

Esau Married the Daughter of Ishmael, in Addition to the Wives He Already Had

28: 6-9

DIG: Upon hearing of his father's preferences for a suitable mate, what does Esau do here? Do two wrong wives make a third one right? What does the Bible continue to point out about Esau and his decisions? What does this tell us about the relationship between Ishmael and Isaac?

REFLECT: Do you renounce sin in your life when you find it? Or do you pacify it with symbolic gestures? How can you restore a relationship with a family member that was once strained?

Esau now makes another attempt to regain the blessing. Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him to Padan Aram to take a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he commanded him not to marry a Canaanite woman, and that Jacob had obeyed his father and mother and had gone to Padan Aram (28:6-7).

Esau then realized how displeasing the Canaanite women were to his father Isaac (28:8). He **consequently thought that by not marrying another Canaanite woman, he would win back his father's favor and possibly the blessing.**

So he went to Ishmael, the son of Abraham, and married his daughter Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth, in addition to the wives he already had (28:9). This is the classic case of closing the barn door after the horse is gone. **Although Esau did not marry any more women of Canaan, he was not willing to send away those he already had, in spite of their unsuitability and wickedness.** Basically, he married his cousin because he thought it would please his father Isaac. She was a descendant of Avraham through Ishmael. But this just magnifies Esau's lack of spiritual perception. The Ishmaelites were just as rejected as the Canaanites or the Philistines. Ironically, the rejected son of Isaac married into the rejected line of Ishmael. At any rate, he failed to impress his parents and the marriage goes unnoticed by his father and mother.

But however clueless **Esau** might have been about **his** birthright, it is interesting to note what this says to us about the relationship between **Ishmael** and **Isaac**. Marriages at that time only took place with the consent of both fathers. If the father was incapable or dead, the oldest son took his place. **Ishmael** had died at least fifteen years before **Esau** approached **his** family. Had **Ishmael's** son **Nebaioth** been resentful about the fact that **Isaac** was the full heir, even though **his father** had been the firstborn, then **he** would not have given **his sister** to **Esau**. Instead, **he** trusted **her** completely to **his** cousin. It seems that **Ishmael** had experienced healing through the blessing of **his** twelve sons (see **Gi - The Twelve Sons of Ishmael**).

All this only furnished further proof that **Esav** had absolutely no understanding of the blessing and what it meant. Once again, **he** was proven unfit to receive it. **He** tried to act godly in the futile hope that somehow or other it would be pleasing to **ADONAI**. There are many like that today. They will not do exactly what **God** requires, but something like it. They will not give up the world entirely and put **the LORD** first in their life, but merely rearrange the deck furniture on the Titanic! They will not renounce sin, but pacify it with symbolic gestures.

While **Esau** was occupied with the "honey-do's" of **his** three **wives**, **Jacob** was off to **Paddan Aram** in search of a bride.