

Pleasant Valley  
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon  
Wichita KS 67204  
(316) 838-4195  
www.letjesusleadus.org

## Schedule of Services

### Sunday

Classes . . . . . 9:30 am  
Worship . . . . . 10:30 am  
Evening . . . . . 6:00 pm

### Wednesday

Classes . . . . . 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

# Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

January 13, 2008

## Esau, a profane man

by David King

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; . . . lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For 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" (Heb. 12:14-17).

In order to grasp the lesson in this passage, we need to first understand the concept of the birthright in ancient cultures. The birthright was a special privilege bestowed upon the firstborn by the father. The birthright consisted of the primary title to the family inheritance and the family name. To inherit the birthright was to accept the position as spiritual head of the family. In the case of Abraham's descendants, it also meant being in the lineage of the Messiah.

The Greek word here translated "profane" literally means "lawful to be trodden." Like an old rag tossed aside in the dirt, to be trampled by passersby, that which is profane is considered common, worthless, of no value. That's a fitting description of how Esau treated his birthright. By bargaining it away to his brother Jacob for a single bowl of stew, he displayed a contempt for his birthright. It meant nothing to him. He was a "profane man" in the sense that he did not value that which was of great worth.

So why did Esau despise his birthright? Looking closely at the story (Gen. 25:29-34), it's obvious that Esau's decision was not based

on a careful evaluation of the birthright's value. Later, when the time came for Isaac to ceremonially pass the birthright on, Esau realized the folly of what he had done, and sought to reverse his earlier decision (Gen. 27). By then, of course, it was too late. ("He found no place for repentance" refers to seeking a change in his **father's** mind, not his own.)

Instead, Esau's earlier decision was a rash act motivated by the immediate craving of his fleshly appetite (in this case, hunger). In the original account, Esau reasoned, "I am about to die, so what is this birthright to me?" (Gen. 25:32). It's doubtful that Esau would die by missing one meal; yet his physical hunger blinded him to everything else. To borrow a modern phrase, Esau "lived for the moment," not bothering to think about the long-term implications of his short-term decisions. He was a slave of his passions, concerned only with satisfying the baser animal desires of his nature. So he sold his birthright.

The story of Esau's foolish bargain is a sobering lesson on the importance of maintaining a spiritual perspective on life. If we allow our fleshly appetites to dominate our lives, we will make equally dumb decisions, profaning a far greater birthright in favor of satisfying temporary carnal desires. Only when it is too late will we realize the folly of our shortsightedness.

How do we avoid becoming a profane person? Look again at our opening text: "Pursue holiness." Commit yourself to a search for that which is holy, sacred, special, and the profane will no longer blind you to what is important.