to "help God" work out His foreordained providence. Whatever the case, until this point the birthright was Esau's. Albert Barnes comments: "In after times the right of primogeniture consisted in a double portion of the father's goods [[Deuteronomy 21:17](#)], and a certain rank as the patriarch and priest of the house on the death of the father." God had already promised vast lands and wealth to the descendants of Abraham who came through the birthright son ([Genesis 26:1-5](#)).

Imagine for a second that Esau could have foreseen all of North America, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, vast sections of Europe, and parts of the Middle East. Would he have had a greater appreciation for the birthright then? Possibly.

However, Esau could not imagine the unimaginable wealth, power, military might, political impact, and world leadership his descendants could have. This is not even considering the potential for a far greater spiritual inheritance—the blessing (see [Genesis 27:1-29](#))—that accompanies the birthright. These benefits were not real to him; he could not touch them. They were too far in the future; they were not present at the moment. The only thing that was real to him was his need to eat some lentil stew. Right now.

Esau's impulsive, unholy, live-in-the-now lifestyle was about to cost him and his descendants dearly. As God says, he despised his birthright.

God has called us to a fabulous, unfathomable birthright. Our birthright, as [firstfruits](#) of God, makes Esau's birthright seem trivial. If we cannot or will not realize what God has offered us, we can let such great a prize slip away as tragically as Esau spurned his birthright ([Hebrews 2:1](#); [12:14-17](#)). If we do not value our birthright more than anything in this universe, we can sell it for our own equivalent of a bowl of lentil stew.

— Staff

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