

Sunday June 3rd 2012
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Forty Seven

1). Heb 11:20 *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. 21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff. 22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.*

a). We had last week completed our brief study of the panoramic picture given to us in Genesis Chapters 21-25 which had been introduced to us through the reference to Abraham's faith with regards to his offering of Isaac in Hebrews 11:17.

b). And we had seen that the faith Abraham had, the kind of faith equated with the saving of the soul, was founded in God's promise to him concerning a land and an inheritance and his descendants – a promise that has its beginnings in - Ge 12:1 ¶ *Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." 7 Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.*

c). And also Abraham's faith was founded on the statement God had made in - Ge 21:12 *But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.*

d). Abraham at this point had 2 sons, Ishmael who was the oldest who was born of the flesh to the bondwoman Hagar and Isaac, born of the Spirit to the freewoman Sarah – And it is only to him born of the Spirit that the inheritance is promised – 'in Isaac your seed shall be called'. The one born of the flesh can have no inheritance – as it is in the natural so it is in the spiritual Ga 4:30 *Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."*

e). Ga 4:28 *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise.*

f). It is then by believing God with respect to an inheritance connected to the city with foundations whose builder and maker is God, an inheritance to be received at a time beyond the end of his life, that would come through a specific strand of his lineage that Abraham's faith is commended – He had the gospel concerning the justification of the Gentiles by faith preached to him and as a result knowing the prophetic significance of the events surrounding the birth, offering and resurrection of Isaac he knew that in Isaac his seed would be called and that this seed did not refer just to Isaac alone, but was the Seed that takes us back to the Garden and forward to Christ - Ga 3:16 *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ.*

g). Abraham would have known and therefore believed, that only through Christ, his Seed, the promised Seed of the Woman, would his physical descendants through Isaac and Jacob receive the promised inheritance and only through Christ that the Gentiles would be justified by faith - Ga 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

h). The beginning of Genesis Chapter 25 brought us to the picture of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham's physical descendants – the Children of Israel in repentance, cleansed and returned to the land of their inheritance in order to be fruitful - Ge 25:1 ¶ *Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.*

i). Here then, presented in a type, is the very fulfillment of that which God had promised Abraham with respect to his physical descendants, confirmed to him through the birth of 6 children, born to him when he was well over 130 years old.

2). And it is with respect to this same promise within the same Kingdom context that we see Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau 'concerning things to come'.

a). We will remember that God had said to Isaac - Ge 26:2 *Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 "And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 "because*

Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

b). Isaac blessed both his sons and both blessings had to do with 'things to come' – their status within the Kingdom in the 7th Day, that future time when God's promises would be brought to fulfillment.

c). Now, although both Jacob and Esau received a blessing in respect of this future time, the blessing they received was markedly different; one being uniquely superior to the other. And that which they received is in no small way connected to that which the scriptures have to say about them –
Ge 25:24 So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. 25 And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. 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.

d). Esau receives his name because of his description at birth – he was red and like a hairy garment – the name Esau having to do with being rough to the touch.

e). The name Jacob literally means 'heel catcher' and although we will often see this name interpreted as 'supplanter' it also can mean to restrain by holding the heel and as a derivative has the idea of taking the place of another as a substitute.

f). And we will of course remember that God changes the name of both Esau and Jacob at later points in the Genesis account – Esau becoming Edom and Jacob, Israel.

g). At the time of their birth of course Esau is the eldest and therefore the one in line to receive the blessing given to the firstborn.

h). The scriptures then continue, after the description of their birth, to give us more information about Jacob and Esau as they grow - *Ge 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.*

i). And as we look at this verse I am sure we can see the contrast – Esau was a skillful hunter, compared with Jacob, who was a mild man. Esau is a man of the field, compared to Jacob who dwells in tents.

j). And these contrasts of course are not without significance. In the skillful hunter we may well hear echoes of Nimrod who was a mighty hunter before the Lord. The field in scripture is used as a picture of the world –
Mt 13:38 "The field is the world....."

So Esau being a man of the field would be a man associated with the world, a worldly man, fleshly, carnal be nature. Jacob on the other hand is described as a mild man – the word ‘mild’ meaning upright, undefiled, righteous. And Jacob lives in tents, the very same description that we see given to Abraham denoting the fact that he considered himself a stranger and a pilgrim upon the earth, because of his focus on that which was to come. And so to put this simply we see that Esau is conformed to the things of this world with his focus in the present whereas Jacob looks beyond the present to the age to come. Then to make this more simple still – Esau is a picture of the first birth, the man of the flesh and Jacob the second birth, the man of the spirit.

3). The contrast between these two is also continued through their attitude towards the rights of the firstborn - Ge 25:29 ¶ *Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. 31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

a). Now there are several things that we should note here – the birthright did belong to Esau as the firstborn and this birthright had to do with inheritance and rulership in the age to come, and we must realize that Esau was fully aware of what was involved in this birthright, as it would be impossible for him to despise that which he didn't know about. And we might remember from last week that the word ‘despised’ means to consider it to be of no value, to be worthless.

b). Esau saw no value in that which lay out ahead beyond his lifetime when compared to the immediate need of his hunger. The gratification of his flesh in the present therefore was of significantly more importance to him than a promise that remained in the future – to despise the birthright is to despise the One who promised with respect to it. That which lay out ahead could only be seen by faith, but the man of the flesh cannot see that which is only spiritually discerned – it is within this context, the selling of his birthright, that we see Esau become Edom; a name that is a derivative of Adam and literally means to be flushed with blood; and this must bring two things to mind – Adam as fallen man and the life/soul being in the blood. Here then is a picture of fallen man with an entirely soulical nature.

c). We must also note that Jacob does not trick Esau out of his birthright; the scripture clearly says that Esau 'sold his birthright to Jacob' – this was then a legal transaction that was confirmed by the swearing of an oath.

d). We could understand this transaction by thinking about us if we buy a house. The house belongs to the person who is selling it. It is entirely theirs to sell or not sell as they choose. Once having sold it however the house no longer belongs to them, the ownership has changed. They could not come back a year later and say the house should still be theirs because it isn't; there is a legal agreement that says so. And this is exactly how it is with Esau's birthright.

e). Now having said all of that the thing we must really grasp here as most important above all else is that Esau discards that which is of infinite value for a plate of stew. And that which is given in this picture can also be the experience of Christians and even those Christians who understand the Word of the Kingdom, who choose to live according to their carnal nature, who put their own wants and desires before the things of God – Heb 12:14 *Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 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.*

f). It is this very thing that is the subject of the fifth and final warning in Hebrews and I really don't want to get into the details of this before we get to Chapter 12, but suffice it to say that the warning shows us that we can despise our birthright by putting our own wants and desires first by not pursuing peace and holiness, by falling short of the grace of God, by allowing a root of bitterness to spring up that defiles many, by being friends with the world and walking after the flesh – and should this be our constant practice then we will have given up that which is of infinite value for the gratification of our flesh in the present.

g). Once again - Ga 4:30 *Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.*

h). Ro 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* [only those who God regards as sons can be adopted as firstborn sons]

4). Ge 27:1 ¶ *Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." 2 Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. 3 "Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. 4 "And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die." 5 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. 6 ¶ So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 7 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' 8 "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. 9 "Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. 10 "Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." 11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. 12 "Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."*

a). And so we come to the account of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau – this is the blessing to be given before his death and is the blessing connected to the rights of the firstborn, the birthright.

b). Now it appears from our scripture that Isaac is planning to bestow the blessing connected to the birthright upon Esau, but having sold his birthright because he considered it of no value this is a blessing that Esau cannot receive – he cannot be blessed as the firstborn as he had forfeited the rights to that blessing and that position within the family. This was a blessing that now belonged exclusively to Jacob.

c). Rebekah's actions and Jacob's compliance are then seen as the means by which Jacob receives that which is rightfully his.

d). Although, at Rebekah's instigation there is an apparent deception we will also note that there is no record in the scripture of any condemnation of Rebekah's and Jacob's actions. And the reason for this would have to be because of what the events here picture; providing us with a type of that which is to be fulfilled in Christ.

e). We will remember what the scriptures record concerning Christ at His first advent – Ro 8:3 *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

f). Php 2:8 *And being found in appearance as a man.....*

g). Esau, as we have seen, has his name changed to Edom, a derivative of Adam and Jacob replaces the one who is a picture of fallen Adam, just as Christ is seen doing exactly the same thing in - 1Co 15:47 *The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.*

h). Christ is 'the second man' and He is also 'the last Adam' and just as Adam pictured things concerning Christ, so does Jacob.

i). And there would be a number of secondary applications that could be taken from Jacob's actions that would teach things concerning Israel and the church.

j). Suffice it to say that the picture given here is most instructive and most important.

5). We must always remember that from God's perspective that associated with the inheritance that comes through the birthright given to the firstborn is of an importance that is impossible to adequately quantify - it still remains the 'so great a salvation' and it must not be taken lightly - Mt 16:26 *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

6). And so we come to the blessing that Isaac gives to Jacob - Ge 27:27 *And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son Is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed. 28 Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!"*

a). We will remember from our opening scripture this morning that Isaac gives this blessing 'by faith', and he does this concerning 'things to come'. He is prophetically looking to the day when the descendants of Jacob, the nation of Israel, repentant and restored receive the rights only given to a firstborn son - the day is coming when God will give that nation 'the dew of heaven', they will have 'the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine'. In that day 'peoples will serve' Israel and 'nations will bow down to' them. And within Israel as a nation there will be a hierarchy with regards to the individual tribes based upon the firstborn status - 'Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you'. And this is a theme repeated more than once.

b). Ge 9:27 *May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant."*

c). Ge 37:7 *"There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."*

d). Isaac's blessing pictures the same thing we see in Melchizedek blessing Abraham after the battle with the kings.

e). And we would also see in this a picture of Christ in that Day when God the Father blesses Him and gives Him the nations of the earth as His inheritance.

7). Following this blessing given to Jacob, Esau returns - Ge 27:32 *And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." 33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him-and indeed he shall be blessed." 34 When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me-me also, O my father!" 35 But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." 36 And Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" 37 Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?" 38 And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me-me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, And of the dew of heaven from above. 40 By your sword you shall live, And you shall serve your brother; And it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck."*

a). It is now in this moment that Esau realizes the value of that which he has lost forever by his own volition and although he lifted up his voice and wept and cried out 'Bless me – me also, O my father' his father cannot give back to him that which he had deliberately cast away - *"Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"*

b). And here, for ourselves, we have a most poignant picture of the Judgment Seat when those Christians who have despised their birthright cry out to their Father to bless them after the same fashion as those who are

adopted as firstborn sons, only to find that no such blessing is to be given them. This is the same picture that the Lord gives in - Mt 7:21 ¶ *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*

c). There is a blessing for Esau as we see in Genesis 27:39-40, but it is much inferior to that given to Jacob and portrays the relationship that will exist between the descendants of Esau and the descendants of Jacob during the Millennial Kingdom.

d). Jacob laid claim to that which Esau despised and was blessed as the firstborn son, just as God had told Rebekah he would be, and it is of course this same Jacob who wrestles with God for a blessing and is given a new name as a result - Ge 32:24 ¶ *Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" 27 So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." 28 And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. 30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved."*

e). And the name that Jacob is given, Israel, as we will remember means, 'he who will rule with God'.

8). And here we will stop for this week.