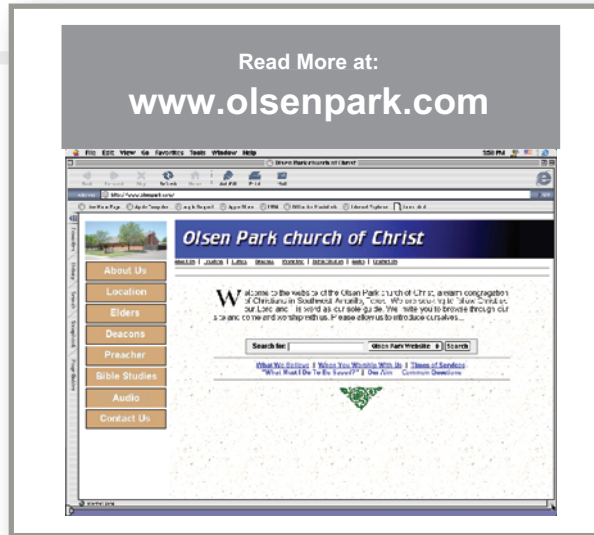


The Carnality of Esau (Cont. from pg. 3) better blessing and Esau received the lesser (27:11-40). When Esau learned of this, “Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob.”” (27:41). It is a carnal soul indeed that will allow jealousy of a brother to lead to murder! Although his attitude softened as the years passed (33:8- 16), his hatred was but another example of a weak heart that was controlled by the flesh.

By Kyle Pope



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Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.
10:20 a.m.
6:00 p.m.
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

Elders:

Ken Ford
Charles Kelley
Pat Ledbetter

Deacons:

Dean Bowers
Eddie Cook
Bill Davis
Pat Goguen
Neil Ledbetter
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The Carnality of Esau

Jesus' statement, in his own domestic needs Matthew 26:41 aptly (25:29,30). Many a describes the character Christian man has found demonstrated by the Old Testament patriarch Esau: outdoor recreation. There indeed, his *flesh was weak*. Let us consider spending time outdoors how Esau's tragic fishing, hunting or camp-carnality was shown in ing. Yet, sadly far too the choices he made in many men, like Esau, have allowed their love of "the field" to lead them to neglect their relationship with their wife, their responsibilities in the home or their duty to God.

“A man of the field.”

Genesis 25:27 tells us that Esau was “a skillful hunter, a man of the field” (NKJV). While this “outdoorsman” lifestyle endeared him to his father (25:26), it also left him unmindful of his parents wishes (28:8) and unprepared to attend to

“What is this birth-right to me?”

Esau's neglect of his own domestic provision led to one of the (Cont. on pg. 2)

The Carnality of Esau (Cont. from pg. 1) most flagrant demonstrations of his temporal and carnal view of life. Scripture tells us that Esau, on one occasion after coming in from the field was weary and pleaded with Jacob to give him some lentil stew which he had cooked (25:29-30). Jacob took advantage of the situation and told Esau that he would give him of the stew if he would sell him his birthright for it (25:31). Esau responded, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?” (25:32).

In ancient times, the birthright of the firstborn was very significant. Tablets from the Mesopotamian city of Nuzi, contemporary with the patriarchs, record that the firstborn was entitled to a double portion of the inheritance (*The Ancient Near East*, James B.Pritchard, Vol. 1, pg. 168). The same practice was in place when the Law was given (Deut. 21:17). Esau was willing to surrender



Cuneiform tablet from Nuzi dating to the time of the Patriarchs

his greater portion of the inheritance for a bowl of stew! The Hebrew writer calls Esau a “profane person” (Heb. 12:16) for making such a choice, using the Greek word *bebelos*, which refers to the “unhallowed” and “common” (Thayer). How many people, like Esau, have allowed their own unwillingness to delay gratification to lead them to fornication, lust and immorality? How many have sold away an eternal inheritance to fulfill the fleeting desires of the flesh?

“He took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.” Although the distinction and segregation of Jews from Gentiles did not exist until after the giving of the Law, the character of Canaanite women led Abraham’s offspring to return to Haran to find wives from their Mesopotamian

disregarded this practice and married Hittite women in Canaan (26:34). This was “a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah” (26:35).

Scripture makes it clear that Canaanites throughout history were immoral and idolatrous. When the Israelites conquered Canaan they were not to intermarry with Canaanite women lest their hearts be turned to idolatry (Deut. 7:3-4). Esau’s interests were shortsighted and carnal. His choices set the stage that would produce the idolatrous Edomite nation which descended from him (2 Chron. 25:14). Few choices influence our spiritual life more than our choice of mate. This choice can unite us with an encouraging partner on our journey to heaven, or bind us to an ever present source of temptation to turn from the Lord.

“I will kill my brother Jacob.” Although Esau had already surrendered

his birthright, he still hoped to receive a good blessing from his father. The blessings given by a patriarch to their children were more than just statements of best wishes, they were binding declarations of the child’s status in the family. Cyrus Gordon called them “irrevocable last wills and testaments” (“Biblical Customs and the Nuzu Tablets”, *Biblical Archaeologist*, III.1 (Feb. 1940), 1-12).



The Jabbok River near where Jacob & Esau met upon Jacob's return

In addition to this they were also prophetic in nature. The inspired patriarch declared what God revealed to him about his offspring (e.g. Gen. 49). Before birth God had told Rebekah “the older [Esau] shall serve the younger [Jacob]” (25:23). This knowledge may have motivated her, as Isaac succumbed to age, to instruct Jacob to deceive his father into thinking he was Esau in order to receive the better blessing (27:6-10). Jacob did as his mother instructed, and Isaac gave Jacob the (Cont. on pg. 4)