

Genesis 25:29-34

Abraham was Isaac's father. Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah and he asked God for children. Finally, when he was sixty, Rebekah became pregnant. She was so miserable she said, "If this is what motherhood is like, why should I bother?" God said to her, "The reason you are miserable is because you've got two babies, not just one. And you'll see, they'll be as different as two separate nations."

When they were born, one baby was all hairy and red and they named him Esau. The second was born holding on to his brother's foot. They named him Jacob. When they grew up Esau was a hunter and Jacob was more of a homebody. Esau was Abraham's favorite, and Rebekah preferred Jacob.

Jacob was cooking stew once, when his brother came in from the field, starving. He begged his brother for some stew. Jacob said, "You can have some, but first you have to sell me your birthright." (That means that the oldest child always inherited the father's goods, and Esau was the oldest.) Esau was so hungry all he could think about was food. He said, "I'm about to die of hunger, what do I care about my birthright? You can have it. Just give me some stew."

Jacob put the stew in a bowl, but before he gave it to Esau he said, "Swear that it's mine."

Esau said, "Yes, it's yours. Now give me that stew."

Jacob gave him bread and kept filling his brother's bowl with stew. When Esau was finally full, he got up and walked away.

And that's how Esau lost his birthright.

Psalm 99

You are the best, God. You are the King.

See the people shake with excitement and fear.

Watch the ground tremble and hear it rumble.

You are the best and all the people know it.

Can you hear them speak your powerful name with wonder?

We will let everyone know that you are a great God.

We will climb your holy hill to worship you.

Here is what the people say to you,

"O mighty King, you treat us fairly,

And everyone comes before you as equals."

We recognize how great you are

And give ourselves to serve you.

You are holy and you amaze us.

We will let everyone know that you are a great God.

We will climb your holy hill to worship you.

Moses and Aaron are your priests,
Samuel was too.
When they called your name, you answered them.
You talked to them from the pillar made of cloud.
And they walked behind you and followed your path.
You answered their questions; you forgave them,
but made them accountable for the wrong they had done.
We will let everyone know that you are a great God.
We will climb your holy hill to worship you.

Matthew 22:15-22

The Pharisees wanted to trap Jesus into saying something they didn't like. They sent some of their people to follow him. "Teacher," they said, "We know you are a sincere follower of God. Tell us this then: is it against God's law to pay taxes to the emperor of Rome?" Jesus knew they were out to get him. He said, "Why are you setting me up, you hypocrites?" They gave him a coin that he asked to see. He showed it to them and said, "Whose head is this on the coin, and what is his title?" they answered, "It's the emperor's head on that coin." So, Jesus said, "So give to the emperor the things that are his. Give to God the things that belong to God."

"Wow – I guess he told us, didn't he?" They were amazed, had nothing to say after that, and they left him.