YOVEL PUBLICATIONS

THE WEEKLY TORAH & PROPHETS

תּוֹלְדֹת

TOLDOT

The Generations of Isaac



> "Two nations are in your womb, and
> two peoples from within you will be separated."
>
> Genesis 25:23

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Torah: Genesis 25:19–28:9

Haftarah: Malachi 1:1–2:7

SCRIPTURE SOURCE

Scripture quotations are based on the World Messianic Bible British Edition (WMBB), a public-domain translation. Where the WMBB renders the Hebrew Divine Name as LORD or GOD, Yovel Publications uses YHVH in accordance with its house style. Such adaptations are editorial choices of Yovel Publications and are not part of the original WMBB text.

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WHY READ THE WEEKLY TORAH PORTION?

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For thousands of years, the people of God have gathered around the Scriptures to hear the words of Moses and the Prophets. The first followers of Yeshua did not regard these Scriptures as something belonging to a discarded religion or a bygone age. They were the Scriptures from which the Good News of Messiah was proclaimed.

The book of Acts gives us a wonderful glimpse of this practice. When Paul and his companions entered the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia on the Sabbath, we are told:

> *"After the reading of the Torah and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, 'Brothers, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, speak.'"*
>
> Acts 13:15

Paul then stood and proclaimed Yeshua from the story of Israel. The setting is important. The Torah and the Prophets were being read on the Sabbath, and it was from within that Scriptural framework that the apostles proclaimed Messiah.

Later in the same chapter, Gentiles also wanted to hear more:

> *"The next Sabbath, almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God."*
>
> Acts 13:44

The earliest proclamation of Yeshua was therefore not detached from the Torah and the Prophets. It grew naturally out of them.

MOSES WROTE ABOUT ME

♦ ♦ ♦

Perhaps no reason for studying Torah could be stronger than the words of Yeshua Himself. Speaking to those who searched the Scriptures yet failed to recognise Him, Yeshua said:

> *"For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"*
> John 5:46–47

MOSES WROTE ABOUT YESHUA.

That means Torah is not merely a collection of ancient laws and historical events. Within its pages are patterns, promises, shadows and prophetic pictures that point us toward Messiah.

The Passover lamb speaks of Him. The manna from heaven speaks of Him. The Rock in the wilderness speaks of Him. The tabernacle and priesthood speak of Him. The appointed Feasts speak of Him. The sacrifices, deliverances, covenants and great events of Torah continually prepare the reader to recognise the One who was to come.

Yeshua did not say that believing in Him should cause us to disregard Moses. He made the connection in the opposite direction: "If you believed Moses, you would believe me." And then He gave the sobering counterpart: "If you don't believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

This changes the way we approach the Torah. We are not returning to Moses instead of following Yeshua. We are reading Moses because we follow Yeshua, and because Yeshua Himself told us that Moses wrote about Him.

After His resurrection, Yeshua demonstrated precisely this way of reading Scripture. On the road to Emmaus:

> *"Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he explained to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."*
> Luke 24:27

Beginning with Moses, Yeshua showed His disciples the things written concerning Himself. That is the spirit in which these Weekly Torah Portion booklets are offered.

Each week we will walk through another portion of Torah, allowing Scripture to tell its own story while following the threads that run through the Prophets, the Writings and the Apostolic Scriptures. Along the way we will look for the patterns of redemption, covenant, Kingdom and restoration—and above all, we will look for Yeshua.

"HE WROTE ABOUT ME."

So open the Torah. Give ear. And let us discover what Moses has to tell us about Messiah.

A PRAYER BEFORE WE BEGIN

♦ ♦ ♦

The Psalmist prays directly to YHVH:

> *"Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of your Torah."*
> Psalm 119:18

And so, before opening this week's portion, let us make that prayer our own:

> *YHVH, open our eyes as we open Your Word. Give us ears to hear and hearts ready to receive. Show us the wondrous things in Your Torah, and above all, help us to recognise Yeshua, the One of whom Moses wrote. Lead us by Your Spirit into truth, understanding and faithful obedience. Amen.*

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THE TORAH

TOLDOT

תּוֹלְדוֹת

Generations

Genesis 25:19–28:9

The struggle, the birthright and the blessing.

Who Holds the Inheritance?

♦ ♦ ♦

Two brothers. One inheritance. And a question that runs from the first pages of Scripture to the last: who is the real thief?

Toldot means generations. The portion opens with the generations of Isaac, and within a few verses we are inside a household at war. Two sons are born. One will sell the family birthright for a meal. The other will receive the blessing of Abraham. And the brother who sold it will accuse the other of stealing it.

Most of us were taught to read the story as Esau tells it, with Jacob as the supplanter, the man who took what was not his. But that verdict comes from one voice, in one bitter moment: Esau's. Scripture tells it differently.

Yeshua showed us how to recognise a thief:

> *"The thief only comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."*
> John 10:10

The thief is the enemy. He is also the one who speaks the lie. Yeshua said of him that "he is a liar, and the father of lies," and Revelation names him: "the old serpent, he who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world."

Thief. Liar. Deceiver.

Toldot is where those names take shape inside a family. Esau and Jacob become two peoples, Edom and Israel, and Scripture follows them to the conflict at the end of the age. The answer is worked out across the whole Bible, but it begins before either child is born.

Paul tells us why this family matters:

> *"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. He doesn't say, 'To descendants', as of many, but as of one, 'To your offspring', which is Messiah."*
> Galatians 3:16

One offspring, and that offspring is Messiah. So everything depends on the line that leads to Him. The promise must pass from Abraham to Isaac, and from Isaac to one of two sons. The enemy's purpose is to seize that line or destroy it, and Toldot shows how he works: from inside the family, and with an accusation.

That is the question we will carry through this portion and its Haftarah. Who is the real thief and deceiver? And who will hold the inheritance until the King comes?

The Struggle in the Womb

♦ ♦ ♦

Genesis 25:19–28

Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah, and the marriage began where Abraham's had begun, with a barren wife. Sarah had been barren. Rebekah was barren. Rachel would be barren. The line of promise is never produced by human strength; it is given. Isaac entreated YHVH, YHVH answered, and Rebekah conceived.

Isaac is a picture of the promised Son, and Rebekah, fetched from a far country to a bridegroom she had never seen, is a picture of the bride. It matters what is born from this marriage.

Then the trouble began.

> *"The children struggled together within her. She said, 'If it is like this, why do I live?' She went to enquire of YHVH."*
>
> Genesis 25:22

The Hebrew word for struggled is Ratzatz, a word of violence, used elsewhere of crushing and breaking. Rebekah was in distress, and notice where she took it. She went to YHVH and asked Him. He answered her before either child had drawn breath:

> *"Two nations are in your womb. Two peoples will be separated from your body. The one people will be stronger than the other people. The elder will serve the younger."*
>
> Genesis 25:23

Two nations, two peoples. That is the immediate meaning, and Scripture follows it exactly: Esau became Edom, and Jacob became Israel. Yet the order is the surprise. The elder will serve the younger, which reverses the way of the world. Paul reaches back to this verse in Romans 9 and says it

was spoken when the children were "not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad," so that the purpose of God might stand "not of works, but of him who calls." The promise rests on the calling of YHVH. It was settled before either boy could earn it or lose it.

This is how YHVH works throughout Scripture. He respected Abel, not Cain. He named the offspring through Isaac, not Ishmael. He chose Jacob, not Esau, and Ephraim, not Manasseh. Each time the younger is chosen, and each time the pattern points past itself to the Gospel: "that which is spiritual isn't first, but that which is natural, then that which is spiritual." The first man is of the earth. The second Man is the Lord from heaven.

So the struggle in the womb is not a contest between two characters. It is older than character. It is the war of two lines, and we have met that war before. In the garden YHVH spoke to the serpent:

> *"I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel."*
> Genesis 3:15

Two offspring. Hostility between them. A head, and a heel.

That is the first promise of the Gospel, and the enemy has fought it ever since. Through Abel and Seth, Ishmael and Isaac, the line of the woman's Seed narrows, and at every step something rises to cut it off. Now it narrows to one of two sons, and the enmity is already in the womb.

Now return to Rebekah's womb. The first child came out red, like a hairy garment, and was named Esau. Then:

> *"After that, his brother came out, and his hand had hold on Esau's heel. He was named Jacob."*
> Genesis 25:26

A hand on a heel, in the first moment of life. The heel is the place of conflict in Genesis 3:15, and here one brother has hold of the other's. The war between the woman's offspring and the serpent's has entered the house of Isaac.

But the heel carries more than conflict. The name Ya'acov is built on Aqev, the heel, and the same root gives the Hebrew word Eikev, which means "because".

Heel. Because.

In this very portion YHVH uses that word over this very family. When He confirms the oath to Isaac, He says it stands "because Abraham obeyed my voice" (Genesis 26:5), and that "because" is Eikev. The child born holding a heel is the child of the "because".

The word reaches further than Genesis. A whole Torah portion is named for it. In Deuteronomy 7:12 Moses says:

> *"It shall happen, because you listen to these ordinances and keep and do them, that YHVH your God will keep with you the covenant and the loving kindness which he swore to your fathers."*
> Deuteronomy 7:12

"Because you listen" is Eikev, and the portion is called Eikev. On the far side of that "because" stand not wages but covenant and loving kindness, sworn to the fathers. Hearing and obeying is the faithful response of those whom YHVH has already chosen, and the promise rests on His oath. So the heel at Ya'acov's birth points forward, to a blessing that flows to those who hear the voice of YHVH and keep His word, as Abraham did. The heel is important. It announces the "because".

Abraham's obedience was the first "because". The last "because" is the obedience of the Seed, as Paul writes:

> *"For as through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one, many will be made righteous."*
> Romans 5:19

Because of Him we receive the blessing and the inheritance of eternal life. Abraham obeyed, and the promise was confirmed. Messiah obeyed, and in Him the promise is fulfilled.

The struggle in Rebekah's womb is the struggle in every believer. Paul says that "the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Galatians 5:17). Flesh and Spirit are at war inside us, as Esau and Jacob were at war inside her.

The boys grew, and Scripture sketches them in a single verse. Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field, and Yeshua said that "the field is the world." Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents.

Those were no ordinary tents. Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born (Genesis 21:5). Isaac was sixty when the twins were born (Genesis 25:26). Abraham died at a hundred and seventy-five (Genesis 25:7). Count it, and for fifteen years Jacob dwelt in tents with Abraham himself. Hebrews says it exactly: Abraham lived "dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." That is where Jacob learned the worth of the birthright and the promise, at the tent door of the man who had received them, while Esau was out in the field.

And the word for quiet is Tam. It means whole, complete, a man of integrity, and it is the word used of Job when Scripture calls him blameless and upright. That is the first word Scripture gives us about Jacob. Whatever label is fastened on him later, it is not Moses' label.

Isaac loved Esau, "because he ate his venison." The Hebrew reads Ki Tzayid Befiv, literally "because game was in his mouth." Rashi gives the Midrash reading: there was hunting in Esau's mouth, and he used to entrap his father and deceive him with his words. On that reading the deception in this house begins with Esau, who fed his father fair words along with his venison.

Rebekah loved Jacob. The household was already divided, as the oracle had foretold: Isaac with one son, and Rebekah with the other.

And the first words recorded between the brothers are about a meal.

The Birthright — Despised and Accused

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Genesis 25:29–34

Esau came in from the field, famished, and asked for some of the red stew that Jacob was cooking. That is how he was named Edom, the Red. Jacob's answer was brief:

> *"First, sell me your birthright."*
> Genesis 25:31

The birthright, the Bechorah, was the place of the firstborn: the double portion, the leadership of the family, and above all the inheritance of Abraham, the promise of the Seed. YHVH would one day say to Pharaoh, "Israel is my son, my firstborn." It was no trifle. Jacob did not take it. He asked for it, and he bought it, openly and under oath, as Abraham had bought the cave at Machpelah. Esau replied:

> *"Behold, I am about to die. What good is the birthright to me?"*
> Genesis 25:32

Esau was not dying. He was hungry. In one sentence the inheritance of Abraham is weighed against a bowl of stew and found lighter. To Esau the birthright was a burden for tomorrow, and the stew was a certainty today. That is the voice of the flesh: *I am hungry now. What good is a promise tomorrow?* It is the indulgence of the flesh, which sells eternal things for a bowl of stew. Then Scripture gives its own verdict:

> *"Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. He ate and drank, rose up, and went his way. So Esau despised his birthright."*
> Genesis 25:34

Scripture does not say that Jacob stole the birthright. It says that Esau sold it, and that Esau despised it. Hold on to that, because Esau will later tell the story differently.

Hebrews uses him as a warning to believers, a "profane person, like Esau, who sold his birthright for one meal." Paul describes the same kind of person as one "whose god is the belly." The pull is as old as the garden, where the woman saw that the tree "was good for food," and ate.

Esau's failure was not that he was hungry. Hunger is no sin. His failure was that when the satisfaction of the moment was set beside what YHVH had given him, he judged the gift to be worth less. Jacob valued what Esau despised, and that is the difference between those who hold an inheritance and those who lose it.

The same test came to Yeshua. After forty days without food, the tempter said:

> *"If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."*
> Matthew 4:3

He was as hungry as Esau ever was, and the tempter used the same lever. Yeshua answered from Deuteronomy 8, where YHVH says that He "allowed you to be hungry" in the wilderness, to teach Israel what it would live by:

> *"It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of God's mouth.'"*
> Matthew 4:4

Adam ate and fell. Esau ate and despised. The true Firstborn refused, because He valued the word of His Father above the bread in front of Him. The bread He would not make from stones, He gives from heaven: "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not be hungry." He is

"the firstborn amongst many brothers," and those who belong to Him have come to "the festal gathering and assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven."

That is where we come in. Those who belong to Messiah are counted among the firstborn, and that inheritance was given by grace, not earned. Yet the choice that came to Esau comes to every believer. Whenever the flesh presses to be satisfied now, whether by appetite, comfort or indulgence, we stand where Esau stood at the pot of stew and must decide what the inheritance is worth. The birthright is a share in the Kingdom that Messiah will bring, and it is never worth trading for something that will be gone by evening.

Rebekah shows the better way. In her distress she did not rely on her own judgement. She enquired of YHVH. When the struggle within us is more than we can sort out, that is where we go first.

Esau went on his way, and the matter was finished. The birthright had passed to his brother by his own oath. But Esau did not leave it there. When the blessing went to Jacob, he would call the sale a theft.

The Wells

♦ ♦ ♦

Genesis 26:1–33

The thief rarely begins by taking the inheritance. He begins by taking what feeds it.

A famine came, and YHVH appeared to Isaac with a command and a promise. Do not go down to Egypt. Live in the land. The Hebrew word for living there is Gur, to live as a stranger. Egypt had grain, and the land had only the promise.

> *"I will establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father...*
> *In your offspring all the nations of the earth will be blessed,*
> *because Abraham obeyed my voice."*
>
> Genesis 26:3–5

That "because" is the Eikev we met at Ya'acov's heel. The promise reached Isaac as a gift, secured by YHVH's oath and Abraham's faithful obedience, and not as wages that Isaac could earn. Isaac stayed in the land, sowed, and reaped a hundredfold, and the Philistines envied him.

Envy is the sin of the tenth commandment: "You shall not covet your neighbour's house." The envious cannot receive the blessing, so they attack its source. In a dry land the wells were the inheritance, and the Philistines filled them with earth. The enemy cannot cancel the promise. He stops the water.

Isaac did not fight for the wells, and he did not give them up. He dug again the wells of his father, and "called their names after the names by which his father had called them."

The new wells met the same hostility. The first was Esek, contention. The second was Sitnah, and the name is built on the root of Satan, the Adversary. The same word appears in Ezra 4:6 for an accusation written

against the people of Judah. Where the inheritance is held, the accusation arrives. Isaac moved on and dug again, and at the third well no one argued.

> *"For now YHVH has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."*
> Genesis 26:22

Rehoboth means room, and room is what the accuser cannot take away. At Beersheba He appeared again with the word, "Don't be afraid, for I am with you." Isaac built an altar, called on the name of YHVH, pitched his tent, and only then did his servants dig a well. Altar, then tent, then water. That very day they came to him: "We have found water."

Water in a dry land is Scripture's oldest picture of salvation. At another well, Yeshua spoke to a woman of Samaria:

> *"Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."*
> John 4:14

Isaiah looked ahead to that day: "With joy you will draw water out of the wells of salvation." The Hebrew for salvation is Yeshuah, the root of the Name Yeshua.

Isaac kept his father's wells against envy and accusation. But an inheritance must also be handed on, and the handing on of it is a blessing. That blessing was about to be tested inside Isaac's own tent.

The Blessing and the Accuser

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Genesis 26:34–28:9

Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, and he called Esau, his elder son, to bless him. Esau had already sold the birthright. YHVH had already spoken over the womb. Yet Isaac set out to bless Esau, the son whom YHVH had said would serve.

Rebekah heard, and what followed was her plan. She called Jacob and told him what to do: "Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command you." It was a command, and Jacob was bound to honour his mother. He answered that he would bring a curse on himself and not a blessing. She replied:

"Let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice, and go get them for me."

Genesis 27:13

Rebekah did not act on a whim. She had herself inquired of YHVH about the struggle in her womb, and she had heard His answer: "The elder will serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23). She saw the blessing of the promise about to go to the son YHVH had said would serve, and she moved to guard it for the line of the Seed and the Kingdom to come. She took the curse upon herself to do it.

Everything that followed was hers: the meal, the clothing, the skins, the bread put into Jacob's hand. Jacob did what his mother commanded, and Scripture says of him, "Jacob obeyed his father and his mother." She bore it herself, and she sent her son away for "a few days," and Scripture never records her seeing him again.

"Let your curse be on me, my son."

Hear those words again in a greater key: "Messiah redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Rebekah is a picture of the One who took the curse upon Himself, so that the heirs might receive the blessing.

The curse fell on Him. The blessing is ours.

Isaac had to weigh a voice against a touch.

> *"Jacob went near to Isaac his father. He felt him, and said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.'"*
> Genesis 27:22

Isaac knew the voice, yet he followed his hands. Even so, the blessing he spoke was the very blessing YHVH had decreed:

> *"Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers. Let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you. Blessed be everyone who blesses you."*
> Genesis 27:29

Peoples serve. Nations bow down. This is no household inheritance. It is the language of the Kingdom. Hebrews says, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come." That commends his faith in what YHVH would do, and it is not an endorsement of how the first blessing was arranged. When Isaac learned what had happened, he trembled and said, "Yes, he will be blessed."

Then Esau came in, and he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry.

> *"Isn't he rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright. See, now he has taken away my blessing."*
> Genesis 27:36

"He took away my birthright." Esau had sold it, under oath, with the stew still in his mouth. "He has supplanted me." Jacob, Ya'acov, the name given at the heel, Esau now turns into a charge: supplanter, thief. The label is Esau's. Scripture introduced Jacob as Tam, and Moses never calls him a thief.

Hebrews tells us what the tears meant. Esau "desired to inherit the blessing," and "sought it diligently with tears," but found "no place for a change of mind." He wept for the blessing and the riches, not for repentance before YHVH. There is a grief that wants back what it threw away, and a grief that turns to YHVH. Esau's was the first.

Here Scripture shows the accuser's pattern in miniature. One who despised the inheritance turns on the one who holds it and says, you stole. John sees where such accusation ends:

> *"Now the salvation, the power, and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah has come; for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them before our God day and night."*
> Revelation 12:10

Zechariah saw the same figure standing before the angel of YHVH, with "Satan standing at his right hand to be his adversary." Satan means the accuser, and behind every such accusation stands the thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy, the liar who "was a murderer from the beginning." First the accusation, then the plan: he "said in his heart, 'The days of mourning for my father are at hand. Then I will kill my brother Jacob.'"

Rebekah heard of it, and Jacob went to Laban. Isaac called him and now, knowing everything, blessed him again:

> *"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, that you may be a company of peoples, and give*

you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your offspring with you…"
Genesis 28:3–4

This is the blessing that matters: the promise of the Seed, spoken openly. Jacob left for Paddan Aram. Esau kept his hatred.

That hatred did not die with Esau. It ran down his line to Amalek, Esau's grandson (Genesis 36:12), and in him it becomes the hatred of a nation.

Israel had hardly come up out of the sea when Amalek attacked.

"Then Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim."
Exodus 17:8

Moses later recalled it:

"Remember what Amalek did to you by the way as you came out of Egypt, how he met you by the way, and struck the rearmost of you, all who were feeble behind you, when you were faint and weary; and he didn't fear God."
Deuteronomy 25:17–18

Amalek struck the rearmost, the feeble, the faint and the weary, not the army at the front. That is the enemy's way. It was the first attack on the people of the promise, and YHVH answered with an oath:

"YHVH will have war with Amalek from generation to generation."
Exodus 17:16

Not one battle, but a war that runs down the ages. This is the enmity of Genesis 3:15 in its next form, and Amalek is the arch-enemy of Israel.

The womb, the heel, the birthright, the accusation and the war of Amalek all run into the last of the Prophets, who takes up the story where Genesis leaves it: "Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother?"

THE PROPHETS

HAFTARAH

Malachi 1:1–2:7

Love remembered, the table despised, honour restored.

Malachi — Despising the Gift

♦ ♦ ♦

Malachi 1:1–2:7

Malachi is the last voice of the Prophets, and his first words are a declaration of love. Israel asks, "How have you loved us?" And the answer is a question that takes us straight back to Toldot.

> *"'I have loved you,' says YHVH. Yet you say, 'How have you loved us?' 'Wasn't Esau Jacob's brother?' says YHVH, 'Yet I loved Jacob; but Esau I hated, and made his mountains a desolation, and gave his heritage to the jackals of the wilderness.'"*
>
> Malachi 1:2–3

Paul quotes this verse in Romans 9:13 beside the oracle over Rebekah's womb. Jacob was loved before he had done anything, and that is grace. Esau's house lost its heritage by what it did with it: it sold, despised and hated.

Edom did not stay in Genesis, and it did not fall silent after Amalek. Centuries later an Edomite sat on the throne of Judea, Herod the Idumaean, and when the wise men did not return he "sent out and killed all the male children who were in Bethlehem." Revelation shows who moved behind him: "The dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child." The head and the heel have never stopped their war.

Ezekiel's prophecy against Mount Seir names the same hostility:

> *"Because you have had a perpetual hostility, and have given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time of the iniquity of the end."*
>
> Ezekiel 35:5

Mount Seir is Edom, and Edom still reached for the inheritance:

> *"Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries will be mine, and we will possess it,' although YHVH was there."*
> Ezekiel 35:10

That is Esau grasping again, and he could not see that YHVH was there. Ezekiel 36 gives the answer. The mountains return to Israel: "They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance" (Ezekiel 36:12). The heirs receive what Esau tried to seize.

And Edom's answer in Malachi's day is defiance:

> *"Whereas Edom says, 'We are beaten down, but we will return and build the waste places,' YHVH of Hosts says, 'They shall build, but I will throw down; and men will call them "The Wicked Land," even the people against whom YHVH shows wrath forever.'"*
> Malachi 1:4

Edom will build. YHVH will throw down. It is the old contest: the one who sold what he was given, trying to build for himself what he threw away. Obadiah carries the verdict to its end:

> *"Saviours will go up on Mount Zion to judge the mountains of Esau, and the kingdom will be YHVH's."*
> Obadiah 1:21

That is where the thread ends, not with ruins but with a Kingdom. Isaiah sees the same day from the other side: "Who is this who comes from Edom?" The answer comes: "It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." The King comes to Edom's own door. And Revelation 12 shows the dragon thrown down, then going off to make war with the

rest of the woman's offspring, who "overcame him because of the Lamb's blood."

But Malachi does not stop at Edom. Having shown the enemy outside, he turns to the enemy inside.

> *"A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, then where is my honour?… You offer polluted bread on my altar. You say, 'How have we polluted you?' In that you say, 'YHVH's table is contemptible.'"*
>
> Malachi 1:6–7

The Hebrew for despise is Bazah, the very word Genesis uses of Esau and his birthright. Esau despised the birthright for a bowl of stew. The priests despised the table of YHVH, and brought blind, lame and sick animals to it. They would not have offered such gifts to a governor. They still kept the altar and the table, but they no longer valued what they kept. The spirit of Esau is not only outside Israel. It can stand at the altar. Whoever treats the inheritance as ordinary, whether a priest in Malachi's day or a believer who handles bread and cup as routine, is standing where Esau stood. Paul warns: "he who eats and drinks in an unworthy way eats and drinks judgement to himself if he doesn't discern the Lord's body."

And the same word reaches the cross. Isaiah says of Messiah, "He was despised and rejected by men." Bazah. Esau despised the birthright; the table was despised; and the true Firstborn was despised, by those who held the altar and by all of us in our own way. YHVH warned the priests what that road leads to: "I will send the curse on you, and I will curse your blessings."

Against that warning YHVH sets the pattern He intended:

> *"My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him that he might be reverent towards me; and he was*

reverent towards me, and stood in awe of my name. The law of truth was in his mouth, and unrighteousness was not found in his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many away from iniquity."
Malachi 2:5–6

This is Levi's birthright. Life and peace were given as a covenant gift, and reverence was the response that kept it. Out of reverence came truth in the mouth, a walk with YHVH, and a ministry that turned many from iniquity. The priest stood as "the messenger of YHVH of Hosts," and the heir who honours the gift becomes a blessing to others.

And the one who despised may return. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," David wrote. "O God, you will not despise a broken and contrite heart."

Two houses stand side by side in the last of the Prophets. Esau's despised and was thrown down. Levi's was given life and peace, and honoured the Name. The heirs must choose, and the question we began with has not changed. Who will hold the inheritance until the King comes?

Living as Heirs

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We began with a question. Who is the real thief, and who will hold the inheritance until the King comes?

Esau sold the birthright and then called his brother a thief. He cannot cancel what YHVH has given, so he persuades the heirs to sell it for something they can eat tonight, and when it is sold he accuses those who still hold it. He is the thief, the liar and the deceiver of the whole world.

But the Seed has come. The heel was bruised, and the serpent's head is crushed. Paul says, "The God of peace will quickly crush Satan under your feet." Those who belong to Messiah are counted among the firstborn, enrolled in heaven, by grace and not by merit. The inheritance was given.

The day is coming when the accuser of our brothers is thrown down. Obadiah's last words tell us what follows: "the kingdom will be YHVH's." Until then, the risen Yeshua says to those who wait:

"I am coming quickly! Hold firmly that which you have, so that no one takes your crown."
Revelation 3:11

Hold firmly. Dig the wells again when envy fills them. Honour the table. Keep the birthright. And as the overcomers did: "They overcame him because of the Lamb's blood, and because of the word of their testimony. They didn't love their life, even to death."

Esau sold his birthright for one meal. These heirs would not sell theirs at any price.

Will we hold it?

Yes, come, Lord Yeshua!

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The Blessing



"May God give you of the dew of heaven
and of the fatness of the earth."

Genesis 27:28

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