

FLANNEL BOARD FRIDAY

PART 2 JACOB AND ESAU

Esau's Appearance

The Bible tells us that Esau was "red" and all his body was like a "hairy cloak" (Genesis 25:25). It is unclear if the "redness" refers to Esau's complexion, his hair color, or both. Red was often associated with "ruggedness" or manliness. True to his name, Esau would grow into a stereotypically masculine figure (Genesis 25:27). His hairiness, at least at birth, is so remarkable that they named him Esau, which means "hairy".

Birthrights and Blessings Genesis 25:29-34; 27:36

A birthright was an honor given to the firstborn son, bestowing rights to the father's inheritance and land. However, the birthright was not automatic, it had to be given, officially, to another. In the Bible, this process was usually performed in the form of a blessing. When it comes to the blessing, it was about posterity and leading the family spiritually.

Esau's Names

- Esau = Hairy Genesis 25:25
- Edom = Red Genesis 25:30; 2 Chronicles 21:8
- Mount Seir = Hairy Goat Demon Deuteronomy 2:22; Joshua 24:4

EVEN MORE TO THE STORY

Did You Know?

- Jacob and Esau were 77 years old when Jacob dressed up like his brother and tricked his aging father into blessing him.
- Based on the different physical descriptions at their birth, Jacob and Esau were dizygotic twins.
- There are at least two other sets of twins mentioned in Scripture: Perez and Zerah (Genesis 38:27-30), as well as Thomas, who was called Didymus, a Greek word meaning "twin" (John 11:16).

Quick Fact

The Book of Jasher, mentioned in Joshua 10:12-13; 2 Samuel 1:18-27, is not part of our canon of Scripture. However, it offers a backstory on Esau trading his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of beans. The book of Jasher declares that Esau killed Nimrod while in the woods hunting. Having to fight off 2 of Nimrod's men to get home alive, Esau was exhausted and feared more of Nimrod's men would come to kill him. The idea is, Esau was so quick to forfeit his birthright because he thought his death was imminent.

Questions to Ponder

- The description of Esau's appearance is somewhat unnerving. Can you imagine seeing a new born baby covered in hair? Do you think Esau considered his appearance as a curse or a blessing? What do you think others thought about it?

- Why do you think Esau was more upset about losing the blessing than he was about losing his birthright?

- There are many people in the Bible who the Lord renames, like Jacob and Peter. However, Esau was renamed 3 different times. Do you think that has any significance? What do you think that might mean?

