

## The Attitude Of Esau

**What is Your Salvation Worth?**

**Clyde Finklea**

**Given 10-May-03; Sermon #611s**

In ancient Israel, the firstborn son held special status in the family. He had a special position as being the father's right-hand man. He represented the father's authority to the family. He had a special inheritance. He would inherit a double portion of his father's possessions. He had special responsibilities. He held responsibility for the welfare of the family. And before the Levitical priesthood, the firstborn son was sometimes appointed as a priest.

But occasionally the elder fell out of favor, and was replaced by a younger son, a brother. Now notice some examples: Jacob replaced Esau; Ephraim replaced Manasseh; Joseph replaced Reuben; Solomon replaced Adonijah; and so on.

Now how does this relate to us? Jesus is declared to be Firstborn in three distinct relationships. He is the Firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15); He is the Firstborn from among the dead (Colossians 1:18); and He is the Firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29). So we see that Jesus is to inherit all things.

**Romans 8:14-17** For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

So we see that we are to be joint heirs with Jesus Christ. We have been called to share in His inheritance. We are to rule with Him and hold positions of authority as kings and priests. No one else will be given this privilege after the first resurrection.

But unfortunately, we too can fall out of favor and be replaced. Let us look at the story of Esau and Jacob and see if we can learn a lesson from the attitude of Esau. Turn with me back to Genesis 25.

**Genesis 25:27** So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

Esau, it says, was a man of the field. Jesus speaks of the field as a picture of the world. So Esau was a man who loved the things of the world. He was worldly. He lived for the pleasures of life now.

It says that Jacob dwelt in tents. In Hebrews 11:9 it says that Abraham “by faith dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” So Jacob, along with Abraham and Isaac, had his eyes on an eternal dwelling place. Jacob believed the promise that God had given to Abraham, his grandfather.

I will continue the story in verse 29.

**Genesis 25:29-34** Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Esau sold his birthright to Jacob. He impetuously forfeited important rights, responsibilities, and honors that were his by birth. It says that he *despised* his birthright. He considered the responsibilities and the honor as unimportant, or that he was just totally uninterested in them.

Now, just to bring out the point, when it talks about “he was about to die,” some will think that he might have been near death. But the statement “I am about to die” is just a figure of speech. You have heard people say, “I’m about to starve to death.” Well, Esau could have just as easily said it that way, because after he ate and drank, after he satisfied his fleshly cravings, he carelessly rose up and went his way without any serious reflections upon the bad bargain that he had just made, or any show of regret.

Let us take a look at the New Testament and see what it has to say about the attitude of Esau.

**Hebrews 12:16** . . . or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

To profane is to regard something as unhallowed; it is to treat something sacred as common. So Esau took what God considered holy, and he made it common. Being so totally concerned with his temporary and material needs, he gave them priority over his rights as the firstborn son, and his responsibilities as the heir to the blessing of the covenant that God had made with Abraham.

**Hebrews 12:17** For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

The result was that afterwards when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected. He repented with tears, but the situation was irrevocable.

We too must beware lest we count as unimportant what God considers sacred and holy.

I have two very dear friends that spent many, many years in this church. And occasionally I will run into them. And one will always say, “Well, I’m planning on coming back to church,” but she always ends with, “eventually,” and then she laughs. Eventually never comes, does it? She is not back. The

other one boldly says, “Well, I’m definitely coming back to church, but when I get good and ready to.” I guess he is still not ready. This is the attitude of Esau.

You see, they want to inherit the blessing, they know what the inheritance is. They know what the promises are. They want that. But they want it when they want it. They are not ready to make the sacrifices that are necessary for salvation now. They want to satisfy, as Esau, their temporal and material needs now, thinking that they can repent later.

But later could be too late.

All things are possible with God. Jesus said there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth, especially for those who counted their calling and inheritance as unimportant. And we too can lose our inheritance, even though we are sitting right here today.

Jesus said:

**Matthew 6:24** “No one can serve two masters.”

The apostle Paul said:

**I Timothy 6:9-10** But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

How many do we know that have done that?

We too can fall into the attitude of Esau, thinking that we have time to overcome the sins that we commit over and over again. You see, we all have those sins that we sin and repent. Then we sin again, and we repent again. But is that true repentance?

Paul says in Romans 8:13, “We must put to death the deeds of the flesh in order to live.” If we live after the flesh trying to satisfy every lust, we shall die.

Jesus said:

**Mark 8:35** “For whoever desires to save his life [that is, living for the self, satisfying the flesh] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's [that is, living for Christ at all costs, sacrificing our lives now, putting to death the deeds of this flesh] will save it.”

You see, this temporary body that we live in is not worth losing our inheritance over, like Esau for one morsel of food gave up his inheritance. The time to truly repent and overcome for us is now. You see, time is running out on us, because we do not know if we will even live to see tomorrow.

Turn me back to Revelation 21.

**Revelation 21:7** He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.

We have to overcome. We cannot keep going on like we are. You know 70 to 80 years in this life, if should we live that long, is nothing compared to eternity. It is less than the blinking of an eye. So let us stop feeding the lusts that are in this flesh, and cling to the eternal crown that has been offered to us.

Now I want to close in Revelation 3, which speaks for itself:

**Revelation 3:11** “Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown.”