

ESAU DESIRED THE BLESSING

David Baker, Presbytery Word for week commencing Sunday 31 August 2025
Transcription of recording, slightly edited

Part One

It is a pleasure to be teaching with Pete and Dan this weekend. We are going to continue in this theme of the profile of Esau. As we are looking at this over the weekend, you will note that this theme has some major implications in terms of eschatology. We recognise that the prophecy of Isaac concerning Jacob, and then also the prophecy of Isaac concerning Esau will not be fulfilled until the time of the end. At the same time (I am sure you will have been registering this listening to Pete as well), there are some very specific pastoral implications for us now. We are to look carefully at ourselves concerning this profile. We will begin by reading our key verses again.

Hebrews chapter 12 and verses 14 to 16: 'Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone... [This is speaking to all of us - 'looking carefully']... lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator [meaning immoral person] or profane [meaning godless] person like Esau... [It is not just that last one that refers to the profile of Esau. It is that all these things are all part of the profile of Esau,] ...who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.' Verse 17 is where I am going to focus in my session here today: 'For you know that afterward... [We all know this story, so let us take our time to consider it today] ...you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.'

This verse is highlighting the underlying corruption that belongs to the Esau profile. That is, that after Esau had despised the birthright, he still wanted to inherit the blessing. We note that there is a distinction between the *birthright* and the *blessing*. When we are looking at this in type (in terms of Abraham's natural lineage), we note that the birthright was the right to the double portion inheritance that belonged to the firstborn son. It is received on the basis of birth. The blessing then was the inheritance. That is the very simple relationship between the two - the

birthright is the right to the inheritance and the blessing is the substance of the inheritance. It was imparted through (I am talking in type here) the laying on of hands, and specifically the right hand. This becomes very important for us when we are looking at the substance too, because Jesus Christ who is the first Man in the image and likeness of God has ascended and taken His seat at the right hand of God. Then He has stars in *His* right hand, and they are proclaiming to us the prophetic word made more sure. It is descending upon us like the dew from heaven, and it is imparting to us (if we will receive it) the substance of the blessing. It was imparted through the right hand. (We know the story concerning Joseph's sons - Manasseh and Ephraim, and the way that when Joseph is bringing his two boys to Jacob, he puts Manasseh on Jacob's right hand and Ephraim toward the left hand. Jacob crosses his hand, highlighting the significance of the right hand and the impartation of the blessing that belongs to the firstborn.)

The prophetic word defined the inheritance and the power that belonged to the recipient to possess the inheritance, as long as they continued to walk in fellowship with the right hand of the Lord. Peter has already explained what the substance of this looks like for us in terms of the birthright. It is what we receive by adoption and new birth, making us a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. The blessing is our participation in the fellowship of Yahweh which requires the inheritance of a spiritual body for our participation in the new heavens and the new earth.

I want to unpack this one verse for us today. I going to begin to read it again. We are working on Hebrews 12 verse 17, and we will go slowly. It says here, 'For you know that afterward...' Let us think about this. 'You know that afterward...' It is interesting that it was 60 years between when Esau despised the birthright and then when he desired the blessing. That is a long time. How do we know it was 60 years? Where are all the Sonseekers today? Are you happy to do a little bit of maths? This is a Bible school, so we will work on this a bit. Are you happy to do a bit

of maths on a Saturday afternoon? We will establish the ages here. I think the two boys were 16 or 17 when Esau sold the birthright to Jacob for the bowl of red stew. That is a very significant age. Then I think they were 77 years old when they were blessed by their father Isaac.

Now concerning how old they were when Esau despised the birthright: Abraham was 175 years old when he died. Sonseekers, you might want to write these numbers down. Abraham was 175 years old when he died. Isaac was born when Abraham was 100, and Isaac married when he was 40. Isaac and Rebekah had the two boys (who were non-identical twins) when Isaac was 60. On that basis then, the boys were both 15 years old when Abraham died. I think that is very significant, because they were all dwelling together. There were three generations in a house. They were all dwelling together - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Esau in tents in Mamre (or Hebron). I am sure that Abraham had a very significant part to play in terms of Jacob and Esau as they are growing up. He is their grandfather. When he died, it would have been pretty significant for them. We also know that 16 years old (17 years old) is a very significant age when a person is coming of age and making their choice. It is not the first choice that a child makes, but the nature of their choice is really solidifying one way or the other. It is a notable age.

In terms of working out how old Jacob and Esau were when they were blessed, we need to work backwards. Write these numbers down. Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh and was appointed as the ruler over Egypt. (I think you are still studying Joseph in Sonseekers tomorrow.) He was 30 years old when he was taken out of prison and stood before Pharaoh and then made ruler over Egypt. Then you have seven years of plenty. Then probably it is the second year of the famine that Jacob and the rest of the family came down to Egypt. How old was Joseph then? He is 39. When Jacob came down to Egypt, Pharaoh actually asked him, 'How old are you?' He says, 'I am 130.' How old was Jacob when Joseph was born? Jacob is standing before Pharaoh; he is saying I am 130; Joseph is standing there and he is 39. We work backwards to say that Jacob was 91. If I get any of this wrong, you can correct me afterwards. We will see if we can get this right together today.

The birth of Joseph was in the fourteenth year of Jacob's sojourn in Laban's house. Straight after Joseph was born to Rachel, Jacob said, 'We want to go back.' Then he stayed there for another six years working for Laban. Joseph was born in the fourteenth year of Jacob's sojourn. Now if Jacob was 91 when Joseph was born, how old was he when he was sent away 14 years earlier? We are going 91 minus 14 which equals 77. I am going to make the point a bit later. This is reasonably old for someone who is still playing dress-ups in response to his mum's instruction. Equally, it is pretty old for Esau to still be throwing a tantrum, throwing himself on the floor when he does not get his own way. They are 77 years old. The big point I want to make is that 60 years have passed between when Esau despises the birthright (60 years - that is a long time), and when there was an opportunity for Esau to find repentance.

The Lord did give Esau time to repent; but time itself does not remedy (this is true in every situation) or heal relational breaches. Time is the opportunity for repentance. It is the demonstration of the Lord's longsuffering and forbearance because He does desire all men and women to come to repentance. But the time for repentance does come to an end. You can think of Jesus' statement concerning Jezebel, 'I gave her time to repent, but she did not repent.' During those 60 years, Esau did not demonstrate any fruit of repentance. Having shown no remorse after selling his birthright, he continued to despise the culture of his father's household and to go his own way. When he was 40 years old, we know he went and married two Canaanite women. He knew that was an action of rebellion because Abraham was very clear when he sends the servant to go and find a wife for Isaac. 'Do not choose anyone from among the Canaanite women.' Esau goes and does this. He evidently embraced the foreign culture of these women because it caused grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. If Esau had recognised his sin in relation to the birthright, his repentance would have been demonstrated by his willingness to turn from his godless culture and further to serve his younger brother (which was always the issue). Esau wanted to rule. He did not want to serve.

I will make a couple of points here concerning repentance. Repentance is the fruit of godly

sorrow. Godly sorrow is the fruit of illumination; and illumination is the fruit of meeting Christ eye to eye by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. We can see what was missing in Esau's life for 60 years here. He never finds repentance because he never found any godly sorrow. He never found any godly sorrow because he never found any illumination. He never found any illumination because he never met the Lord. 60 years just passes. We will add another point to that: the fruit of repentance... (this would have been true for Esau if he had of found repentance) ...the fruit of it would have been seen in the nature of his connection to his family. I have said it this way, applying it to us: the fruit of repentance will be seen in our marriage and family. The simple fruit would have been that Esau would have served his younger brother.

In addition to that, the fruit of repentance is demonstrated by our own obedience. In contrast to this, Esau's lack of repentance was demonstrated by the fact that he still wanted to receive the blessing in his godless condition, becoming enraged when he was rejected. Let us work on this now, coming back to our key verse: 'For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected.' What does this mean that he was rejected? We know that Esau was not predestined to be damned. He was predestined to be saved through serving his younger brother. That is what God had chosen for him. He had to choose what God had chosen for him. If he chose that, he would have been accepted.

This is the same point that the Lord made to Cain. Cain is bringing the fruit of the field (which was his projection), and he wanted God to accept that. God rejected that, but God said to him, 'If you do well [if you will receive an admonition and be aligned to your sanctification] you will be accepted.' This was the issue for Esau as well. God has already (this is a big point for all of us) rejected all our projections. That is true. He has already rejected all our projections. If we persist in presenting our projection to God, He will reject us. If we insist on saying, 'This is me', in the end He has rejected the projection, and you will be rejected with that projection. Esau desired to receive the blessing of the firstborn. This was for him a projection. It did not belong to him. He was asking his father to bless an idol in his heart.

Let us keep going with our verse - verse 17: 'He was rejected for he found no place for repentance.' This is giving us the reason now. We need to consider this at three levels. There are three different perspectives on repentance here.

Firstly, he did not repent from despising the birthright. We have already said that. More foundationally, he did not repent from his projection. We are not saying that if he did find repentance concerning despising the birthright, then he would have received the blessing, because the blessing did not belong to him. The blessing of the firstborn belonged to Jacob. If he had repented in relation to despising it, I think what should have happened should have been a fellowship discussion between the two boys and their father. Esau would offer the birthright to Jacob. He gives what he valued; he does not sell what he despises. That would have been a point of offering, and his name would not have been changed to 'Edom'. It would have been changed from 'hairy', because that did not need to define him; it could have been changed to (and Esau should have been named) something that means 'servant'. This is what Jacob found. His name means 'deceiver', but it was changed to 'Israel'. There was a predestination for Esau - it was to serve. More foundationally, he did not repent from his projection.

We will go more specifically here in terms of what he is crying about. What are all the tears about? Most specifically, he did not find any repentance by God. This is a very big point. It was not his own repentance that Esau looked for diligently with tears. He is not looking for that. He is searching for some ground of repentance from his father and then by implication from God Himself concerning what God had chosen for him.

I will digress briefly here. There are instances in the Scripture where God changes His mind and the one I am thinking of is when the nation of Israel is at the foot of Mount Sinai and they make the golden calf and the Lord says to Moses, 'You had better get down there. I am going to consume them in My wrath and then raise up a nation from you.' Moses immediately begins to intercede for the people. It says there that 'The Lord relented from the harm which He said he would do to His people.' Exo 32:14. The old King James

says, 'The Lord repented.' The New American says, 'The Lord changed His mind.'

The intercession of Moses was effective because Moses was interceding according to his name. The Lord invited Moses to intercede for the people according to his name. That is why He told Moses what He was about to do. It is the same point concerning Abraham interceding for Sodom. The key point is this: the intercession of Moses was effective because it was according to his name, but it was also calling the Lord back to His purpose from before the foundation of the world. He had chosen the nation of Israel, and He had chosen to give them the inheritance of the promised land. He did not choose to wipe them out at the foot of Mount Sinai. What He did was He turned back from the judgement, and He turned back to keep faith with His original purpose to give them time (or opportunity) for repentance. The intercessory prayer of Moses did not remove the need for the people to be sanctified. That is why Moses still goes down and says, 'Everyone who is with the Lord needs to stand with me.' Nor could Moses' intercession override the freedom of choice that all those people had. There was no way (it does not matter how great he was at intercessory prayer) of praying them into the promised land. As we have already heard, in the end, they did not choose and the Lord swore in His wrath, 'They will never enter My rest.'

We are talking about this principle of how the Lord changes His mind in relation to judgement, but He will never change His mind in relation to His calling or predestination for us. He was never going to change His mind in relation to Esau. He had chosen that Esau needed to serve his younger brother and that was not going to shift. But Esau is diligently looking for a shift. 'Will God please embrace my projection?' Practically, Esau wanted his father to change his mind and to revoke the blessing that he had given to Jacob. His tears demonstrated how much he wanted to inherit the blessing on his own terms.

Let us go to the book of Genesis and raise another point concerning this interaction - particularly concerning Isaac. This is Genesis chapter 27 verse 1. This clearly shows us what Esau is looking for with tears when we read this account. 'It came to pass, when Isaac was old... [Isaac was 137 years

old here. He was 60 when Jacob was born and Jacob is 77. That gives us Isaac's age: 60 plus 77 is 137. It says here] ...and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." ' Isaac's eyes were dim physically and spiritually. He had a veil over his eyes in relation to the culture of his own marriage and the sanctification of his own household. He could not see the nature of God's choice in relation to his two sons.

We know that the Lord had spoken to Rebekah about the two boys and we can only assume that Rebekah would have communicated that to Isaac; but Isaac was accountable here to seek the Lord in prayer, by lifting up holy hands without wrath or doubting. The Lord was not calling him to receive the word from his wife and say, 'Whatever you say, dear. I am doubting my own connection to the Lord and my obedience to Christ, so we will just run with whatever it is that you say.' The Lord was not asking him to do that; nor was the Lord asking him to react against what Rebekah was saying either in wrath, and do the opposite, and then preference Esau for whatever reason. We know that it was a split marriage because Rebekah loved Jacob and Isaac loved Esau and the fruit of the gap was seen in the children. There is a big point here for Isaac.

When Isaac was a young man, he knew the Lord, and he chose for himself to join the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings when he went up Mount Moriah with his father Abraham. We know that is true. Isaac chose that. When he came of age, that is what he chose. From his youngest years, Isaac was a God-fearer. Jacob testified to Laban that God was the fear of Isaac. It is a name that he used there to refer to the Lord — 'the fear of Isaac'. Isaac had chosen, but he did need to keep choosing, and his choice as a young man in relation to his own discipleship did not automatically extend to the culture and sanctification of his marriage and family.

We note this same principle with Moses, too. When Moses came of age, he chose to suffer reproach with the people of God rather than be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and receive all the riches of Egypt. He chose. That choice then did not automatically extend to the culture of his own marriage and family. When the Lord calls

him to deliver the people out of Egypt, he goes back and (as we have been looking at) the Lord met him there to kill him. The issue was the culture of his marriage and the sanctification of his children.

This is the same principle here for Isaac. Isaac was weak and sick here and at risk of dying before his time because of the lack of sanctification in his own marriage and family. We know the story. Rebekah overhears his intention to bless Esau. She makes some stew, and she dresses Jacob up in Esau's clothes and puts goat skin on his hands and his neck and sends him in to Isaac. Jacob lies three times here. It is amazing when you read the account. He out and out lies and he does it three times. He comes in and Isaac says, 'Who are you?' 'I am Esau.' 'How did you make the stew so quickly?' 'The Lord brought it to me.' And 'Are you really Esau?' 'Yeah, absolutely. I am.' This connects us back to Peter in the court of Caiaphas, too. Jacob is a liar.

I want to pick the account up here in verses 30 to 33: 'Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also made savoury food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me." And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?"' So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled exceedingly... [Sometimes you have to think about how you would respond in this situation. As this has suddenly dawned on him] ... Isaac trembled exceedingly and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came and I have blessed him - and indeed he shall be blessed." When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried [He sought this diligently with tears] with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me - me also, O my father." ' He is appealing to his relationship with his dad here. It was not possible for Isaac to revoke the blessing that he had given to Jacob, or even to share the blessing between the two boys even though they are twins. It *did* belong to Jacob. Even though Jacob initially obtained the blessing by deceiving his father, the blessing of the firstborn did belong to him. God does not change

his mind in relation to His sovereign choice. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Esau had to choose whether he would accept or reject what God had chosen for him, and whether God accepted or rejected him was all on the basis of whether he accepted or rejected what God had chosen for him.

Isaac clearly stated to Esau that the blessing upon Jacob could not be revoked. Additionally, he was clear that Esau needed to become a servant to Jacob. We will go down to verse 37. It says here, 'Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Indeed, I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"' ' That is an interesting question. 'What shall I do now for you, my son?' By posing this question, Isaac was communicating to Esau that it was not possible for him as his father to establish an alternative pathway. However, Esau did not accept this. He continued to plead for an alternative. Verse 38: 'And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me - me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.' This is real diligence here toward the weeping. He 'lifted up his voice and wept'. The tears of Esau were not the manifestation of godly sorrow. His tears were the manifestation of his anguish and bitterness because his father did not meet his carnal expectations.

This is the point that I want to conclude on. I think this is a wonderful point. The only person who received any illumination in this whole interaction was Isaac. He is the only one who received any illumination. This was a very messy situation. Rebekah had intervened to manipulate the whole scenario. Jacob was a 77-year-old man taking instruction from his mother and (as I said before), still playing dress-ups and also lying through his teeth. It is not looking good from Jacob's perspective either. Esau was a 77-year-old man throwing a tantrum on the floor. Now Isaac is also as blind as a bat, both physically and spiritually. However, in the middle of this very messy situation, Isaac gets the illumination. This is an amazing, amazing point.

He came to see that his fallen preference toward Esau and the fact that he had normalised Esau's godless behaviour for so many years had become a thick veil over his eyes. The veil was removed

from his eyes as he turned to the Lord. Even though his initial response is panic, he is trembling exceedingly. In the midst of this messy situation, he evidently then turns to the Lord. He turned to the Lord in the middle of this emotional and difficult situation. There was certainly a lot of emotion happening. Isaac's repentance was demonstrated by his willingness to stand in faith to confirm Jacob's blessing and equally to withstand Esau's carnal demands.

When Isaac withstood Esau, he really saw what was real. The moment he stood up and said, 'No, that is not you and I cannot embrace that,' then you get the tantrum. Then Isaac sees what is real. Let us highlight three amazing points here.

After Isaac repented and then joined the sufferings of Christ in the middle of this very messy and emotional situation, he began to receive resurrection life in his old age. That is why I made a point that he was 137 years old. Now Isaac is on his deathbed at 137 years old and he is so worried that he is about to die. That is why he sends Esau off to get the game so he can bless him and then presumably curl up his toes and die. That shows you where he is at. After this, he lives until he is 180 and he dies full of faith - full of years. He is there when Jacob comes back after the 20 years' sojourn and Jacob brings all the grandchildren back and they all live there with Isaac in tents in the same place that Abraham lived in tents with Isaac and Jacob. They are all living there in Hebron. We get back to three generations in the house here. There is resurrection life that Isaac received on the basis of this massive shift in his life. That is the first amazing point. That is an extra 43 years.

Secondly, we read in the book of Hebrews, chapter 11 verse 20, 'By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.' When I read the account, particularly the initial blessing of Jacob (when Isaac thinks it is Esau), I do not see a lot of faith there. This is an amazing thing, that once Isaac repented and turned to the Lord, and he embraces his participation with Christ, and then stands up in faith, the Lord reckons the whole messy situation as a faith initiative of Isaac. I think this is just remarkable. In the book of Hebrews, it records that 'by faith' he did this. There was not a lot of faith to start with. This really highlights that it is not how we start; it is

how we finish. That is what the Lord is particularly interested in, and if we make a shift, the Lord is very keen and willing to meet us on the basis of that repentance. The Lord's testimony concerning the whole matter then was that it was done in faith. That is not how it started, but that is how it ended. That is how the Lord viewed the matter. Isaac's blessing upon Jacob stands. Then we know that Isaac with clear eyes confirmed the blessing to Jacob as he sent him away to Laban's house, but the first blessing stands as well. Isaac did proceed to give Esau a blessing, but he did not bless Esau in response to his tears. Rather, he blessed him as an action of faith in a manner that was consistent with God's sovereign choice.

This brings us to the third amazing point concerning this whole interaction here as we finish. The two blessings were prophetic. 'By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.' Dan will particularly pick this up in his sessions. Let us read the prophecies here and register that this is all prophetic of what will be fulfilled in the time of the end. Isaac said to Jacob in Genesis 27 verse 28, 'Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let the people serve you, and *nations* bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you.'

Then we read Isaac's blessing to Esau. This is Genesis 27 verse 39: 'Then Isaac his Father answered and said to him: "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; and it shall come to pass, when you become restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck." ' The key point is that the prophecies are not fulfilled until the time of the end.

The prophecy to Jacob cannot be fulfilled until he has finished bowing seven times. The nations do not bow down to him until he has finished bowing seven times to the nations. Equally, the prophecy to Esau cannot be fulfilled until he has first served Jacob as part of those nations. He needs to be yoked before he can become restless and break the yoke. I will leave it there.

Part Two

We are going to continue looking at the profile of Esau this morning, considering this from a prophetic perspective, but at the same time, also considering the pastoral implications for us. I will begin by giving some context. We will gather up a couple of points that Dan made yesterday because we are going to continue looking at the history a little bit. I want to particularly focus on the Herods this morning.

After Isaac sent Jacob to Laban's house, Esau remained in the land of Canaan for some time. He lived there and we could say he misappropriated the dew of heaven (or the blessing) there in the land and he became quite rich - quite wealthy. He had great livestock. In the end, he decided... (of course he had already chosen that he did not want to serve his younger brother) ... he decided that the land was no longer fit to support both of them. It reminds you a little bit of the issue with Abraham and Lot. Esau decided the land was not sufficient. The reason he moved away from the land (the Scripture tells us very definitively) is that he wanted to be away from the presence of Jacob. That was the reason. And so he left. Then the Lord gave Mount Seir to him to become his inheritance. That became known as the land of Edom. That was not his predestination. It became his inheritance, but that was the place of his *damnation* not the place of his *salvation*. It is amazing then that the Lord sovereignly helped him to inherit that land. That is a very sobering and scary point. He did the same thing for the Moabites. He did the same thing for the Ammonites. He helped Esau and his descendants (they probably had angelic support) to conquer those regions and clear out whoever was there before them, and it became their inheritance.

As we heard yesterday, when the Jews, many years later, were conquered by Babylon (and that was a judgement upon them and a severe chastening for those who did turn to the Lord in repentance), the descendants of Esau (the Edomites) took advantage of that. They took advantage of the downfall of Judah in that regard. They went back into the land of Canaan, and they claimed the region to the south of Jerusalem (this is an amazing point) the region of Mamre (or Hebron) where Abraham previously dwelt with Isaac and Jacob in tents. The Edomites

moved in, and they claimed that as their own. That became known then as the land of Idumea. The Idumeans are the same descendants but with a different name. Idumea is just the Greek version of the Hebrew name Edom. That is important in terms of our context, because the Herods were Idumeans and they were the direct descendants of Esau.

When we consider the history of the Edomites or the Idumeans (same people, different name), and particularly of the Herodians, we observe that the journey of Esau began by despising the birthright. We looked at that yesterday. Then it runs a course, and it finishes (once we get to the Herods), with a false kingship. It moves from despising the birthright, then taking advantage to return to claim a false inheritance (as Dan called it yesterday), and then it runs to its full fruit with a false kingship. Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing which contained the rulership. He did not want to serve his brother. All along, the thing that he coveted more than anything else was the rulership. What Esau coveted, when we look at the Herods, they achieved. They achieved it using religious and political alliances. It is a false kingship. The reason that the Herodians persecuted Christ and then the church of the Firstborn is because they did not want to relinquish their claim to kingship. If you are anything like me, you see the term 'Herod' all the time in the Scriptures, and it is a bit confusing who is being referred to. To orientate us again today, there are four different Herods who are identified in the Scripture.

The first one is Herod the Great, and he was the ruler when Jesus was born. He is the one who really panicked when the three wise men (Moses, Elijah and Enoch) turn up looking for Christ. He is the one who slaughters all the babies and all the male infants under two years old in Bethlehem. He dies then very soon after Christ was born.

Then you have the next one who is Herod Antipas, and I am going to focus a little bit on him today. He was Herod the Great's son. When Herod the Great died his region was split into four and Herod Antipas was the ruler in the region of Galilee. He is the ruler during the time of John the Baptist and during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry. He is the one who killed John

the Baptist. We will look at that. He is also the one who used his soldiers to humiliate Christ. We will also look at that interaction today.

Then you have his nephew who is the grandson of Herod the Great. This is Herod Agrippa the First. He is the one who killed James with the sword. He saw that that pleased the Jews, so he arrests Peter. We know that Peter was miraculously delivered by the angel of the Lord on account of all the intercessory prayer in Mary's house. You will know all these accounts well. Herod Agrippa the First is the one who goes down to Tyre. He sits on his throne arrayed in his glorious apparel. He is a great orator, and they all start proclaiming, 'That is the voice of a god, not a man!' Then he is struck down by the angel of the Lord and eaten by worms and then he dies. It has always intrigued me that the worms come before the death. It is not very nice way to go. These are all dramatic stories.

Then you have the next one. His son is Herod Agrippa the Second, and he is the one who is referred to in the Scripture just as Agrippa - King Agrippa. He is the one who interfaced with the apostle Paul and said to him, 'You almost convinced me to become a Christian.' All these things are important for us.

What I want to do in terms of the history (because we are not interested in a history lesson) I am wanting to emphasise in relation to the history is that, when we look at the Herods, we observe the transition in the 'ancient hatred'. This is one of the major points looking at the Herods. They are the natural descendants of Esau, but when we consider each Herod, we see there is a transition taking place in the nature of the ancient hatred. Dan read the verse yesterday in Ezekiel where it attributes the ancient hatred to the descendants of Esau. That is Ezekiel 35 verse 5. The first expression of the ancient hatred is between Esau and Jacob. It is two brothers — it is two men, and it is between the two of them. But then we see it moves or continues between the natural descendants of Esau and the natural descendants of Jacob. You can run that through - all the different phases of that. But when we look at Herod the Great and Herod Antipas, the expression of the ancient hatred shifted from the Jews toward Christ, who is the true Firstborn.

Herod the Great is a very interesting case study. He was an Idumean, but he was a practising Jew. The Hasmoneans had conquered the Idumeans, and they forced them to convert to Judaism. They all became Jews, so they all had to be circumcised. Herod is a practising Jew, and he is also a Roman citizen. He flees to Rome and then gets the support of the Roman senate and comes back down into the land and he claims the whole thing by force. He has a whole Roman army behind him.

When you are looking at the progression, you see that it is always the strength of the sword, and it is always supported by an army. But the army keeps getting bigger. Esau turned up to claim the promised land with 400 men before he was disempowered. Then Herod the Great does what Esau could not do, and he turns up with a whole Roman army and he claims the false rulership there. Once you get to Antichrist (where we run the theme right to the end), he spends his three and a half years of rulership getting the largest army that the world has seen. He gets the armies of all the nations and gathers them together for Armageddon. (We will add an interesting point: When Christ returns there [physically returns for the battle of Armageddon], He is not coming back to bow seven times. Antichrist will definitely learn that the hard way on that day. But you see the armies getting bigger. That is a simple point I am making.)

Herod the great comes back and what we are also seeing is that Edom is becoming a code word for the world because it is integrating all these other cultures. Esau marries the daughter of Ishmael. He marries a princess because all of Ishmael's sons are princes, so that culture then is integrated into the descendants of Esau. We have everything that belongs to the flesh. Then you have the one in the royal line of Edom who goes and marries the princess (or the sister of the queen in Egypt) and so it pulls in everything to do with the world. Then when Herod the Great comes back (this is a very interesting one), he marries a Hasmonean princess. That integrates everything that belongs to the Maccabees and the Hasmoneans - everything that belongs to that religious zealot dynamic as well. You have got a very interesting confluence of all these principles that you then see in Herod and the Herods.

What I was just saying is that the ancient hatred is shifting. When we look at Herod the Great and Herod Antipas, it is shifting from the natural descendants of Jacob to Christ Himself who is the true Firstborn. Then when you get to Herod Agrippa the First, it shifts from Christ to the apostles of the early church. Herod Agrippa the First is putting James in prison; he is killing him. Then he is putting Peter in prison. That is where the ancient hatred is directed. Very interestingly, he puts Peter in prison because he sees that when he killed James, it pleased the Jews. So the ancient hatred is not toward the Jew. The ancient hatred shifted to the apostles of the early church. When you get to Paul and Herod Agrippa the Second (and this is a very significant one), it does not shift to Paul. Paul is establishing lampstand churches everywhere. His conflict (or his persecution) is not from Herod Agrippa who is pretty much the last in the natural lineage of Esau. It basically comes to an end then. But the whole principle of the ancient hatred shifting (and what Paul was contending with) is what is now *in* lampstand churches and going out *from* lampstand churches. So Paul was identifying the ancient hatred. We read this verse yesterday and I will read it again. This is Philippians 3 verse 18. It is shifting to the Nicolaitans in lampstand churches and then to the spirit of antichrist which is in the church and goes out of the church. Paul is saying in Philippians 3 verse 18: 'For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly [We can definitely connect that back to Esau - selling his birthright for one bowl of stew], and whose glory is in their shame - who set their mind on earthly things.'

Paul also writes to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4 verse 10, 'For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world.' This is an interesting one because Demas had been ministering with Paul and travelling with him. He is still with Paul when Paul wrote the letter to the Colossians and to Philemon. But then when he is writing the second letter of Timothy, he says, 'For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica.'

When we are looking now at where the ancient hatreds are operative now, the key is what

Malachi says concerning Jacob and Esau, 'Were they not brothers?' So it is now the principle that is operative among brethren. That is where it begins. What is born of God but then chooses to set its mind on the flesh and become offended when its projection is not embraced or blessed, leads to a root of bitterness that begins and ultimately departs.

As John says in 1 John 2 verse 18, it is the spirit of antichrist. 'Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming... [That is where we see it come to its full fruit - in Antichrist himself. But equally he says] ... As you have heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us... [so it is, 'Were they not brethren?'] ... They went out from us, but they were not of us.' So there is a receiving of the birthright, but there is a refusal then to actually participate (or be immersed) in the fellowship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. 'They were not of us; for if they would been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that none of them were of us.'

The final manifestation of this is Antichrist himself. When he exalts himself above the fellowship of the presbytery around the throne of the Father, he becomes offended when the idol in his heart is not blessed. He allows a root of bitterness to take root, and this ultimately leads to the great falling away.

I want to focus on Herod Antipas, orientating us there. When Herod the Great died, his realm was divided among his sons. One of his sons, Herod Antipas, became the ruler of the region of Galilee. It is significant that Herod Antipas was the first descendant of Esau to interface directly with the Elijah ministry. This is an interesting point. We know that John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah. He was the greatest of all the Old Testament prophets and he came to prepare the way for Christ by proclaiming the judgement of God upon the Jewish nation and calling the entire nation to repentance.

We know that the Lord has been restoring the Elijah ministry in our day, and the Elijah ministry is looking for worthy houses. The word that we have been receiving and the word that

we are receiving is addressing the culture of our marriages and the sanctification of our families.

Unsurprisingly, the thing that John the Baptist addressed when he confronted Herod Antipas was his marriage. He had a very sad, sorry situation. We will not worry about the specifics of that. I am just making the point that when the Elijah ministry interfaced with Herod Antipas, the thing that John addressed was Herod's marriage. He rebuked him because he had married his brother's wife. Her name was Herodias. It says here in Mark 6 verse 19, 'Therefore Herodias held it against him, and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [Verse 20] for Herod... [this is a very interesting verse]... for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.' Another translation says, 'He was very perplexed, but he used to enjoy listening to him.' There was no illumination (or understanding) coming, but he loved his preaching.

This is a very interesting profile which we can think about anecdotally. We are talking about where the profile of Esau begins, or what one element of it is. Herod Antipas loved the messenger, and he loved the word that he preached. He *respected* the messenger; he *esteemed* the messenger; he even *protected* the messenger. These are all very interesting things. He protected him, but he was unwilling to receive the word that had been preached to him (where the rubber really hit the road) in terms of the nature of his marriage and family. It is very interesting that he does not necessarily even identify the discrepancy in his life. His wife certainly did. She knew what John was saying, and she wanted to kill him. But Herod Antipas does not quite join the dots. He is very happy to disregard that, but at the same time, he loves listening to John preach.

Herod is a ruler, so this is another interesting profile. He is the ruler of the region of Galilee. He is a very powerful man, and he is on top of the pile. Among all the men there, he is the top dog. But at home, he is completely 'under the thumb' of his wife. She is running the show at home, so it is because of her that Herod puts John in prison. Then we know the story where his

daughter dances at the feast and he is enamoured by it. He says, 'What would you like? I will give you anything you like. I am willing to change my will right here and now. You can have half of the kingdom when I pass away.' She goes home and consults with mum. Mum says, 'Ask for the head of John the Baptist.' Herod Antipas is jammed. Let us read this here in Mark 6 verse 26. 'And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.' Verse 27: 'Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison.' Herod Antipas reluctantly granted her request to preserve his own honour and reputation before the nobles. In the end, he killed John the Baptist because of his own pride. This is an extreme example, but it shows how strong the desire to preserve our reputation is, and how hard we will fight to avoid being humiliated.

This becomes a very important theme for us when we consider the interface between Herod and Christ Himself. I am wanting to identify here what the leaven of Herod is, because this is a unique thing. Jesus says to his disciples, 'Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees', which we know is hypocrisy. That is pretending; that is acting. He says, 'Beware of the leaven of the Sadducees'. That is unbelief. They did not believe in the resurrection. But then He also says, 'Beware of the leaven of Herod.' He says that to His disciples, so that leaven was evidently among them. We heard yesterday (and I want to read this verse again) as we identify that the leaven of Herod is pride. There are two sides of the coin in relation to this, but it is the same element: it is pride manifesting itself two ways. We read yesterday in the prophecy of Obadiah which is a very unique book. It is the only book that is addressed exclusively to the descendants of Esau - the Edomites. Obadiah 1 verse 3 says, 'The pride in your heart has deceived you, you who dwell in the clefts of the rock, whose habitation is high; you will say in your heart, "Who will bring me down to the ground?"'

On one side of the coin, we are just talking about pride; but there are two manifestations here. On one side of the coin, the leaven of Herod is the desire to rule. It is the desire to be the greatest with all the wranglings that go with that. That

leaven was definitely among their disciples. We know that. They were constantly (right up until the last supper) arguing among themselves about who would be the greatest. And Jesus addressed that in them when He said in Luke 22 verses 24 to 26, 'Now there was a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors'. [This is the kind of rulership that Herod is looking for (or Esau is looking for)] ... But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves." ' We know that Christ Himself exemplified this attitude and demeanour which belongs to the Firstborn when at the Last Supper, He girded Himself with a towel like a servant and then washed His disciples' feet and said, 'I have done this as an example to you. You need to learn to serve one another and wash one another's feet as well.'

This brings us to another point, which is the flip side. Peter initially reacts because he is feeling a bit humiliated by Jesus taking His sandals off and exposing the nature of His feet and girding Himself with a towel and washing his feet. The flip side here of this leaven is the desire not to be humiliated. We know that Peter did allow Jesus to wash his feet, but once he gets down to the court of Caiaphas, he is struggling with this again. In the end, his desire to preserve his reputation among his Jewish community was even stronger than his desire to prove to Jesus that he was a religious zealot - a great disciple. It is very, very strong - this desire that rests within our heart to preserve our reputation and to avoid humiliation.

We will look at the interface here between Jesus and Herod as we are drawing to a close. It is interesting that when Herod Antipas hears about Jesus, he thinks that John the Baptist has been raised from the dead. He is aware that he is interfacing with a certain kind of ministry and Jesus was the source of the Elijah ministry. In one sense, he might have thought he had got rid of the problem, but now he has a greater problem. The source of the whole Elijah ministry is here and so it is accounted to Jesus that Herod wants to kill Him. He says, 'You go and tell that fox...'

He calls him a fox because he was only there because of his religious and political alliances. It was his cunning. That is why he was there. It was false. It was not authentic or genuine. 'Go and tell that fox that today and tomorrow I am doing miracles and on the third day [speaking about His offering], I am going to be perfected.' We will not read that verse.

I just want to look at the actual interface between Jesus and Herod Antipas on Jesus' offering journey. We will pick this up in Luke, because we have a lot of prophetic themes that are all converging in this very significant interaction. Now this is Luke 23 verse 7. 'As soon as he [Pilate] knew that Jesus belonged to Herod's jurisdiction [because he was a Galilean], he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.' Again, we could just anecdotally say that Pilate is trying to give Jesus the right to justice. He is a Galilean citizen and so he sends Him to Herod. Pilate was the governor of Judea; Herod Antipas was the ruler of Galilee. Even though Jesus was being accused of crimes in Pilate's jurisdiction, He was one of Herod's subjects, so he sends Him there. He wants to give Him the right to justice. I am going to play on this a bit. Verse 8: 'When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; ... [It is hard to pin these guys down because he is trying to kill Him, but then he is also exceedingly glad when he sees Him.] ... he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.' That is why he wanted to see Him. Verse 9: 'Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing.' That is a very significant statement. When we are looking at Jesus' offering journey, we know (and the Scripture says), 'He opened not His mouth.' There are a number of layers to that. We know at every point, Jesus, when He was reviled, He did not revile in return. And equally, even when He is interfacing with Pilate and the scribes and the Pharisees (the Sanhedrin), He is not answering the lie. When He does open His mouth, He is always bearing witness to the truth. There are a number of layers to this; but where the Scripture says, 'He opened not his mouth', just full stop. This is the occurrence here where Jesus literally had *nothing* to say. He did speak when he was in the court of Caiaphas; He did speak before

Pilate; but when He is standing before Herod, He literally 'opened not His mouth' - nothing to say at all. Herod had already rejected the message of the Elijah ministry. There are a number of threads here and we will not get them all; but I will try to lift out a couple here.

Herod had already rejected the message of the Elijah ministry that had been proclaimed to him by John the Baptist. There is a big point there, that Jesus said when He sent the 72. They were the expression of the Elijah ministry there, looking for worthy houses. He said to them, 'If someone receives you, they are receiving Me; but if someone rejects you and rejects the word that you are proclaiming, they are rejecting Me, and they are rejecting My Father who sent Me and there is nothing more to be said to them.' So Jesus had nothing to say to Herod Antipas because Herod Antipas had already rejected the messenger to him. That is a very big point for each and every one of us. If we reject the word of the messenger, Christ closes his mouth; 'He opens not His mouth'; 'there is nothing more to say'. The only other guy that we see this with in terms of the offering journey is the unbelieving thief. Jesus had nothing to say to him either.

Now Herod Antipas (as the descendant of Esau) had the opportunity to recognise Jesus as the true Firstborn - the seed of Abraham to whom all the promises of God had been made. In this interaction, Herod should have bowed his knee before Jesus and committed himself to become His servant. He could have used his army to deliver Jesus. I do not think he would have even needed his army, because Pilate wanted him to be delivered too at this point. In contrast to this, Herod Antipas wanted Jesus to serve him by performing a miracle at his behest. He wanted to misappropriate the power of Jesus' ministry to validate his own claim of rulership. Herod Antipas was infuriated by the refusal of Jesus to bless his idol and to validate his projection as it says in verse 11: [We need to follow this theme in Isaiah] 'Then Herod with his men of war treated Him with contempt.' The old King James says, 'He set Him at naught.' The literal is that 'He humiliated Him.' This is the definitive point on His offering journey - where He was humiliated. We know that all this is being gathered up and included in His crucifixion; but he (Isaiah) picks this one up here where he says, 'He opened not

His mouth'. The Ethiopian is reading this, and Philip draws up beside the chariot and says, 'What are you reading?' The Ethiopian quotes in Acts 8 verse 32 that 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. [He immediately says] In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.'

This is where Christ is humiliated and His right as the true Firstborn was taken away. At the same time, we see the full manifestation of the ancient hatred here between the descendants of Esau and Christ Himself, the true Firstborn. We also see Jesus fulfilling the seven times bowing and as He is humiliated by Esau, He breaks the power of that, and He overcomes. The ground for the rulership of the true Firstborn is established. He yokes Herod and all his descendants to Himself and takes the whole thing to the cross.

When Jesus suffered at the hands of Herod and his soldiers, it was not the fulfillment of Isaac's prophecy concerning Jacob and Esau. That is, Christ did not rule over Herod, and nor did Herod bow his knee to Christ. Rather, Christ fulfilled the need for God's elect to bow seven times before Esau in order for them to overcome the world. Furthermore, as the conquering Slave, Jesus laid hold of Herod and of all the demonic principalities and powers that supported his rulership and energised his hatred, and He took them all with Him to the cross as the place of their eternal judgement. We will leave it there and I will invite Dan to come.