

ESAU

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Christians can have doubts and question things and sometimes there does not seem to be an answer. I have heard Christians say, God, that is unfair.

Esau was the firstborn of twins born to Isaac and Rebekah. He was born first with red hair. He became the ancestor of the people of Edom. At his birth, Jacob's hand was holding Esau's foot or heel which some have surmised was an intention to be his father's heir. Esau's name means hairy or rough.

Many years later, after returning from a hunting trip, Esau came home hungry and exhausted. Jacob was cooking and Esau begged for some sustenance. Cunning Jacob said he would give his brother some food in exchange for his birthright. Esau was so exhausted that he agreed.

The rights of the firstborn were important since it meant authority over the family. Esau was wrong to sell his birthright even if he was famished. The birthright should have meant more to him.

Helped by mother, Jacob pretended to be Esau and went into his elderly father and received the blessing due to the firstborn. Esau was understandably angry and wanted to kill Jacob.

Rebekah sent Jacob to Paran where he stayed for twenty years. In this time, Esau became wealthy and had an army of 400 men. On Jacob's return home, Esau forgave Jacob. In all of this, Jacob behaved very badly and Esau was the victim and expressed forgiveness but perhaps it was feelings of remorse rather than repentance.

Was Esau truly forgiving?

In Hebrews 12:16 we read that he was profane and sold his birthright for a morsel of food and he was rejected finding no place for repentance although he sought this with tears. The word profane means to treat with irreverence or contempt, to debase by a wrong attitude or action.

Edom became an enemy of Israel frustrating their journey into Canaan and continuing hostility towards Israel hence the judgment pronounced against them by Obadiah.

Esau married first when he was forty two. These were Hittite women, Judith and Basemath and these marriages were against his parents wishes and Esau also married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. With the Ishmaelites, Esau drove out the Horites from Mount Seir. He was probably the progenitor of the Kenizzites, who were mentioned in the covenant God made with Abraham, and the Amalekites. Amalek was Esau's grandson. When Isaac had died, Esau had taken his wives, children and servants with his livestock to Mount Seir.

It is estimated that the twins were born in 2006 BC and Jacob died at 147 years of age in 1859 BC. It is also said that Esau died about the same time protesting at the burial of Jacob. Jacob was to be buried in the cave of Machpelah but Esau protested saying that this was his burial ground. Hushin attacked Esau with a club and he died. This is the traditional story.

Jacob's son, Joseph, officiated at the funeral of Jacob and then went back to Egypt.

In Malachi chapter 1, the people question God's love saying, You loved Jacob but hated Esau. The general acceptance of this is that by comparison the Lord preferred Jacob but the Lord goes on to

say that Edom will lay waste and if it is rebuilt God will bring it down. The Lord said that people will call it a wicked country.

The epistle to the Romans also speaks of God's love for Jacob and the hatred for Esau.

Consider all the trouble resulting from the behaviour of the twins Esau and Jacob and how their parents were not without some blame.

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