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*Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the open, famished. And Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stuff to gulp down, for I am famished," which is why he was named EDOM (red). Jacob said: "Sell me your birthright today." And Esau said, "I am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?" But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob. Jacob then gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and he rose and went away. And Esau spurned the birthright. --- Gen. 25:29-34*

It is not believable that someone would give another a bowl of lentils and say to him, "Sell me your birthright," and the other would sell it to him. In fact, there was a longer conversation, of which the Torah only quoted the essence.

When Esau entered, he found Jacob standing and cooking, his eyes tearing from the smoke of the oven. Esau said, "Why do you need all this trouble? Look around you: all the world's creatures eat what they find--fish, creeping things, pork, and such, and you go to all this trouble to cook a bowl of lentils!" Jacob replied, "If we act like other people, what shall we do on that day when the righteous will be rewarded?" Esau said: "Is there a world to come?" (**Midrash Hagadol**)

Esau said: "Why do I need to believe this thing?" (**Midrash Lekach Tov**)

Jacob said: "If there is no world to come, why do you need your birthright?" (**Midrash Hagadol**)

The first-born takes his father's place. (Abravanel)

You won't be able to handle all the responsibilities of the birthright, to serve God as befits the firstborn. (Sforno)

Esau said, "I didn't choose to follow the way of my fathers, whose glory was in sitting at home." (Abravanel) "I go out every day to hunt wild animals in the forests, and my life is in danger." (Rashbam) "What profit is there for me in being called the firstborn?" (Abravanel)

Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright today, for only today is certain, yesterday is gone, and we don’t know what tomorrow will bring.” (Rashi)

Esau began to curse, saying, “Why do I need the birthright?” (**Midrash Bereshit Rabbah**) He sold his birthright to Jacob. He ate and drank, and he rose and went away. And Esau spurned the birthright. He didn’t agree to the sale because of hunger, for after he ate and drank, he didn’t regret what he had done. He ate and drank, and then immediately afterwards it says, *Esau spurned the birthright*. (Abravanel)

(Woven together in **Shabbat b’Shabbato**, Avraham Shtahl)