

## Commentary

### Session 5 – Day 1

#### Into the Word

##### Twins

The signs of family dissension appeared early. They wrestled in the womb, these twin boys who were as different as day and night. That struggle predicted a lifelong rivalry.

Rebekah named the firstborn Esau, meaning “hairy,” later nicknaming him Edom, meaning “red.” These words in Hebrew are plays on the words for Seir and Edom, which are the neighboring regions where Esau’s descendants settled. Father Isaac enjoyed this rough, easygoing son who was a skillful hunter, a man of the fields.

Rebekah named the younger son Jacob, which means “grabber,” because he grabbed his brother’s heel as he came from the womb. Rebekah adored Jacob, her quiet, serious son who was a shepherd, dwelling in tents. The two vocations, hunting and shepherding, portray two different ways of living off the land, inevitably in conflict. But the favoritism of the parents must have inflamed the sibling rivalry. Consider these sad words of Scripture: “Isaac loved Esau, ... but Rebekah loved Jacob” (Gen. 25:28).

##### Birthright

Jacob was smart; he was smooth. One day Esau showed up at Jacob’s campfire tired and hungry. “Grabber” blindsided his brother, turning down his request for a serving of lentil soup. “Sell me your birthright,” demanded the conniver.

Ancient laws of primogeniture gave a double portion of the inheritance to the oldest son. Jacob was demanding Esau’s firstborn rights. Esau, foolishly and impulsively, agreed to this outrageous demand, and this set in motion an even more heated rivalry between the two brothers. Later, Esau takes two Hittite wives, and we are told that they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 26:34-35).