

## ESAU WAS GODLESS

**“See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son. Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. He could bring about no change of mind, though he sought the blessing with tears.” (Heb 12:16-17)**

Two facts emerge from this passage that provide insight into Esau. (1) He despised his birthright and sold it for a single meal. (2) He wanted to inherit the blessing and sought it diligently with tears.

First let us consider Esau’s right as the firstborn son. In the age of the patriarchs the father served as a priest for his family. Noah, Job, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all built altars and made sacrifices for their families. Consider, for example the ministry of Job regarding his children. **“Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, ‘Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.’ This was Job's regular custom.” (Job 1:5).** When the patriarch died, this privilege was passed on to the oldest son. This inheritance right involved being a priest for the family and devoting your life to spiritual things. Esau wasn’t interested at all in being a priest and sold that privilege for a mess of pottage.

The “blessing” by contrast, did not directly involve spiritual things at all. The focus of the blessing involved the things of earth. Here is the blessing Jacob stole from Esau: **“May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness — an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.” (Gen 27:28-29).**

While Esau despised his birthright, he sought the blessing with tears. When he realized that his brother had stolen his blessing . . . **“Esau said to his father, ‘Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!’ Then Esau wept aloud” (Gen 27:38).** These tears are a testimony to how godless Esau actually was. This hardened hunter, who could brave the heat and cold of the wilderness, wept out loud like a baby over the tinsel trinkets of earth. Every aspect of the “blessing” was temporal. Within a few short years Esau would die and leave behind every aspect of the “blessing”. The birthright, by contrast, would enable him to lay up treasure in heaven where moth and rust cannot corrupt and where thieves cannot break through and steal.

This passage in Hebrews prepares the way for a similar contrast between Jewish worship and Christian worship. Jewish worship involved physical things and Christian worship involved the spiritual. (See Heb. 12: 18 - 29)

Mt. Sinai was a physical mountain that could be touched. The fire, darkness, gloom, and storm were physical things that could be experienced by the five senses. The trumpet blast could be heard by human ears and the whole experience was so terrifying that even Moses trembled with fear.

Christianity, by contrast, involved spiritual reality that could not be experienced by the five senses. These spiritual realities include Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, thousands upon thousands of angels, the church of the firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven, God the Judge of all, the spirits of just men made perfect, and Jesus Himself whose blood cried out for mercy not revenge.

The late Jim Elliott grasped the significance of this contrast and said: “He is no fool who gives up the things he cannot keep to gain the things he cannot lose”

So - **“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” (Heb 12:15)**