

Lesson 2 – 9 May 2010

Esau, a Profane Man

Lesson Scope: [Genesis Chapters 25-28 and 36](#)

Lesson Focus

Esau and Jacob were twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, Esau being the firstborn.

These sons were born into a family of special privilege. God had called and chosen this family to be a blessing to the whole world. Their grandfather, Abraham, and their father, Isaac, both served a covenant-keeping God. The family was wealthy and had many servants. This provided the sons with the time and means to pursue their lifestyle of choice.

Esau and Jacob were quite different from the very beginning in appearance, goals, attitudes, and spiritual interest. Before they were born, God had declared that the elder would serve the younger (Genesis 25:23). This was not the usual practice, but each of them followed the path that God knew, he would. Esau despised the birthright and lost the blessing, thereby becoming an example and a type of an earthly-minded man. God never forces a man to serve Him.

Those who lightly esteem spiritual things lose present and spiritual blessings. Earthly priorities lead in a downward course away from God. Rebellion lies within the heart of every human! The child of God needs to deal with this issue when changing circumstances call for submission and brokenness. Rebellion is so foolish. Some men flaunt their independence before the unchanging laws of Almighty God. They are brazen in their open defiance, sowing with no expectation of reaping. Other men are like Esau—indifferent and uninterested in spiritual things. Living a simple, godly life holds no appeal. Having a good time, enjoying all the latest technology, and making lots of money are some of their all-consuming passions. We live in perilous days. We will never lead our churches and families heavenward by taking a casual, indifferent approach to the threats and influences of our day. Truth will stand. No rebellion of man can change it. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption."

Lesson Aim: To see traits of an earthly-minded person.

Theme Verse [1 Corinthians 2:14](#).

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Lesson Text

The Carnal Sowing

[Genesis 25:21](#)

And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

[Genesis 25:23](#)

And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

[Genesis 25:27-34](#)

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man, dwelling in tents. ²⁸And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

²⁹And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: ³⁰And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. ³¹And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. ³²And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? ³³And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. ³⁴Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright.

[Genesis 26:34-35](#)

And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: ³⁵Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah.

The Bitter Reaping

Genesis 27:30

And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

Genesis 27:34-36

And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, *even* me also, O my father. ³⁵And he said, Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing. ³⁶And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?

Genesis 27:41

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob.

Genesis 28:6-9

When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; ⁷And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram; ⁸And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; ⁹Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

Questions for Study

The Carnal Sowing

1. In what ways did Esau express his earthly-mindedness?
2. Why did despising the birthright have such serious results?
How can we avoid the snares of impulsive behavior and unwise choices?
4. How can we safeguard our families from casual? carnal sowing?

The Bitter Reaping

5. What prompted Esau's great and exceeding bitter cry?
6. How did Isaac respond to Esau's earnest request for a blessing?
7. How can parents bless unfaithful children?

8. Does carnal sowing always result in bitter reaping? Explain.
9. Enumerate some blessings that come as the result of careful sowing.

Analyzing the Passage

Esau, meaning "hairy or rough," was "a man of the field" an outdoorsman who enjoyed the challenge of hunting. He seems to have been restless in spirit. Jacob, meaning "heel catcher or supplanter," was a plain (pious, gentle) man who was content to live in tents. Both men knew how to prepare food. Isaac loved Esau's savoury meat. Jacob's pottage became the bargaining medium in helping him to obtain the birthright. Esau was an impulsive man. This is revealed in the events surrounding his fruitless hunting trip and in his choice of wives. He lightly regarded parental concerns and direction. He relinquished the special privileges of the firstborn in order to satisfy his personal desires.

"The birthright gave the eldest son special privileges and responsibilities—leadership in the family and a double portion of the inheritance. The blessing was the pronouncement of God's blessing and a passing on of the patriarchal responsibilities. The birthright and the blessing belonged together. Esau's desire for the blessing seems to be an interest in personal benefits, not a change of spiritual values.

Principles and Applications

The Carnal Sowing

1. An earthly mind often expresses itself in a restless, competitive life style (Gen.25:27).

Establishing and maintaining family togetherness does not just happen. It is the result of choosing a godly, simple way of life that is uncluttered by the world's way of thinking, entertainment, and lifestyle. We need to guard against stirring the interests and desires of our children and youth for the lavish, the exciting, the "you can do it too" mindset that comes through the magazines and promotions that show up in our mailboxes. Affluence has opened the door for us to participate in what the world terms a good time, an exciting experience, a "must see," a "must do," and a "must have" lifestyle. We must establish guidelines and set limits that are based upon Scriptural principles in order to safeguard our own lives and the future of our children in these perilous last days.

2. The earthly minded allow feelings and circumstances to dictate a hasty

response (Gen.25:29-33).

At times it is good to stop and evaluate our actions with some personal questions. Why is it so easy for me to leave lily home and go shopping? Why is it easier to spend money for a holiday trip or an extra on the vehicle than to share in the brotherhood assistance offering? Do our children expect French fries, hamburger and a drink every time they go some distance from home? Careful stewardship, self-denial, and thoughtful planning will enable us to be victorious over our earthly-minded tendencies.

3. The earthly-minded place a wrong value on the material and temporal (Gen.25:32).

Frugality, hard work, and careful management often result in abundance. How this is managed and dispersed affects eternal destinies. Keeping kingdom interests first will enable us to communicate the value of laying up treasure in heaven. Leaving large inheritances to our children has the potential of becoming the downfall of the next generation. Our children will know where our interests were focused. They tend to follow the same path. Will it be Safe?

4. The earthly-minded go on in life without realizing the full consequences of daily choices (Gen.25:34).

Choices determine a course of travel. Routines are formed and habits are established that form the foundation upon which one's life is built. Rising early to spend time with God in meditation and prayer will enable one to make God-directed choices. One does not need to stumble through life pursuing useless experimentation.

5. The earthly minded associate with the ungodly (Gen.26:34).

Parents set the standard in determining or allowing this exposure. Our sons and daughters are treasures, priceless treasures. Allowing unsupervised shopping, excursions or allowing them to frequent the local corner store or eating places will expose them to temptations that bring a bitter harvest. The moral tone of society is seductive and destructive. Be careful: be wise!

6. The choices of the earthly-minded bring grief to godly parents (Gen.26:34-35).

Children become adults who need and seek companionship. They usually find companions with interests similar to their own. Parents, work while

the day of opportunity is at hand, lest your neglect bring on a dark night of regret and sorrow.

The Bitter Reaping

7. The earthly minded realise their loss after it is too late (Gen.27:34).

Some choices we make bring consequences that follow us all through life. Wrong choices often limit our usefulness in the church. All wrong choices leave their mark, a scar that reminds us of our folly. We cannot undo the past, but by God's grace, we can receive forgiveness and cleansing, thereby escaping eternal reaping for our sin.

8. The earthly-minded attempt to make amends, yet do not repent. (Gen. 28:6-9)

Making superficial changes to please people does not change anyone's condition in God's sight. Self remains on the throne in the earthly-minded person's life. True repentance is the only remedy.

Important Teachings

1. An earthly mind often expresses itself in a restless, competitive lifestyle. (Gen.25:27).
2. The earthly-minded allow feelings and circumstances to dictate a hasty response. (Gen.25:29-33).
3. The earthly-minded place a wrong value on the material and temporal (Gen.25:32).
4. The earthly-minded go on in life without realizing the full consequences of daily choices. (Gen.25:34).
5. The earthly-minded associate with the ungodly (Gen.26:34).
6. The choices of the earthly-minded bring grief to godly parents. (Gen.26:34, 35).
7. The earthly-minded realize their loss after it is too late (Gen.27:34).
8. The earthly-minded attempt to make amends, yet do not repent. (Gen.28:6-9).

Answers to Questions

1. In what ways did Esau express his earthly-mindedness?

Isaac's flocks and herds provided ample food for the family, but Esau reveled in the challenge and excitement of the chase after wild game. He chose to satisfy his appetite at the cost of greater values. He had no interest in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the firstborn. He chose

heathen wives against the wishes of his parents.

2. Why did despising the birthright have such serious results? Despising his birthright precluded God's blessing on Esau's life. God's covenant blessings went instead to Jacob.

3. How can we avoid the snares of impulsive behavior and unwise choices? We must understand our inherent weakness. We must listen to the voice of those who have more experience; decisions that brought heartache and sorrow to others will likely do the same to us. Confess and repent of your failures. Seek God's wisdom and strength.

4. How can we safeguard our families from casual, carnal sowing? Maintain a simple, godly way of life. Stay close to them. Talk to them and answer their questions. Stay involved. Keep your eyes open. Discuss the reasons why some things are wrong. Share some of your own experiences. Do not expect them to learn the hard way. Do not allow them more freedom than they can handle. Hold them responsible for the choices they make.

5. What prompted Esau's great and exceeding bitter cry?

There was no hope of regaining what he had carelessly cast aside. Coupled with this was the realization that things could have been different.

6. How did Isaac respond to Esau's earnest request for a blessing?

Isaac basically told Esau, "I have blessed Jacob. What is done cannot be undone." ("Yea, and he shall be blessed.") He also gave Esau a prophetic look at himself, showing where his lifestyle and choices would end. He also assured him of God's goodness in sending His rain on the just and unjust, satisfying the wicked and the righteous with good and fruitful seasons.

7. How can parents bless unfaithful children?

They bless them by remaining faithful to the truth. They maintain communication if possible. They continue to pray for them and assure them of their love.

8. Does carnal sowing always result in bitter reaping? Explain.

Yes. Parents are not perfect, but all should be careful. Hindsight often emphasizes the fact that we could have done better. Grandparents, share your concerns and experience. You may spare someone the bitter tears you have shed and the heartaches that come when sons and daughter walk away from God, the church, and the home.

9. Enumerate some blessings that come as the result of careful sowing. God blesses careful sowing with strong, mature youth who have settled convictions. Homes are godly and content. Church life and school life are not hindered by negative peer pressure. God provides a safe way through the moral quicksands of our time.

Summarizing the Lesson

Do you love the world, in its pomp and show?
In its course of sin will you onward go?
Is the pride of life more than heaven above?
Will you lose your soul for the sins you love?
Do you love the world"? Is it dear to thee?
Can it help thy soul in eternity?
Will you choose its way more than godly fear
Sealing thus your doom, when the Lord is near?

B. Elliott Warren

Research Guide

Reflect and ponder the lifestyles and choices of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21). The rich man (Luke 16:19-31). The prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) And Demas (2 Timothy 4:10).