

Lesson 41

Esau Sells His Birthright

Esau, the older twin, sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Refer to the Genesis . In the book of Genesis, we've seen that God planned from the beginning to send a Savior, Jesus, to save us from our sins. He promised the Savior to Adam and Eve and then to Abraham. From Abraham, the promise passed to his son Isaac. Abraham had to have a son to carry on the promise of many descendants and a Savior, and Isaac needed a son, too.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 39 Theme Poster. In this lesson, God provided a wife for Isaac from the relatives of Abraham.

What was her name? Rebekah.

Yes. Rebekah left her home and her family in Haran to become Isaac's wife.

Show the Lesson Theme Posters. Today, we'll learn about Isaac and Rebekah's children. Their children were important because one of them would inherit Abraham's covenant.

Prepare items for students to smell. Cover the items and bring a blindfold.

Bring out the covered cups with items to smell. Before we start, I need a few volunteers to be blindfolded for a special test. I have several items in these cups. And I want to see if you can guess what they are using only your sense of smell. Choose volunteers and blindfold them. Have blindfolded students smell and guess items you brought. Then remove the blindfold and let them see the items. Show the class the items and pass them around. Continue until all items have been identified.

Great job! Our sense of smell is pretty amazing, isn't it? Which items did you think smelled good? Allow answers.

Which items smelled bad? Allow answers.

Did smelling any of the items make you hungry? Which ones? Allow answers.

In our lesson today, we'll see how smelling something good led someone to make a bad decision.

Rebekah Is Barren

Pass out the Class Notes (PDF) to the students.

Remember how Abraham and Sarah were very old and couldn't have a child? God had to miraculously give them Isaac. Well, God had to work a miracle for Isaac and Rebekah, too. Let's read about it!

Genesis 25:21-23

Slide #5

Slide #6

Turn to Genesis 25. Who will read verses 21-23? Assign a reader. So, what was Rebekah's problem in verse 21? She was barren.

Barren means that she couldn't have any children.

So, what did Isaac do in verse 21? Prayed to the Lord.

Yes. Isaac prayed and asked God to give them a child. And God answered! Rebekah became pregnant, but she was worried about something.

What was happening to Rebekah in verse 22? The children (babies) struggled within her.

Have any of you ever felt a baby moving around or kicking against your mother's stomach? Allow answers.

While it's normal and exciting to feel an unborn baby moving around, Rebekah knew something was different with her pregnancy.

Notice that the Bible says "children" and not "child" within her. What does that mean? There was more than one! She was expecting twins.

Twins! God didn't just give them one child, but two! How many of you know someone who is a twin? Show of hands.

Rebekah prayed and asked God what was happening. God told her that she would have twins and each child would become a nation of people.

What else did God say about the twins at the end of verse 23? One would be stronger than the other. The older would serve the younger.

Back in Isaac's day, the firstborn son was special. He received a double portion of the inheritance and became the leader of the family. The younger brothers and sisters served the oldest. But God said that the older twin would serve the younger in Isaac's family. That was an important prophecy.

Slide #7

Let's go to our Class Notes (PDF). Today we have a crossword puzzle. You will write the word that completes each statement in the puzzle, not the blanks. Who will read #1 and tell us what Isaac asked God for? Assign a reader. Rebekah. Have students complete #1.

And in #2, what did God bless Isaac and Rebekah with? Assign a reader. Twin. Complete #2.

When Rebekah felt the babies moving inside her, she asked God what was happening. Who will read #3 and tell us what God said? Assign a reader.

Younger. Complete #3.

Twins Are Born

Some twins look alike; they are identical, and people may not be able to tell them apart! Other twins may look totally different from each other.

Genesis 25:24–26

Slide #8

Let's read the description of Isaac and Rebekah's twins. Did they look the same or different? Who will read Genesis 25:24–26? Assign a reader. So, what did Esau, the older twin, look like? Red and hairy.

Yes! He doesn't sound like a very cute baby, does he? And his parents named him based on how he looked. Esau means "the hairy one."

Slide #9

What about Jacob? What was he doing in verse 26? Holding Esau's heel.

The name Jacob means "to take by the heel." It can also mean one who schemes to take the place of another or one who deceives.

Deceive: to make someone believe something that is not true
What does it mean to deceive?

Allow guesses. To make someone believe something that is not true.

We'll see in a bit how Jacob schemed to take something from his brother, Esau.

Jacob and Esau not only looked different, but they also liked to do different things. When the twins grew up, Esau became a skilled hunter who liked to be outdoors in the wild while Jacob liked to stay close to home and cook and care for animals.

Slide #10

Let's fill in the descriptions of the twins on our Class Notes (PDF). Who will read #4 and give us the name of the twin who was red and hairy? Assign a reader. Esau. Complete #4.

And #5? What was Jacob doing when he was born? Assign a reader. Heel. Complete #5.

And who will read #6? What activities did they like to do? Assign a reader. Hunt. Complete #6.

Esau Despises His Birthright

Sadly, as the twins grew, Isaac and Rebekah made a mistake by picking favorites. Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob because he liked to eat the meat that Esau brought back after a hunt. But Rebekah loved Jacob more than Esau. When parents choose favorites, it can lead to jealousy and hurt feelings.

Plus, as the oldest son, Esau would inherit a double portion of his father's wealth and become the head of the family when his father died. That was his birthright.

Now, how would you feel if you knew that your older brother would get twice as much as you would from your parents and would get to be in

charge of everything? Allow discussion.

Most of us would feel jealous or think that wasn't fair, but that was the way things worked back then. However, God told Rebekah that her younger son, Jacob, would one day lead the family. Jacob knew this, too, and he wanted the birthright from his brother.

Let's continue reading to see what Esau thought about his birthright. Did he appreciate all the benefits of being the firstborn?

Genesis 25:29–34

Slide #11

Slide #12

We'll read Genesis 25:29–34 like a skit with parts! I'll be the narrator and read everything that isn't Esau or Jacob talking. I need two volunteers: one to be Esau and one to be Jacob. Esau's first sentence is in verse 30 and Jacob's is in verse 31. Be ready to read your part. Everyone else listen and follow along in your Bibles. Assign volunteers to be Esau and Jacob. Read the passage.

So, our reading started with Jacob cooking up a delicious stew and Esau coming in from the field. What do you think Esau was doing in the field? Hunting.

Right! Esau was a hunter, remember, so he probably just came back from trying to shoot something to eat. When he returned, he was tired and hungry. What did he smell cooking when he got home? Jacob's stew. Uh oh! He smelled something delicious! Have you ever been really hungry and came home to smell your favorite meal cooking? Show of hands.

Well, that's how Esau felt. After a long day outdoors, he wanted nothing more than a good meal. His stomach was probably growling. And when he neared the tent, he smelled lentil stew.

Does anyone know what a lentil is? Allow guesses.

Pass out examples of lentils or show lentil pictures if you brought them. A lentil is a legume, like peas and beans. It's small and round and comes in a variety of colors like red, green, and brown. Lentils are often used in soups and stews.

What color was the stew that Jacob made? Genesis 25:30. Red.

Maybe Jacob used red lentils or maybe he used a special seasoning to make the stew red. The color red is important because we get another name for Esau from it.

What is the other name given for Esau in verse 30? Edom.

Yes. Esau was also called Edom, which means red. And Esau's descendants became known as the Edomites.

Okay. Let's get back to our verses. We see that instead of just giving his brother some food, Jacob decided to take advantage of the situation and

try to get something for himself. What did he ask Esau to sell him for some stew? Genesis 25:31. His birthright.

The birthright was a big deal. It included a double portion of all their father's wealth—flocks and herds, silver and gold, tents, and servants. Don't you think those things are worth more than some lentil stew? Yes. Esau was quite dramatic in verse 32 and said that he was about to die, so his birthright didn't mean anything to him. Do you really think he was about to die? No. Don't you think there was other food around all his father's tents? Yes.

Esau showed he was impatient and wanted to satisfy his hunger more than he cared about his position as the oldest son. So Esau sold his birthright to his younger brother and then ate his meal. He let his sense of smell and desire for food lead to a bad decision.

What did Esau think about his birthright? Look in verse 34. He despised it. What does "despise" mean in this verse? Allow answers.

Slide #13

Despise can mean to dislike something or someone, but in this verse, it means to regard as worthless.

Despise: to regard as worthless

Esau didn't see his birthright as valuable. It was worthless to him so he sold it for some stew.

Notice that after he ate and drank, Esau arose and went his way. This shows that he wasn't remorseful or sad after he sold his birthright. He didn't even care about what he'd lost!

This account shows us the heart of Esau. He cared more about satisfying his earthly desires than about his blessings as the firstborn son. He was impulsive, which means he didn't stop and think about decisions before he made them. Then he wasn't even sorry that he lost his birthright.

We also learn some things about Jacob. He cared about the birthright, but he also took advantage of his brother to get it. Jacob knew about God's prophecy to his mother that the older would serve the younger, but he didn't wait for God to work this out. Instead, he tried to "help" God by getting the birthright himself.

Who else did we learn about who tried to "help" God fulfill his promise? Abraham and Sarah.

Abraham and Sarah tried to fulfill God's promise of a child with Sarah's servant Hagar. This led to Abraham and Hagar having a son named Ishmael, who caused problems in their family. Jacob fell into the same sin of trying to help God. God wants us to trust him and wait for his timing. When we jump ahead and try to do things on our own, we end up sinning. Despite our sin, God will still accomplish his purposes. There will always be consequences, though, when we don't wait for God. We'll see some serious problems develop between Jacob and Esau in our next lesson.

Slide #14

Let's wrap up our Class Notes (PDF). Who will read #7? Assign a reader. Stew. Complete #7.

And #8? What did Esau sell to Jacob for a meal of lentil stew and bread? Assign a reader. Birthright. Complete #8.

Application

Slide #15

Refer to the Lesson Theme Posters. God again showed that he is faithful to fulfill his promises. He answered Isaac's prayer to give him and Rebekah children. They had twin boys—Esau and Jacob.

Which twin was born first? Esau.

Right. As the firstborn, Esau had the birthright, which included a double portion of his father's inheritance and the responsibility to lead the family and make decisions. But Esau cared more about food. After one long day in the field, Esau came home and smelled some delicious stew cooking. Jacob had made the stew, and Esau asked for some.

Instead of giving his brother some stew, Jacob bargained with Esau and asked him to sell his birthright for the food. Esau should've said no because his birthright was worth much more than a bowl of stew, no matter how good it looked and smelled. But Esau let his appetite guide his actions, and he sold his birthright to Jacob.

What word did we learn that means that Esau viewed his birthright as worthless? Despise.

Yes. Esau despised his birthright. So, we see that these two brothers didn't value the same things. Esau cared about hunting and eating while Jacob cared about God's prophecy. They both sinned—Esau by despising his birthright and Jacob by deceiving his brother—but God accomplished his purpose anyway. By giving Jacob the birthright, Esau would one day have to serve him as the leader of their family. The older would serve the younger!

The world tries to get us to want more things by appealing to our senses, such as sight, taste, and smell. Grocery stores pass out free samples to get us to buy things. Commercials on TV show happy people wearing trendy clothes and using cool technology. It all makes us feel like we're missing out if we don't have something. This can lead to jealousy and greed.

Have you ever wanted something that your brother, sister, or friend had? Or something you saw on TV? Does anyone want to share something you really wanted? Allow discussion.

We may even be sneaky, like Jacob, to try to get what we want. Maybe we try to talk Mom and Dad into getting something for us. When we do this,

we can sin and get into trouble. It's best to be content and grateful for what God has given us and let him bring us blessings in his good time. We also have to be careful not to let our senses guide our decisions. We don't want to be like Esau, who let the smell and sight of food lead to a poor decision. But when we do sin, like both Jacob and Esau did, we should be quick to recognize it and ask God for forgiveness. Let's not be like Esau and walk away from sin without caring.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the finish on the Game Board.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams.

Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Medium-sized cardboard box
- Scissors or knife
- Four beanbags
- Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each hole with a point number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

- Review Questions
- One drawing area for each team (paper, white board, etc.)
- Pencils or white board markers
- One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the white board in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they get a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body, as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.



They can draw according to the numbers below:

6 = body

5 = nose

4 = whiskers

3 = eyes

2 = ears

1 = tail

Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

Review Questions

Masking tape

Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

- Review Questions
- Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
- Rolled up socks
- Masking tape
- Ten sheets of paper
- Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Oh No

Not every roll of the dice will be good for the team. Answer the question, roll the dice, and be prepared to say, “Oh no!”

Materials

- Review Questions
- Two dice

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams. Each team will take turns answering review questions. When a team

answers correctly, have them roll the dice to determine their points. If a team does not answer correctly, give the answer and repeat the question later. Keep track of team scores.

Numbers aren't always a winner! If students roll:

- 2 or 3 that team gives 5 points away to the other team
- 4 or 5 that team takes 5 points from the other team
- 6–10 face value
- 11 subtract 10 points from the team score
- 12 double the team score

(Note: no team can have less than 0 points.)

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Small paper strips
- Cup or basket

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Keep track of each team's points. If time allows, repeat the questions!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards
- One beanbag
- Masking tape
- Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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