

Conquering the Greatest Enemy

by Stella Paterson

The greatest enemy we face is gaining ground at such a pace it is impossible to comprehend. This insidious enemy has infiltrated every area of life as we know it. Its disastrous influence has been so embraced that we will soon see the ultimate manifestation of this enemy in a world ruler.

For thousands of years, this "enemy" has been at the root of almost every problem. Its influence can be seen throughout Bible history, and its more recent influence is visible in the global crises that are emerging at a speed greater than an unstoppable avalanche. On a personal level there is hope. But on a global scale there seems to be no hope, even though promises of peace are already being made.

If we are going to understand how despicable in God's eyes this enemy is, we must hear His heart. If we are going to understand the necessity to conquer this enemy, we must obey His direction for us and allow the "conquering" to be accomplished. Now, let us see what He has spoken through His Word.

In order to come to a deeper understanding, this article will take a little different approach from that in *The Greatest Enemy-Exposed* where we learned its identity, as well as God's response to it. Of course, the enemy we are talking about is "flesh," or "self" to use a term that is more easily grasped. The Bible very clearly exposes the evil of man's flesh, at the same time as making a way to escape its clutches.

First of all, let's look at the far-reaching effects of flesh, and we will see how it will play a large part in what is soon to come upon the people of the earth. Although there are countless examples we could discuss, it is more relevant that we take a closer look at Abraham's family.

Abraham and Sarah

As the familiar story goes, Sarah was way beyond her child-bearing years, so when the Lord said she and Abraham would have a child, and ultimately a family as countless as the stars in the sky or the sand of the sea, Sarah found it unbelievable. She told Abraham to impregnate her maid, Hagar, so they would have a son to raise as their own. The son turned out to be Ishmael who was the son after the flesh. Abraham and Sarah had taken it upon themselves to "help" God accomplish His promise to them. But Ishmael was not the son God had promised.

When Abraham and Sarah came to believe that God would miraculously restore their youthfulness, things changed dramatically. Abraham had renewed strength

in his old age, and Sarah was able to conceive long after menopause. This time the son of promise was born, and his name was Isaac.

Ishmael

Upon learning she was pregnant, Hagar despised Sarah for giving her to Abraham "to wife." Sarah dealt harshly with her so Hagar fled from her presence. And when an angel of the Lord came to Hagar by a fountain, he said her "seed" would be multiplied innumerable. He also told her his name would be Ishmael, then He said this:

And he will be a wild man; **his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him**; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. (Genesis 16:12)

Hagar was not the only parent beseeching God on her son's behalf. When Abraham was on his face before God, he said "*O that Ishmael might live before you!*" Following the promise of another son and a covenant, God told Abraham

And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. (Genesis 17:20)

Out of Ishmael came what we know today as the "Arab" nations. The present day, as well as history, shows us that Ishmael's hand is indeed *against every man and every man's hand against him*. As the days progress we will see even more the influence of this "son according to the flesh." The one bright spot is that in many nations there are those who have come to know Jesus.

Isaac

When Abraham said to God, "*O that Ishmael might live before you,*" he was given this promise:

Sarah your wife shall bear you a son indeed; and you shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. (Genesis 17:19)

When Isaac's wife Rebekah was pregnant, the children in her womb were already struggling with each other. She asked the Lord about it and He told her,

Two nations are in your womb, and two manner of people shall be born; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. (Genesis 25:23)

These twins, Jacob and Esau, were the *two nations* born of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau came first, with Jacob following right after him with his hand holding his twin's heel. This seemed to set the tone for what was to come. As he grew, Jacob desired to have the place of the firstborn which would include the spiritual inheritance that it afforded. One day when Esau was very hungry, he came to Jacob who had made a pot of lentils. And when Jacob asked for Esau's birthright, this hungry man gave it up, just for some food to satisfy his fleshly hunger. As the Scripture passage tells us, Esau "despised his birthright." (Genesis 25:34)

As we all know, Jacob went on to become "Israel," and what a great nation he became! Geographically, Israel is one of the tiniest areas of land, yet it is becoming increasingly more central to all that is transpiring around the world.

Esau

Esau's birthright was to become the next in line after his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham, and ultimately carry the seed for generations forward to Messiah the Saviour of the world. Instead, he *despised* his birthright by allowing his younger brother to have it. This action on his part set in motion something that was irreversible.

Esau's choices brought grief to his parents, as we see in this passage:

And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beerli the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah. (Genesis 26:34-35)

I wonder if Isaac and Rebekah had foresight of the problems the Hittites would bring to Israel in the coming years?

What a rebel Esau was! But there is more about him throughout the Bible. For instance, he went to the infamous Ishmael, his uncle, and took for a wife the sister of Ishmael's firstborn.

Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath (later known as 'Bashemath') the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife. (Genesis 28:9)

Esau's intermarriage with the likes of Ishmael's daughter and those of the Hittites only made his place in history more of a blight against his brother, Israel's descendants. There was always conflict between the Edomites, who were Esau's descendants, and Israel. David spoke of this in Psalm 137. He was speaking of the treatment Israel received at the hand of the Babylonians, and at the end of the chapter he said

Remember, O LORD, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem; who said, Rase it, rase it [Hebrew: 'demolish it'], even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be, who rewards you as you have served us. Happy shall he be, that takes and dashes your little ones against the stones. (Psalm 137:7-9)

The prophet Jeremiah pretty much declared how unimportant this fleshly Esau [Edom] really was, and what his end would be, when he said

But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: **his seed is spoiled**, and his brethren, and his neighbours, and he is not [Hebrew: 'is a non-entity']. . . . Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goes by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbour cities thereof, says the LORD, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. (Jeremiah 49:10, 17)

Then we have Ezekiel prophesying similarly, saying

Thus says the Lord GOD; Because that Edom has dealt against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended, and revenged himself upon them; therefore thus says the Lord GOD; I will also stretch out my hand upon Edom, and will cut off man and beast from it; and I will make it desolate from Teman; and they of Dedan shall fall by the sword. And I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel: and they shall do in Edom according to mine anger and according to my fury; and they shall know my vengeance, says the Lord GOD. (Ezekiel 25:12-14)

Even though the "house of flesh" (if we could call Edom that), was so vengeful against the spiritual house of Judah, the LORD God was still Supreme, as He always is; and which we will see one day soon. Ezekiel 32:25-30 speaks more of the "end" that is in store for Edom, as well as others like him.

In Daniel 11:21, we learn of a "vile person" who arises and comes in *peaceably*, obtaining the *kingdom by flatteries*. According to the Hebrew word, "peaceably" means "*false sense of security*." And the word "flatteries" means "flattering remarks meant to persuade," or simply "smooth." In the ensuing verses we read of his "exploits" against the people and the "holy covenant," as well as the exploits of those who "do know their God." But before the end of the chapter, can be found a very interesting fact. Verse 41 tells us this:

He shall enter also into the glorious land, and many countries shall be overthrown: **but these shall escape out of his hand, even Edom**, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon.

How is it that, among the others, Edom, this rebellious man of flesh should seemingly be favored and escape? As a side note, we have to realize that Moab and Ammon were the offspring of incest between Lot and his daughters. (Genesis 19:31-38). The evil of flesh knows no limits. But there is a day of reckoning coming for the "vile person," as we see in the 45th verse of Daniel 11.

And he shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas in the glorious holy mountain; yet **he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.**

The prophet Joel also spoke of Edom in these verses:

Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness [Hebrew: 'desert'], for the violence against the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation. (Joel 3:19-20)

Then we have Amos who prophesied how God would deal with Edom. In the first chapter, we are told of the judgment against Edom "*because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever.*" (vs. 11b) Later on, Amos says this:

That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, says the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sows seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. (Amos 9:12-14)

The Lord gave Obadiah a vision which can be found in the one-chapter book of Obadiah. Three verses stand out. They are, of course, regarding Edom.

Shall I not in that day, says the LORD, even destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding out of the mount of Esau? And your mighty men, O Teman [Esau's son], shall be dismayed, to the end that every one of the mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter. For your violence against your brother Jacob shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off for ever. (Obadiah 1:8b-10)

Esau hated

Have you ever wondered why the Lord used such strong language regarding Esau? I have. But the Lord has shown the reason why.

God's "hatred" for Esau was mentioned twice; first in Malachi then quoted by Paul in Romans 9:13. In Malachi, we find these words:

The burden of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. I have loved you, says the LORD. Yet you say, Wherein have you loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? says the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom says, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus says the LORD of hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the LORD has indignation for ever. And your eyes shall see, and you shall say, The LORD will be magnified from the border of Israel. (Malachi 1:1-5)

Ever since the birth of Jacob and Esau, there has been a battle, with Esau (Edom) taking up arms against his brother. In a moment of "living in the now" and considering only his flesh, Esau gave up his birthright. Out of Jacob came the nation of Israel, God's chosen people. Even though the Lord dealt harshly with Israel because of their rebellion and unfaithfulness, His mercy was never-failing. Their father, Jacob, had desired that special place promised to his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham. God loved him and to this day loves the people Israel. His "hatred" for Esau was because this self-centered, self-serving, evil man had "despised" what God had promised to him, as the firstborn to Isaac and Rebekah. Because of a "need" to satisfy his flesh he threw it all away. What an affront to the God Who promised him life! Ever since that time he has been the enemy of Israel. God's "hatred" is justifiable in light of Edom's choice and what his original choice will mean in the coming days.

The final battle

In the book of Revelation we read of a battle to end all battles. It is commonly called *The Battle of Armageddon*. The word "Armageddon" is actually derived from the Hebrew word "Megiddo," which means "*rendezvous*." The real battle at Armageddon is the final battle of God against all flesh - and He wins!

In Revelation, John tells of the unclean spirits of demons coming out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These spirits perform signs, going throughout the earth "to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty...And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon." The kings and people of the world are being brought to a place of "rendezvous" with the King of Kings, Who with His presence destroys every one of them. They are coming to war against Him, but they lose!

The day is fast approaching when all flesh will be consumed by the coming of Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God. No physical flesh can survive the full manifestation of Jesus. IT IS THE DAY WHEN FLESH WILL CEASE TO BE HIS

OWN "god," BECAUSE ALL THAT IS FLESH WILL BE OFFERED TO THE BIRDS OF THE AIR (Revelation 19:17-18) IN A SACRIFICE MADE BY GOD. (Ezekiel 39:17-22) For thousands of years man has been obsessed with flesh, and Israel continued to make sacrifices of flesh even though Jesus had put an end to the Law. In the end, God turns the tables and makes His own sacrifice of flesh to, of all things, the scavengers of the air. In the fire of His jealousy, Jesus exposes flesh as mere flesh. (2 Peter 2:12)

In Revelation, John told of seeing an angel who cried with a loud voice,

saying to all the birds that fly in mid heaven, come and be gathered together unto the great supper of God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit thereon, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, and small and great. (Revelation 19:17b-18)

(Much of the above paragraphs were taken from *Calling Forth the Remnant*, chapters 25 & 26.)

God's mocking "sacrifice" pretty much tells us what He thinks of flesh, including that of Edom and his descendants. But God, being GOD, provided a way for all who would come to trust in His perfect Sacrifice, Jesus the Lamb of God.

Why the sacrifice?

The filthiness of flesh was shown in the book of Leviticus in the accounts of sacrifices for sin. The subject is too involved to relate here. You will find much about it in *The Law and the Sacrifice* on page 31 of my book.

When Jesus came in the likeness of sinful flesh and put it to death on our behalf so we could have Life in Him, He did not take us out of our flesh. How does He give us His Life? The answer is simple but profound--His Spirit comes in to dwell in our spirit, at which time we pass from death (flesh) to life (spirit). Even then, it is only the beginning, as Paul said in Galatians 2:20.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. (EMTV)

Conquering the flesh of self

Let's look at what it means to "conquer." The Greek word for "conquer" means "subdue." In various places in the New Testament it is translated as "*conquer, overcome, prevail, get the victory.*"

How do we conquer or *subdue* our flesh? We cannot; otherwise it would be flesh conquering flesh. The answer can be found in Paul's words in Romans 8:9-14.

But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. But if Christ is in you, the body indeed is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, **He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit indwelling in you.** Therefore, brothers, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you shall die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the practices of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (EMTV)

The *practices of the body* are sometimes portrayed as "righteousness." The prophet Isaiah used strong language in describing self-righteousness. Take a look at the words he used in this verse: "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags [Hebrew: 'menstrual cloths']; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*" (Isaiah 64:6)

Considering the depths of degradation Isaiah's words reveal, when it comes to our attempts at righteousness in the strength of SELF, we can only imagine how our Lord sees us. But what of those with whom we come in contact? Without the Spirit of Jesus living His Life in and through us we would appear to others as nothing but a sanctimonious prig. The definition of "sanctimonious prig" is "*a holier-than-thou person who is excessively precise, proper, and smug in his moral behavior and attitudes, to the annoyance of others.*" (*Webster's Dictionary*)

The way we live our life on this earth, and the way we represent the Lord Who bought us, is no small matter in the eyes of God. There is great accountability! Why? Let me tell you why. **The God of the universe came in the form of His Son and gave Himself as a sacrifice, beaten beyond recognition, to destroy that thing that came between man and Himself.** But what does man do? We creatures of mortal flesh who refuse to submit to His Spirit's purification only serve to bring upon ourselves the judgment that is coming. If we think flesh is a minor thing and of no consequence, we must ask ourselves "Why, then, did Jesus have to die?"

Purification

In Leviticus, the LORD God said, "*For I am the LORD your God: you shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy; for I am holy.*" (Leviticus 11:44) Back then, during the time of Moses' Law, there was no power to be holy; it had to be done through obedience to the Law, which was done in the strength

of self. That same Law foretold of the coming Messiah Who would become Holiness to man.

In Isaiah 64:1, the prophet expresses his heart cry with these words: "*Oh that you would rend the heavens, that you would come down, that the mountains might flow down at your presence.*" He had prophesied earlier, when he said "*The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*" (Isaiah 40:3) Of course, we know he was speaking of John the Baptist who would come.

Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled, as we see in Matthew's words.

For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "A voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; make His paths straight.'" (Matthew 3:3 EMTV)

How did John prepare the way of the Lord? He captured their attention through a prophetic act which we know as "baptism." How was it prophetic? It prepared the people for the One who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire, as we learn from Luke's record of Jesus' life on earth.

John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire**; whose winnowing shovel is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His threshing floor, and will gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." (Luke 3:16-17 EMTV)

We have here an example of an important, God-ordained event being revealed to one of His prophets. That "event" would be the coming of the Holy Spirit. What a grand entrance He made! As Jesus was being baptized by John, He came up out of the water and upon Him descended the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. This had earlier been shown to John so he would have the confirmation that he had indeed heard from God regarding the baptism Jesus would perform.

But first of all, Isaiah prophesied of John; then Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all confirmed the words of the prophet in their accounts of Jesus' life. But none can compare to the words of Jesus Himself, as found in Luke's gospel.

I came to cast fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is completed! (Luke 12:49-50 EMTV)

Jesus was not speaking of His "need" to be baptized by John. He was speaking of the urgent need for His Spirit to begin His work in the people. I cannot help but

think Jesus may have been referring to His death on the Cross, His resurrection and ascension, and His sending the Spirit to be our Life.

Jesus' baptism by John was only a part of God's plan to introduce the Holy Spirit in a way the people could understand. If He had not been introduced through a simple example of immersion in water which the people used for cleansing, the Spirit would not have been fully seen as the Purifier.

Modern-day baptism

For centuries, and even today, there are those who believe a "sprinkling" with water, which they call "baptism," makes a person fit for eternity with Jesus. There are also those who legalistically adhere to immersion, believing this can add to the work Jesus accomplished on the Cross. At the same time, there are many who desire to be baptized as a testimony of their having buried the flesh and been raised by the Spirit. For these faithful believers in Jesus, such an act is a celebration of death to self. Because of their love for the Lord it is a precious experience, and for many it can be an emotional time as the Spirit of God ministers to them. Is it their obedience to water baptism that matters? Or, is it their willingness to die to self in the power of the Holy Spirit? I believe it is the latter, for water can never do what the Spirit of God came to do.

Having said all that, we need to look at some passages where baptism is actually spoken about.

Baptism of John and Holy Spirit Baptism

Baptism in water was typically referred to as the "baptism of John," as was mentioned in 6 different verses. When reference is made to John's "baptism" we must keep in mind the little word "but" which precedes the statement that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit and fire. This is brought out in a passage in Acts.

Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who, coming down, prayed concerning them in order that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For **He had not yet fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of Christ Jesus.** (Acts 8:14-16 EMTV)

When the word "baptize" is used it does not always refer to water baptism. One example where it is obvious the meaning was Holy Spirit baptism is found in this passage, also from Acts.

And Ananias departed and entered the house; and putting his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, the One who appeared to you in the way which you were coming, so that you may see again and **be filled with the Holy Spirit.**" And immediately there fell from his eyes

something like scales, and he saw again; and arising, he was baptized, and when he received food, he was strengthened. Now Saul was with the disciples in Damascus three days. (Acts 9:17-19 EMTV)

Only with the Spirit's power, received through the Spirit's baptism, could Paul then fulfil the call of God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, which can be seen in the ensuing verses.

In this next passage, we see how the Holy Spirit makes us clean. Peter had been told by the Lord that he was not to call anything "common" that He had made clean through the power of His Spirit. The Lord was speaking of the Gentiles. And those "of the circumcision" were challenging Peter over his spending time with Gentiles. In the verses where Peter explains to those questioning him, he also says this:

"And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them, as also on us in the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, **but** you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If then God has given to them the same gift as He gave to us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to be able to hinder God?" (Acts 11:15-17 EMTV)

Baptized into

These words from Paul the Apostle do not necessarily speak of either baptism. To be "baptized into" has its own meaning which has nothing to do with "baptism" as we know it. Take a look at what Paul says.

We died to sin--How shall we live any longer in it? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:2b-4 EMTV)

To give a little better idea how "baptize into" is used, we now look at Paul's words to the Corinthians.

Now I do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were **baptized into Moses** in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they were drinking from that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:1-4 EMTV)

Again we see Paul using that same phrase.

For **by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**--whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free--and we were all given to drink into one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:13 EMTV)

As Paul tells us, without the Spirit's presence in us, we are not Christ's. As he put it in Romans 8:9, "*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*" We must also include this verse: "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" (Galatians 3:27 EMTV)

Filled with the Holy Spirit

Why do we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit? The simple truth can be seen when we consider whether we can be filled with self and still be effective disciples of Jesus. In reality, this is the bottom line when it comes to the central message in the Bible. But do the Bible-reading people even get the message?

It is absolutely sickening, the way "Holy Spirit Baptism" has been so irreverently tossed about on the lips of modern-day Christians. Jesus paid the supreme price so that we could have Life. It was by the Spirit that He was raised from the dead, and it is only by the Spirit that we can escape the death that comes with flesh. All the while, "speaking in tongues" has even become the password, so to speak, to gain entry into the "Pentecostalism club." As I said in the 15th chapter of my book, "*fruit should be of far greater significance than the evidence of tongues.*"

In his message to the Ephesians where he was exhorting them to be prepared as the Bride of Christ, and to model that relationship in marriage, he charged them to be "filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18b) If the Bride is to be without spot or wrinkle, only the Holy Spirit's fullness in us can make us fit. We cannot be part self and part Spirit. We must surrender all that we are, if we do not want to end up like Esau.

The last mention of Esau by name can be found in Hebrews, although I believe some references in the book of Revelation may also point to him. Only time can tell.

Follow peace with all men, and **holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord**: looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; **lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.** For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for **he found no place of repentance**, though he sought it carefully with tears. (Hebrews 12:14-17)

It is no trivial matter if we think we can cling to the flesh life and allow the Lord to have only part of us. There is much more that could be said, showing the folly of flesh, but I must close with the next paragraph.

John, Jesus' beloved friend, tells us we are "antichrist" when we deny that Jesus came in the flesh. It is not enough to realize He came in the flesh; we must come to grips with the reality of WHY He came in the flesh. I can't help but think John expects us to understand that fact when we read his words. The Bible is full of enough information about flesh, but it has been overlooked more than any other part of God's Word to us. Make no mistake; the ultimate manifestation of flesh is preparing to make his presence known. Revelation 13:18 tells of this "beast" who is nothing but a mere man of flesh. Just as Jesus is wholly God in three Persons, with a perfect number of 777 belonging to Him, so also is the beast wholly man, with his most imperfect number being 666.