



## BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

**A1800 ~ Esau's Birthright Sold.**

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*Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.*

Have you made out a legal will that states who should get what of your possessions after you die? Doing a will makes it easier for relatives to know your wishes in how you'd like your things to be given away. Some people joke that they don't have enough to bother about such a thing. Yet many arguments might be saved if everyone in the family knew what was to be given to them. A will determines what money and assets are divided up and in what proportions usually between the surviving children, relatives and friends.

Back in times past, the firstborn son was given a double portion of his inheritance because he was expected to care for his aging mother after his father died. This birthright was highly valued by most, but today in *our Bible Adventure* we'll see the power struggle that continues between Esau and his younger brother Jacob recorded in the Scriptures.

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Esau and Jacob were very different in all of their ways. Esau grew up to be a strong outdoors man, who didn't think things through before acting rashly. Jacob was a quiet indoors man who planned with his mother in an underhand manner for opportunities to take advantage of his older brother Esau.

This constant combat between Esau and Jacob made the home a place of strife. The Scriptures in Genesis, Chapter 25, make it plain that of the 2 brothers, Isaac preferred Esau while Rebekah favoured Jacob. Favouritism in a family can tear it completely apart. While the children who are not favoured may be jealous of the privileges the favoured one receives, the favoured child also has a mental burden of unfair and unjust treatment that they must carry as well.

As recorded in the Bible, one day, Esau had been out hunting and had obviously caught nothing. He was very weary and hungry when he returned home. He wanted to revive himself and he saw Jacob had prepared and was ready to serve some food. Esau asked Jacob for some, making out that he was now near to death. We don't know if Esau was really near to death, as he said he was, or just saying this as an exaggeration. Maybe he'd become faint from lack of food. But generally, it is considered that fit and healthy people like Esau can survive without any food for up to 30 days, provided they have plenty of water to drink instead. However, when Jacob asked for Esau's birthright in exchange for some food, Esau gladly gave it to Jacob. This gives us the understanding that Esau didn't care in the least about his position as the firstborn son in the family at that time. But he did later!

To guarantee his claim to the birthright, Jacob insisted that Esau swear an oath, which made the transaction legally binding. In Hebrews, Chapter 12, Esau is described as a godless person, who later sought to undo what he'd done and couldn't find a way, even though he looked for it with tears.

When Esau was 40 years old, he took two local Canaanite women as wives, and this was a great source of grief for both Isaac and Rebekah. The Canaanites were known for their ungodliness and God required that His covenant people were not to intermarry with them. By doing this action alone, Esau demonstrated that he was unfit to inherit the blessings of his family covenant, firstly, because he married two wives and secondly, because the wives were Canaanites. When Esau saw that his wives didn't please Isaac, Esau then took a third wife, the daughter of his uncle Ishmael.

In Biblical times, it was the custom for an aged father to give specific blessings to each of his sons; these blessings were binding, as much as a written will is legally binding today. In giving these final blessings, the father usually took into account the special privileges due to the eldest son, but he was ultimately free to bestow his blessing on whomever he pleased. For Isaac to send Esau out to hunt for him, he evidently planned to give his entire blessing to Esau and nothing at all to Jacob. Rebekah was most unhappy about this.

Rebekah favoured Jacob and assured him that she was ready to accept any curse if their plot was discovered. There was no doubt that it would come out and very quickly at that. But her plan went smoothly and Jacob fully entered into deception to become his brother Esau.

Jacob and Rebekah's deception worked perfectly. As soon as Jacob secured the blessing that had been meant for Esau, Esau arrived with his tasty food. Suddenly Isaac realised that he'd been deceived and he trembled violently. The blessing, once given, could not be revoked. It was now beyond Isaac's control and would come to pass.

When Esau saw that he'd been cheated by Jacob a 2<sup>nd</sup> time – the 1<sup>st</sup> time being out of his birthright and now, his firstborn blessing, Esau begged his father for a blessing too. When Isaac finally spoke, he told Esau that he and his descendants would live in a dry wilderness area and they would serve Jacob. Esau's greatest sorrow, though, came from knowing that he himself had been responsible for losing his father's blessing when he gave up his birthright for a bowl of food.

Naturally, Esau was very angry at Jacob and resolved to regain his birthright and blessing by killing Jacob. Rebekah found out about this threat to Jacob's life and urged Jacob to flee to her relatives back in the city of Haran. Because Rebekah had suffered so much from Esau marrying Canaanite wives, she persuaded Isaac to tell Jacob not to marry a Canaanite woman but instead, to return to her family for a wife.

Jacob now had a good reason to disappear from the scene while Esau got over his desire for revenge. Rebekah never saw her beloved son Jacob again.

What can we learn from this family so that we don't repeat the same mistakes? To have harmony in the home, there has to be respect for one another. Rebekah didn't respect Isaac's right to give the whole blessing to their older child. If she had, God would have worked things out differently to make the 'older serve the younger', as he had promised to do. She should have let God bring His words to pass without interfering, because lies and deception are never the right way to do things.

Many of us assume that once we reach adulthood, our pain from being a victim in childhood will disappear and not affect us when we are in control of our lives as adults. But childhood anger at our pain and hurts don't disappear unless we can identify them and resolve them. How can we do that? God doesn't want us to store up in our hearts or minds the bad things that have happened to us in the past, as doing so will keep adding to our deep-down anger. Rather, He wants us to acknowledge to Him and get rid of the bad fruit of anger, resentment, distrust and fearfulness. We need to replace such feelings with thoughts of the good fruit of joy, peace, patience, kindness and forgiveness, which only can be achieved through dependence on the power and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son.

How can we forgive an unrepentant parent for their abuse of us? The next time anger wells up in your heart, face the unresolved childhood anger. A counsellor recommends that we take four pieces of paper and label them 'hurt', 'injustice', 'fear' and 'frustration'. Then ask God to reveal buried hurts, injustices, fears and frustrations from childhood. Write down each incident for each that you can remember from your early life. Then release the anger to God, confess both your harbouring sin and the sins of your parents. Ask Jesus for forgiveness of all and in the power of Jesus' Name and through God's Holy Spirit ministering to us and using Scripture, replace your anger with God's cleansing peace and freedom.

Forgive and pray for those toward whom you've held your anger against. Burn the pages you have written as a symbolic reminder of the forgiveness you and they have received in Christ. Full healing may take time as you work through the steps of understanding that pain is a part of this life for everyone. However, God is in control of all our lives and He knows everything from when we're born to when we will breathe our last. Try to see your life from God's point of view – He wants to bless you and bring you into the image of His Son Jesus. Allow the Scriptures to reprogram your thought processes so that you'll be able to replace the problems of your past with God's eternal truth. This will bring true freedom to grudge-free living.

In Leviticus, Chapter 19, Verse 18, it says: "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself."

*The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.*

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