When Smart People Do Stupid Things!
Genesis 25:29-34 NKJV

Please turn with me to tonight’s scripture text in GENESIS 25:29-34.

Genesis 25:29-34 (NKJV)

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom.

31 But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”

32 And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?”

33 Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

INTRODUCTION

They were brothers……twin brothers……the sons of Isaac and Rebekah; and grandsons of Abraham, the great patriarch of the Jewish people.

Normally twins are a whole lot alike. They look alike. They dress alike. They act alike. They even think alike.

Jacob and Esau couldn’t have been more different!
For one thing………

**They differed in THEIR APPEARANCE**  (verses 24,25)

24 So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb.

25 And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau.

We have all seen “ugly” babies haven’t we? Esau was “ugly” to the bone.

-His skin had a deep red hue to it. In fact, in verse 30, Esau was nicknamed “red.” Edom is the Hebrew word for “red.”

-And notice, “he was like a hairy garment all over.” Do you think Isaac and Rebekah looked at each other and said, “My goodness we’ve given birth to BIG FOOT!”

Esau must have looked like “a red hair ball” …… like “red shag carpet.” Now that’s one ugly baby!

Typical Jewish babies were dark haired, dark-eyed and olive-skinned. Redheads were considered “outcasts” or “misfits.” Even as late as the Middle Ages artists painted Judas Iscariot as a red head.

Now what about JACOB? What did he look like? Verse 26 simply says, “Afterward his brother came out.”

Sometimes words aren’t even necessary. Who says God doesn’t have a sense of humor!
They also differed in THEIR PURSUITS (verse 27)

27 So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents.

Esau was “daddy’s boy!” He was a tough, rugged outdoorsman who loved to hunt and get his hands dirty. If Esau lived in our day and time he would wear camo, and ride a 4-wheeler, and have a “pinch of Red Man between his cheek and gum.” Esau was just a “good ‘old country boy!

Jacob, on the other hand was “a mommy’s boy!” He didn’t like to hunt or fish. He didn’t like to get his hands dirty. If Jacob lived in our day and time you would likely find him wearing a stylish polo shirt and Levi jeans. Unlike his outdoorsman brother, Jacob was a homebody who loved to spend time with his mother.

They differed in THEIR APPEARANCE

They differed in THEIR PURSUITS

But they differed most in THEIR CHARACTER

Hebrews 12:16 tells us Esau was a very “profane” man. To be “profane” means to be “irreverent and disrespectful towards God and spiritual things.”

Now think about that! In spite of their differences in appearance and in their pursuits, Jacob and Esau were raised in a spiritual home by the same godly parents. They were both grandsons of Abraham, one of the most righteous men of faith who ever lived. They were both taught the ways of the LORD.

Esau was a smart man! He had been taught the ways of the LORD! He knew the difference between right and wrong. And yet the Bible tells us “he was a profane man……..an irreverent man.”
Jacob on the other hand, despite his moments of craftiness and deceit, was a deeply spiritual man.

Throughout the Bible one of the most common titles for God bears Jacob's name: *The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*. In fact that title for God appears almost 500 times throughout the Bible.

Jacob was also the father of the twelve sons for whom the twelve tribes of Israel were named.

Jacob was the man who had the dream of the ladder ascending to heaven with angels going up and down the ladder.

As we come to our scripture text in VERSES 29-34 we are going to see what happens WHEN SMART PEOPLE DO STUPID THINGS!

In these verses we see three things:

I. THE BIRTHRIGHT
II. THE BARTER
III. THE BITTER CRY

First let’s consider....

I. The Birthright

Like the name implies, the “birthright” was the right of the first born son in the family to receive his father’s inheritance upon his father’s death.

When the father died, each child would receive a portion of his money and personal property. The firstborn, by right of birth, would receive a “double portion” of his father’s goods.

For example, let’s say there were five children in the family and the father left behind 100 sheep. The eldest son by right of birth would get 40 sheep, and the other four children would get 15 sheep each. Or if the father left behind 200 acres of land, the oldest son, by right of birth, would receive 100 acres, and the other four would receive 25 acres a piece.
But there was more to the BIRTHRIGHT than just financial gain. With the BIRTHRIGHT came THE BLESSING. This typically went to the FIRSTBORN as well.

The Blessing had more to do with the “spiritual” inheritance. When the FATHER died, the first born, the one with the birthright would become the NEW HEAD OF THE FAMILY. This blessing would also be upon the FIRSTBORN’S children and their children after them.

The point is this: THE BIRTHRIGHT was something to be valued and treasured.

Even though Jacob and Esau were twins, ESAU had the “birthright” because he was born first.

Secondly, let’s consider………..

II. THE BARTER

1. That term “barter” is one you don’t hear very often these days, but there was a time when a great deal of business transactions were carried out by “bartering.”

   To “barter” simply means to “TRADE.” “To exchange goods or services for other goods or services.”

2. One day Esau and Jacob engaged in a little “bartering.”

Look at verses 29-32 again………..

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom.

31 But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”

32 And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?”
3. Esau comes in from a hunting trip, he’s tired…..he’s starving .......and apparently he’s empty handed.

He smells the big pot of stew Jacob has fixed simmering over an open fire. He says, “Hey Jacob, how about fixin’ me a bowl of your stew.”

Jacob says, “Tell you what I’ll do!” “I’ll trade you a bowl of my stew for your birthright!”

4. Esau didn’t say, “No way!” or “You’ve got to be kidding me!” Or, “Jacob, you must be out of your mind!”

No, he said, “Look, I’m about to starve to death, what good is my birthright if I’m dead?”

5. In verses 33,34 Jacob and Esau finalize their “trade agreement.”

Genesis 25:33,34 (NKJV)

33 Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.”
So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

6. That last phrase, “Thus Esau despised his birthright” means, “Esau shrugged off his birthright as though it was nothing.”

We have considered THE BIRTHRIGHT.
We have considered THE BARTER

Finally, let's consider......
III. THE BITTER CRY

1. Many years passed and no doubt Esau had long forgotten the day when he traded his birthright for a bowl of soup. That is until his father was on his deathbed.

2. Just two chapters over in GENESIS 27, Isaac, Jacob and Esau’s father, is old and doesn’t know how many more days he’ll live. Although he still has a pretty good state of mind, his eyesight is so bad he can barely see.

3. Jacob and his mother, Rebekah, decide to use Isaac’s poor eyesight to their advantage. They came up with a plan to make Isaac believe Jacob was Esau.

   Rebekah dressed Jacob up in Esau’s clothes so he would smell like Esau. And she put goat hair on Jacob’s smooth hands and neck to make him feel hairy like Esau. And she fixed Isaac’s favorite meal of wild game, just like Esau always did after coming home from one of his hunting trips.

   And to make a long story short, THE SCHEME WORKED! Believing Jacob was actually Esau, Isaac pronounced the family “blessing” on Jacob.

4. Almost the very moment Isaac finished pronouncing the blessing on Jacob, Esau arrives home from another hunting trip. Within minutes Esau came to realize that he had just been tricked out of his family blessing.

   “Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.”

5. While ESAU had reacted to losing his birthright with a rather “cavalier attitude,” he responds differently this time. Look at Esau’s bitter cry in chapter 27, verses 38-40.

   Genesis 27:38-40 (NKJV) 38 And Esau said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!” And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. 39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: “Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, And of the dew of heaven from above. 40 By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, That you shall break his yoke from your neck.”
6. The loss of his birthright and his blessing would have an impact on ESAU and his descendants for generations to come. Whereas Jacob inherited the land known as “The Promised Land,” Esau and his descendants inherited the desolate land of Edom. Remember that was Esau’s nickname, “Edom”…….”Red.”

   Just as Jacob and Esau fought as they came out of their mother’s womb, the Israelites and Edomites were bitter enemies throughout the Old Testament.

7. Thousands of years later the conflict continues. The land of Edom is now what we know as JORDAN. And a bitter hatred exists between Jordan and Israel.

CONCLUSION

There is so much for you and me to learn from this account.

One lesson we can learn is this: Even Godly People Do Stupid Things! This is NOT to say Esau was necessarily a godly man, but he had certainly been taught the ways of the LORD.

-Why did Adam and Eve trade paradise for a bite of fruit?

-Why did Samson reveal the secret of his strength to a lowly prostitute?

-Why did Noah get drunk and lay naked in his tent?

-Why did Abraham father a child by another woman?

-Why did David sleep with his neighbor’s wife?

-Why did Jonah think he could actually run away from God?

-Why did Peter deny that he even knew Christ?

Why do people who were raised by Christian parents in Christian homes, who went to Church every Sunday when they were growing up, turn their backs on God and walk away from the Church when they get older?
The scriptures tell us why: “Because we are all sinners who have fallen short of the glory of God.” Because the devil is constantly roaming around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour”...THAT’S WHY!

Even the godliest of people sometimes do “stupid things!” Stupid things that violate everything they were ever taught and believed in!

It is easy to write off godly people who do stupid things as “hopeless failures.” But the apostle Paul warns all of us to “Take heed lest we too fall.”

Another valuable lesson we can learn from this account is this: LIVING FOR INSTANT GRATIFICATION WILL ROB YOU OF SPIRITUAL BLESSING.

Esau traded his birthright for a bowl of soup! Now how stupid was that? Can you imagine trading your inheritance for a bowl of Campbell’s tomato soup? Can you imagine trading your house and all your possessions for a one man pup tent?

Esau traded away his long term spiritual blessings for instant gratification!

Every day you are trading your life and soul for something. The question is, “For what?” If you are trading your spiritual blessings for instant gratification, instant pleasure, then one day you are going to come up empty handed! But if you are trading your life for the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, one day you will reap untold blessings which no one can take away from you.

May we never lose our appreciation of our spiritual blessings!

May we never discount the big consequences that can come from seemingly insignificant choices!