

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.**  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)*

#04-1089

## ***The Struggle Begins – Esau & Jacob***

August 11, 2010

Jacob's twin brother Esau is best known for selling his birthright to Jacob. I imagine most people stop at this part of the story, but there is a whole lot more to Esau's history than this. The fact of the matter is that, symbolically, Esau plays a major role in end-time prophecy in relation to modern Israel and the land, something most people likely miss.

As the story goes, Rebekah was barren, so Isaac prayed to the Lord and Rebekah conceived. When there were rumblings in her womb, Rebekah sought the Lord for the reason.

**The LORD said to her, “Two nations are in your womb; and two peoples will be separated from your body; and one people shall be stronger than the other; and the older shall serve the younger.”** (Genesis 25:23 NASB)

Essentially, the struggle going on in her womb was a wrestling match between two brothers that would decide who would come out on top as the winner. However, the Lord revealed the winner; it was to be the younger brother, which meant the last one to come out of the womb would win the match.

**(25) Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau. (26) Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob** [“one who supplants”]; **and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.** (Genesis 25:25 NASB)

As the firstborn son, Esau should have ruled over his younger brother; instead, Jacob the younger would rule over Esau the elder. How did this come about?

**(30) Esau said to Jacob, “Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.” Therefore his name was called Edom. (31) But Jacob said, “First sell me your birthright.” (32) Esau said, “Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?” (33) And Jacob said, “First swear to me”; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. (34) Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.** (Genesis 25:30-34 NASB)

According to the Book of Jasher (see Joshua 10:13; 2 Samuel 1:18), Esau and Jacob were the age of 15 when Esau sold his birthright, the right of a firstborn son, for some red stuff. Jasher records the events leading up to this bargain-basement sale, so to speak.

Supposedly, Esau killed Nimrod the king of Babel (Babylon) by cutting off his head and then stole his valuable garments that supposedly allowed Nimrod to rule over the whole land. When Esau saw the mighty men of Nimrod coming at a distance, he ran to his father's house “**wearied and exhausted from the fight.**” Esau thought he was going to die and said to his brother Jacob: “**Behold I shall die this day, and wherefore then do I want the birthright?**” (Jasher 27:12).

Whether this is true or not, it makes for a good story and offers a plausible explanation for Esau's irrational behavior. If he would have died, the birthright would have passed on to Jacob anyway, so it had no value to him in death. Of course, Jacob, being the supplanter and, obviously, the shrewder of the two, took full advantage of the situation. But keep in mind; all of this was the Lord's doing.

However, we should not let Jacob off the hook too easily, as if he were an innocent party in this sale, for Jacob broke one of God's laws dealing with selling and buying.

**“If you make a sale, moreover, to your friend or buy from your friend's hand, you shall not wrong one another.”** (Leviticus 25:14 NASB)

Jacob not only took advantage of the situation but wronged his brother by purchasing the birthright for practically nothing. A pot of stew is hardly a fair price. To use a modern expression: “It was a steal.”

But there is more to the story of the struggle between these twin brothers. When he was old and his eyes had grown dim, Isaac was unsure of the day of his death, so he desired to give his elder son his blessing before he died. However, when Rebekah overheard Isaac speaking about it to his son, she plotted with Jacob to deceive Isaac into believing Jacob was Esau in order to receive the blessing.

No doubt, Rebekah remembered the prophetic word spoken to her by the Lord over her two sons, so she figured that the blessing had to go to Jacob, not Esau. Rather than allowing the Lord to bring this about in His way, she took it upon herself and conceived the deception for her younger son to carry out. Sound familiar? Her mother-in-law Sarah figured she too had to help the Lord, which brought forth Ishmael who, in turn, struggled with Isaac. It must have run in the family. Of course, both cases were the Lord's doing; they were part of His plan all along. Nevertheless, these two examples highlight how the natural flesh wants to take things into its own hands rather than wait upon the Lord.

Obviously, the plot succeeded, and Isaac blessed his younger son instead of the elder. Jacob received the blessing of a firstborn.

**Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.** (Genesis 27:29 KJV)

Essentially, it was **the blessing of dominion or ruling**, and it placed Jacob over Esau, which only intensified the struggle that began while the two brothers were in the womb.

When he learned that his younger brother had come out on top again, Esau cried out to his father for blessing, but it was too late.

**(34) When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, even me also, O my father!” (35) And he said, “Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.” (36) “Then he said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?” (37) But Isaac replied to Esau, “Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?” (38) Esau said to his father, “Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.” So Esau lifted his voice and wept.** (Genesis 27:34-38 NASB)

Rather than give his son a blessing, Isaac prophesied over his life.

**And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion [Hebrew *rood*], that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.** (Genesis 27:40 KJV)

This is where the prophetic story gets interesting. When did Esau come into dominion and how did he break the yoke? This is only the beginning of the struggle. Stay tuned.