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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Toldot – Selling Your Soul For Stew

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Toldot, which is Hebrew for “Generations,” and it goes from Genesis 25:19 to Genesis 28:9.

This parashah tells the story of the conflict between Jacob and Esau that began since their birth (Genesis 25:19-34).

It also speaks of Isaac passing off his wife, Rebekah, as his sister, taking after his father Abraham (Genesis 26).

Then there’s the story of Jacob and Rebekah deceiving Isaac into blessing Jacob (Genesis 27).

The parashah concludes with Jacob being told to flee to Paddan-aram to avoid Esau’s wrath (Genesis 28:1-9).

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re just going to present a thought about focusing on God’s purpose for us, instead of just living in the moment.

Genesis 25:29-32

Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!” (Therefore his name was called Edom.) Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright now.” Esau said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?”

Why would Esau sell his birthright to his brother for a simple bowl of stew? Esau’s decision would be like if you were given a suitcase full of money—hundreds of thousands of dollars—and you traded it to a friend for half of his lunch. It just seems crazy, doesn’t it? What was his reason for making such a lousy trade?

Well, Esau tells us the reason. He said, “I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?” Maybe in Esau’s mind, he was going to die someday anyhow, so who cares about a birthright? Or maybe he really convinced himself he is about to starve to death. Regardless, the fact remains, he’s concerned with “right now”.

While it’s easy to criticize Esau, how often do we make this exact same decision in our own lives? How often do we sell our soul for the world? How often do we trade our birthright to satisfy a temporary desire?

We do this from time to time, and we often have the same mindset as Esau. We want instant gratification. We aren’t thinking about the future—after all, what good does that do for us *now*? We don’t consider how the choices we make can impact our lives and the lives of our loved ones forever. This irresponsible and reckless attitude gets people in a lot of trouble.

What’s ironic is that throwing away what truly matters in order to fulfill a temporary desire only leads to sorrow and regret. Indeed, even Esau regretted this decision later in life:

Genesis 27:36

Esau said, “Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. **He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.**”

In this verse, Esau wanted to put all the blame on Jacob. But we can’t forget that Esau was the one who made the choice to sell his birthright. He has no one to blame but himself for his own decision.

So are you like Jacob or Esau? Are you looking ahead and focusing on God’s purposes, or are you just living for right now and sacrificing what’s important for what’s immediate?

True joy and fulfillment comes from being in God’s will. May we say no to temptation and remain steadfast in doing what’s right.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom!

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Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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