

# Grace Alone

## Genesis 33:9

**And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself.**

Jacob and Esau were sons of Isaac. They were fraternal twins. I have been a Baptist all of my life, and have often heard these boys discussed. Without a doubt, the twin most favored among my acquaintances over the years has been Jacob. Small wonder, really, since my friends were, for the most part, Baptist folk. That being the case they had at least some knowledge of scripture and therefore knew that The Lord is on the record as having loved Jacob and hated Esau. I have always wondered a bit about that.

It would seem to me that, were I making a judgment as to which I might invite to join my fraternity, I would be looking most favorably on young Esau. He is a man's man. He is stronger than his brother. He hunts. He is hairy. He is kind to his daddy. He is the firstborn. The icing on the cake, I think, is that he is a really fine cook!

Jacob just doesn't look that good to me! Starting with the man's name. It means, in the original: Supplanter. That is one who displaces or supersedes. The implication is that all of the displacing and superseding is accomplished through some kind of scheming strategy. The scriptural record does not hide the fact that Jacob has lived up to his name. He has gotten the birthright of his brother by coercion. He has received the blessing that ought to have been Esau's from his Father Isaac by deception. He has been aptly named! He *is* a schemer! He *is*, in fact, a supplanter!

Another truth emerges here. It is one that diminishes men and greatly exalts God: The Father *will* have mercy on whom He *will* have mercy! For reasons that seem good to The Creator, He is determined to bless Jacob in spite of his un-loveliness and so Jacob *will* be blessed. Before we make a lot of garish signs and begin some big demonstration on behalf of Esau, let us look more closely at him through the transaction illuminated by our verse.

Jacob is returning to his homeland. There he encounters his brother who has sworn to kill him. When the brothers meet, as inevitably they must, we find Jacob at a significant disadvantage. Not only is Esau bigger and stronger than his brother, but he also has with him 400 men. All the chips are on Esau's side of the table. If there is ever going to be an opportunity for Esau to have his birthright and its attendant blessing restored, this is that time.

Esau is everywhere in scripture used to represent the natural man. Look closely at what he does. He despised his birthright on the evening when he sold it to his brother for a dish of stew. He despises it still. He will opt for the things that may be seen. He is doing very well - thank you very much! He will leave the "pie in the sky" stuff for his brother Jacob! He is not

coerced! Had he ever so much time, his decision would be as it is here: He does not love spiritual things: He will not love them! His love is for this world. He would have it no other way!

Virtually every child of God has had a similar experience to that of Jacob here: Some relative, friend or loved one has looked with pity upon you there with your tattered bible in your hand and spoken condescendingly words something very much like this: "I know you believe all of that stuff. And, really, I am glad that it works for you! But as for me, I'll just stick with what I have!"

It is unlikely, given an identical gene pool, that Jacob is a lot brighter than his brother. It is grace that has altered his desires! That same grace is withheld from Esau. Remember "grace" is undeserved favor. Neither of these men deserves it. That being the case, God does no wrong in withholding it from Esau. Instead, Esau gets exactly what he wants and is very pleased in the bargain.

If you have received the grace of faith, do not take that unspeakable kindness for granted. Do not fail to fall on your knees tonight and thank the Lord for His goodness toward you. Also, do not forget to pray for the lost. The difference between you and the worst of our race is grace alone!

George Moore

Elder Emeritus