

ESAU, AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE FORGIVENESS

By Keith Greer

"So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob. And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you." (Genesis 27:41,42) Remember that Jacob received the blessing of Isaac, instead of Esau?

Jacob went into his father and placed skins of goats on his hands to make them hairy like Esau. " So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him." (Genesis 27:22-23) In doing this, Jacob deceived Isaac and received the blessing instead of Esau!

Rebekah knew of Esau's intentions, so she sent Jacob to her brother In Haran. She thought Jacob could go there for just a few days until Esau's anger against him had subsided but days turned into twenty years! (Genesis 31:38)

Jacob eventually ventures out on his own and ends up going thru the land of Seir, where his brother Esau was. What would Esau do after all these years? Would he still want to take revenge upon his brother for his trickery many years ago? Jacob believed the worst and sent messengers to Esau to explain of his good intentions. They reported back to Jacob saying Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men! Jacob prayed to God, "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, ..." (Genesis 32:11) He wanted God to remember the promises that He had made to Jacob's descendants!

Now the moment of truth arrived and Jacob lifted up his eyes, and behold Esau was coming. So he divided his camp and fell to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. "But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. " (Genesis 33:4)

Why did Esau not "get even" with his brother? One reason he did not was because **HE LOVED HIM!** What a wonderful example of true forgiveness. Esau held no grudges, had no hatred, and brought nothing up of the past; he just simply displayed his brotherly love toward Jacob. Some will store up hatred for another and will never forgive wrongs done to them in the past. Some write it down in a little book and have a record so they won't forget. Such conduct brings much unhappiness to the person who harbors such feelings over a long period of time. What can we learn from this example?

Jesus himself taught the lesson of man's need to practice true forgiveness, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew. 6:14,15) As Christians, we are commanded that if one asks for forgiveness, our love for them should cause us to forgive them. Failure to do so will result in God not forgiving our sins!

God does the same for us, so we should do no less for our brethren and fellow man if we expect to get to heaven! (Hebrews 8:12) Personally speaking, I'm so thankful God is willing to forgive some of the terrible mistakes I made in the past. He not only forgives but forgets them and I will never have to answer for them when I stand before Him in judgment. Can I do less? ***