

## 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. God first promised the Savior to Adam and Eve and then later to Abraham. From Abraham, the promise passed to his son Isaac. But Isaac would also have to have a son to carry on the promise of having many descendants, including the Savior.

Slide #3

Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 39 Theme Poster. In this lesson, we talked about how God provided a wife for Isaac from Abraham's relatives.

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're going to talk about Isaac and Rebekah's children. Their children were important because one of them would receive the promise God had given to Abraham.

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 some items in these cups. I want to see if you can guess what they are only by smelling them. 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.

## God Gives a Prophecy

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

Remember how Abraham and Sarah were very old and couldn't have a child, but God miraculously gave them Isaac? Well, God had to work a miracle for Isaac and Rebekah, too. The Bible tells us that Rebekah couldn't have children, so Isaac prayed and asked God to give them a child. And God answered!

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

God had told Rebekah that she would have twins, and each child would have descendants that would grow to become a nation of people. But one would be stronger than the other, and the older would serve the younger one. This was an important prophecy because back in Isaac's day, the firstborn son was special. After the father died, the firstborn would receive twice as much of everything that belonged to his father, and he would become the leader of the family. The younger brothers and sisters would serve the oldest. But in Isaac's family, God said that the older twin would serve the younger.

#### Slide #5

Let's go to our Class Notes (PDF). Use the word bank to find the answer and put the letters into the crossword puzzle. Who will read #1 and tell us what God did for Isaac and Rebekah? Assign a reader. Twin. Complete #1. Who will read #2 and tell us what God said? Assign a reader. Younger. Complete #2.

### **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 #6

Let's read what Isaac and Rebekah's twins were like. Did they look the same or different? Who will read Genesis 25:24–26? Assign readers.

Encourage your students to bring their Bibles to class. If appropriate, have them read the lesson Scriptures.

So, what did Esau, the older twin, look like? Red and hairy.

Yes! He doesn't sound like a very cute baby, does he? His parents named him Esau. Guess what his name means. Allow guesses.

Esau means "the hairy one."

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

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

#### Slide #7

What does it mean to deceive? Allow guesses. To make someone believe something that is not true.

Deceive: to make someone believe something that is not true  
We'll see how this name really fits when we read about how Jacob tries to get 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 #8

Let's fill in some things about the twins on our Class Notes (PDF). Who will read #3 and give us the name of the twin who was red and hairy? Assign a reader. Esau. Complete #3.

And #4? What was Jacob doing when he was born? Assign a reader. Heel. Complete #4.

And who will read #5? What did Esau like to do as he grew up? Assign a reader. Hunt. Complete #5.

What about Jacob? Will someone read #6? Assign a reader. Home. Complete #6.

### **Esau Despises His Birthright**

Sadly, as the twins grew, Isaac and Rebekah made a mistake by picking favorites. The Bible tells us that 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.

Plus, as the oldest son, Esau would get twice as much of his father's wealth and become the head of the family when his father died. That was his birthright.

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. So let's read and see what happened.

We're going to divide into teams before I read the next part. Each team needs to listen very closely as I read because I'm going to ask questions about these verses, and we'll keep score to see which team can answer the most questions. Divide the class into teams.

Genesis 25:29–34

Slide #9

Slide #10

OK. Everyone turn to Genesis 25. Follow along and listen carefully as I read verses 29–34. Read the passage.

I'm going to give each team a bell (or buzzer). When I ask the question, each team needs to figure out the answer and ring the bell. Whoever rings the bell first and gives the correct answer will earn one point for his team. If you don't give me the correct answer, the other team will have a chance to answer. Give

each team a bell or buzzer. Ask the following questions, allowing the teams to look for answers in the Bible passage. Record the scores for each team.

Are you ready? Remember, you can look in the Bible verses we just read. Here we go. What was Jacob doing when Esau came in from the field? Cooking.

Jacob was cooking when Esau came in. What do you think Esau was doing in the field? We said Esau was a skilled what? Hunter.

Right! Esau was a hunter, so he probably just came back from trying to shoot something to eat.

OK. Next question. How did Esau feel when he came in from the field? Weary. Tired.

When Esau returned, he was tired and hungry. What did he smell cooking when he got home? Jacob's stew.

Yes! He smelled something delicious! Have you ever been really hungry and came home to smell your favorite meal cooking? Well, that's how Esau felt. After a long day outdoors, all he wanted was a good meal. His stomach was probably growling. And when he came near the tent, he smelled the stew.

And that's the next question: What kind of stew did Jacob cook? Lentil stew.

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 different colors—red, green, and brown. Lentils are often used in soups and stews.

Next question: What color was the stew that Jacob made? Red.

Jacob might have 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.

And that's the next question: What is the other name given for Esau because he wanted the red stew? Edom.

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

Are you ready for the next question? Instead of just giving his brother some food, Jacob decided to use this moment to get something for himself. What did he ask Esau to sell him for some stew? His birthright.

Yes. Remember, the birthright was a big deal. Whoever had the birthright, usually the oldest son, would get twice as much of all his 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?

OK. Here's another question. Esau was quite dramatic. He said he was so hungry he was about to do what? Die.

Do you really think he was about to die? Raise your hand if you've ever said something like that? Show of hands.

Don't you think there was other food in his father's tents? There probably was. Esau showed that he was impatient and that satisfying his hunger was more important to him than his position as the oldest son.

Next question: what did Esau do with his birthright to get some stew? Sold his birthright to Jacob.

Right. 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.

Here's the last question: Look in verse 34. What did Esau think about his birthright? He despised it.

Good job! Let's see how you did. Add up scores and announce the winning team. Have students return to their original seats.

So Esau despised his birthright. Think about what just happened. Who can tell me what "despise" means in verse 34? Allow answers.

#### Slide #11

Despise can mean to dislike something or someone. But in this verse, it means to think of something as worthless.

Despise: to think of something as worthless

Esau didn't see his birthright as something very valuable; it was worthless to him. And so he sold it for some stew. Notice that after he ate and drank, Esau arose and went his way. He wasn't even sad about selling 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 desire of filling his stomach than about his blessings as the firstborn son. He didn't stop to think about decisions before he made them. And 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 for himself.

Who else tried to "help" God fulfill his promise? Do you remember?  
Abraham and Sarah.

That's right. Abraham and Sarah tried to fulfill God's promise of a child with Sarah's servant Hagar. This caused some real problems. Jacob fell into the same sin of trying to help God.

Would God rather have us try to help him or just trust him to fulfill his promises when it's the right time? Just trust him.

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 like Jacob. But even though we sin, God is faithful and will still accomplish his purposes. There will always be consequences, or bad things that happen, when we don't wait for God. We'll see some serious problems arise between Jacob and Esau in our next lesson.

#### Slide #12

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 #13

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 amount of his father's wealth and the responsibility to lead the family and make decisions. But Esau cared more about food. After one long day outdoors, Esau came home and smelled some delicious stew cooking. Jacob had made the stew, and Esau asked for some.

Instead of just giving his brother some stew, Jacob asked Esau 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 just wanted to eat, and he sold his birthright to Jacob.

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

Yes. Esau despised his birthright. So, we see that these two brothers didn't think the same things were important. Esau cared about hunting and eating while Jacob cared about God's prophecy. They both sinned—Esau despised his birthright and didn't care about it, and Jacob tried to make God's promises happen on his own. 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 son would serve the younger!

The world tries to get us to want more things by appealing to our senses like sight, taste, and smell. Have you ever eaten free samples in a grocery

store? Why do they pass those out? Allow discussion. They want you to buy some.

How about commercials on TV? Why do you think they show happy people wearing trendy clothes and using cool technology? Allow discussion.

It all makes us feel like we're missing out if we don't have something. It makes us feel like we need to get some of it, doesn't it? We have to be very careful because 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 tell about something you really wanted? Allow discussion.

We may even try to be sneaky, like Jacob, 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.

Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets (PDF) and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

We have to be careful not to let our senses guide our decisions. It's much better to be content and thankful for what God has given us, and let him bring us blessings in his good time. We don't want to be like Esau, who let the smell and sight of food lead to a bad decision. But when we do sin, like both Jacob and Esau did, we need to 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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