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The Division of the Two Brothers

36: 43b

The division of the two brothers REFLECT: At heart, are you an Esau or a Jacob? It can't get any more basic than that. At your deepest level, do you desire the things of this world, or the things of God? Your decision has eternal consequences.



There is perhaps no greater contrast in Scripture than what is seen in the characters of **Esau** and **Ya'akov**. **Esav** was sensual in the sense that **he** lived **his** life for personal enjoyment. **He** lived for the moment and seemed perfectly willing to sacrifice everything to get whatever **he** wanted right then and there. **He** was in every sense earthy and earth bound. **His** life was secular. Everything in **him** was of the world and the flesh, and no part of **his** life was devoted to **ADONAI**. This was the root of his trouble. **God** was not at all in **his** thoughts. The purpose of **Esau's** genealogy is to show that **the seed of the serpent (3:15a)** is alive and well on planet earth. They are multiplying and being fruitful.

The rich young ruler who came to **the Lord** had the splendid advantages of age, position, wealth, opportunity, earnestness and even moral integrity, and yet, when he was put to the test he revealed his deliberate unwillingness to surrender to **Christ** and to allow **Him** to be **the Master** of **his** life (see my commentary on **The Life of Christ**, to see link click [II](#) - **The Rich Young Ruler**).⁵⁴⁹ That was the difference between **Esau** and **Jacob**.

Although **Ya'akov** was far from perfect, **he** loved **God**, submitted to **Him** and allowed **Him** to mold and shape **his** life. More than that, **Jacob** wanted to be molded, to be **conformed to the likeness of His Son (Romans 8:29a)**. In the final analysis, **Jacob was a righteous man** (see [Gn](#) - **Then Jacob Gave Esau Some Lentil Stew and Esau Despised His Birthright**).

This was Esav, the father of the Edomites (36:43c). Esau settled in the land of **Edom**, and the land of Canaan is surrendered to **Jacob**. With this statement, **Esav** disappears from the biblical record, never to be mentioned again. This is contrasted with **Jacob** who **lived in the land where his father had stayed, the Promised Land of Canaan (37:1)**.

Esau had set **his** heart on the here and now. It seemed that **God's** promises to Abraham and Isaac meant nothing to **him**. Here then, **God** has given us a picture of **Esav's** family, and then **He** turns the page. The rest of the story lies with **Jacob's** family; **they** would be the **Seed of the woman (3:3:15a)**, or the line of blessing.⁵⁵⁰

**Haftarah vaYishlach: Hoshea (Hosea) 11:7-12:11 (A);
Ovadyah (Obediah) 1-21 (S)**

(see my commentary on **Deuteronomy**, to see link click [Af](#) - Parashah)

Obediah, the servant of ADONAI, was a pious **Edomite** governor in the palace of the wicked king **Ahab**. Writing on the struggle between **Judah** and **Edom**, **Obediah** prophesied that **Edom's** envy concerning **Jacob's election (Genesis 27:41)** would eventually bring about **their ruin (Obediah 1:15-18)**. A day would come when when **Edom** would watch, with contempt, the destruction of **Judah** and **Jerusalem** without lifting a hand to help **his** hurting **brother (Psalm 137:7)**. This contempt is a chilling reminder of Lemech's arrogance shortly before Cain's line was annihilated (**Genesis 4:23-24**). **Edom's violence against his brother (Obediah 1:10-11)** is rooted in **Hagar's hatred of Sarah (Genesis 16:5)**. **Edom** will be destroyed, and **his kingdom will become the LORD's (Obediah 1:20-21)**.

**B'rit Chadashah suggested reading for Parashah vaYishlach:
Hebrews 11:20; First Corinthians 5:1-13; Revelation 7:1-12**

The author of **Hebrews** builds on **ADONAI's** prophecy to **Rebekah (Genesis 25:23)** and **Isaac's** blessing of **Jacob (Genesis 28:3-4)**. **Isaac**, with eyes of **faith**, refers to an unseen **future (Hebrews 11:20)**. **Hebrews** shows that **the patriarchs died** without experiencing the fulfillment of **God's** promises - rather, **they** salute the promises from afar (**Hebrews 11:13-16**). **Isra'el** bowed down to **Esau** to keep peace, reconcile, and return the blessing (**Genesis 33:1-17**). But later, **Edom** hardened into a covetous nation gloating over **Isra'el's** discipline by **the LORD (Obediah 1:11-12)**. Remember that **Lot's wife** lost **her** life by looking back upon Sodom's judgment! Similarly, **Edom's** gloating over the punishment of **Isra'el** costs this nation eternal life! For its part, **Isra'el** must stay holy to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the land of **her** inheritance. Apart from obedience, **Isra'el** will see

the promises from afar, staying small as a people, with small need for more land
(Deuteronomy 7:22).