

Who are You?

This weeks reading is from Parashat Toldot (*Bereshit / Genesis 25:19-28:9*). Parashat Toldot may be summarized in the following way: (i) the struggle between Jacob and Esav within Rebecca’s womb (*25:21-23*), (ii) Esav became a skilled hunter and Jacob dwelled in tents (*25:27-28*) Isaac loved Esav and Rebecca loved Jacob, (iii) Esav sold his birthright for a bowl of soup (*25:29-34*), Isaac and Abimelech king of the Philistines interact, Isaac tells Avimelech that his wife is his sister (*26:1-11*), (iv) Abimelech, Ahuzzath, and Phicol make a covenant with Isaac (*26:26-31*), (v) Jacob steals Esav’s blessing (*27:1-41*), (vi) Jacob flees to Haran (*27:42-28:6*), and (vii) Esav takes a wife from the daughters of Canaan (*28:7-9*). According to the Scriptures, before Jacob and Esav were born they struggled together in their mothers womb **כג וַיִּאמֶר יְהוָה: כֹּה יִהְיֶה יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּךָ וְתִתְּנֶנּוּ לְדָוָד וְתִתְּנֶנּוּ לְדָוָד וְתִתְּנֶנּוּ לְדָוָד וְתִתְּנֶנּוּ לְדָוָד** *25:22 But the children struggled together within her; and she said, ‘If it is so, why then am I this way? So she went to inquire of the Lord. 25:23 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.’ (NASB)* The struggle between these two brothers, as the scripture says is between two nations (שְׁנֵי גֵיִים), it is apparent that the struggle is related to the one who walks by faith and the other who despises God’s ways. The Scriptures say that Jacob dwelled in tents and Esav was a hunter in the fields. We also learn that Esav despised God and the promise of Abraham by his willingness to sell his birthright and marry from the daughters of Canaan (*Bereshit / Genesis 25:32*). Jacob on the other hand loved the promises of God and did everything he could to inherit what God had promised to his fathers. Can we ask ourselves this question: *“Have we done everything that we can in our relationship with the Lord in order to obtain what He has for us today?”*

כתבי הקודש / The Holy Scriptures	
<p style="text-align: center;">ספר בראשית פרק כג</p> <p>ל וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה יִצְחָק לְבָרֶךְ אֶת-יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אַף יֵצֵא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַעֲשׂוֹ אָחִיו בָּא מִצִּידוֹ: לֹא וַיַּעַשׂ גַּם-הוּא מִטַּעַמִּים וַיָּבֵא לְאָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יְקָם אָבִי וַיֹּאכַל מִצִּידוֹ בְּנוֹ בַּעֲבַר תְּבָרַכְנִי בְּפִשְׁדֵּךְ: לֵב וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִי-אַתָּה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי בְּנוֹךְךָ עֲשׂוֹ</p>	<p>Bereshit / Genesis 27:30-32</p> <p>27:30 Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 27:31 Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, ‘Let my father arise and eat of his son’s game, that you may bless me.’ 27:32 Isaac his father said to him, ‘Who are you?’ And he said, ‘I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.’ (NASB)</p>

We pick up the story line in *Bereshit / Genesis 27:30-32*, Jacob had just taken the blessing that Isaac had meant for Esav and Esav comes to Isaac with his dinner to receive his blessing. While reading through the blessing Isaac gave to Esav, it is interesting that Isaac gave him a very similar blessing, however, the blessing given to Esav was reversed. Isaac says tells Esav that the fat places of the earth would be his dwelling and then dew from heaven above (וַיַּעַן יִצְחָק אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הֲנֵה מִשְׁמַנֵּי הָאָרֶץ יִהְיֶה מוֹשְׁבָךָ וּמִטְּלַת הַשָּׁמַיִם) *Isaac began the blessing in reverse order indicating that Esav would be blessed in prosperity in this world first. On the other hand, in Jacob’s blessing Isaac said that Jacob would be given the dew of heaven, and then the fat places of the earth would be his dwelling. What is the significance of the word order here in the text? The Scriptures reveal to us that Jacob had focused his attention and life on the Lord (dew from heaven) whereas Esav focused his life on this earth (fat places). Jacob’s blessing of prosperity would come from Heaven first, and then he would partake in the fat places of the earth, in other words, the blessing from heaven will precede his blessing in prosperity on earth. This is consistent with Yeshua’s words in *Matthew 6:33* that say *6:33 ‘But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. (NASB)* In addition to this, Jacob left off the blessing of the grain (דָּגָן) and new wine (וַיְתִירֵשׁ) while blessing Esav. Note the significance of the grain offering in the Tabernacle with regard to the lives of Jacob and Esav here in Parashat Toldot. The grain offering is also known as the “gift offering,” and this is a type of offering that scholars believed referred to all voluntary sacrifices (see *Vayikra / Leviticus*), the Shelamim Korban (Peace offering) or Todat Korban (Thank Offering). The absence of the grain (דָּגָן) in Esav’s blessing may suggests that Esav was not voluntary in his gifts to God because he despised His promises. The common Hebrew word for wine is יַי from the root meaning “to boil up” or “to be in ferment.” It is interesting, here in the text וַיְתִירֵשׁ is used to describe “new wine.” It is possible that this word is derived from the root לָרַשׁ meaning “to inherit.” The absence of the new wine in Esav’s blessing suggest he will not inherit the promises God had made, he has been trodden down upon by his brother Jacob because he despised God and His covenant promises. The interesting point of studying Jacob and Esav’s lives is that Esav allowed the things of this world to distract him from what is truly important, that is to seek the Lord and to trust in the promises of God. Yeshua said in *Matthew 6:31* ‘Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ 6:32 ‘For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. (NASB) Then he told his disciples to seek “first” the kingdom of God and all things will be added to you. That is exactly what Jacob did in his life, he believed in the promises of God and lived his life accordingly. Esav on the other hand allowed the things of this world to cause him to disregard the word of God and to not consider what God has done as being important for his life. Today, are you more like Esav and worrying about the fat places of this earth or do you have a heavenly focus and seek the dew that comes down from heaven?*