



[Genesis 25:29-34](#)

(29) And Jacob boiled soup. And Esau came from the field, and he was faint. (30) And Esau said to Jacob, "I beg you, let me eat of the red, this red *soup*, for I am faint." Therefore, his name was called Edom. (31) And Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today." (32) And Esau said, "Behold, I *am* at the point of dying, and what *profit shall* this birthright be to me?" (33) And Jacob said, "Swear to me this day." And he swore to him, and he sold his birthright to Jacob. (34) Then Jacob gave Esau bread and soup of lentils. And he ate and drank, and rose up and went his way. Thus did Esau despise *his* birthright.

A Faithful Version

How did Esau come to be of a mind that he could sell his birthright so easily? Can we follow the same path but in a spiritual sense? What must we do to cherish rather than despise our far more glorious inheritance?

What Esau despised was no small thing. Even if we disregard the earlier promises given to [Abraham](#) and [Isaac](#) of descendants as numerous as the sand of the seashore, the Promised Land of Canaan, royal dynasties, and the gates of their enemies, Esau stood to inherit a literal fortune. As we have learned over the years, the birthright contained a two-fold promise: physical promises and spiritual promises. We can see this in summary in [Genesis 12:1-3](#):

Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

What a wonderful inheritance for Abraham's descendants! [God](#) promises a national homeland, national greatness (power and prosperity), and national prestige. Abraham's descendants would ultimately be a force for good on the planet, especially because

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from Israel would come the Messiah.

If we consider just what Esau would inherit when Isaac died, it still was quite a huge amount of wealth. In [Genesis 24:35](#), Abraham's servant says to Rebekah's family, "The LORD has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys." Just a chapter later, [Moses](#) records, "And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac," except for "gifts" that he bestowed on his other sons by his concubines ([Genesis 25:5-6](#)).

The birthright was customarily passed down from father to eldest son. Being Isaac's eldest son (verse 25), Esau would have stood to gain quite a lot, at least in the way of wealth. A bowl of lentils hardly compares to "flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys"! How could he have despised his awesome inheritance so easily?

What was Esau's problem? He did not treasure his inheritance! [Jesus](#) tells us in His [Sermon on the Mount](#), "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" ([Matthew 6:21](#)). People usually only sell something when they value something else more. Esau did not place a high-enough value on the birthright, so he sold it for a pittance.

— Staff

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