

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
KINDERGARTEN
TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 9

Jacob and Esau



Jacob and Esau

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To continue the narrative of Scripture by studying Isaac's children, Jacob and Esau.

Key Verses

Genesis 25:19-25; 27:1-35—Main Teaching Passages

Exodus 20:1-17

Genesis 25:29-34

Memory Verse - Galatians 3:6 (October Memory Verse)

"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him as righteousness."

Hook

See if any of the students can list the Ten Commandments. Write them on the board (found in Exodus 20:1-17). Ask the students to explain what some of the more obvious commandments mean. Have them explain why we shouldn't steal, lie, or kill, for example.

Now ask them, "What is coveting? Why should we not covet?"

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

One of the names repeatedly ascribed to God is, “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” This week, we are looking at Jacob, the final member of this family line. Jacob was born to Isaac along with his twin brother, Esau. Genesis 25 describes the unique nature of the twins’ birth. Esau was born red and hairy, and Jacob was born grasping his brother’s heel. The name Jacob actually means “heel-catcher,” and it describes a person renowned for tripping people up in sneaky deals. Esau simply means “hairy.” Esau was a man of the fields, a hunter favored by his father. Jacob, however, was a herder preferred by his mother Rebekah. Jacob stayed home with Rebekah, tending to flocks and needs around the house.

In Isaac’s old age (Genesis 27), he desired to bless his children and pray a special blessing over his oldest son, Esau, but Rebekah and Jacob came up with a plan to steal that blessing and have it delivered to the Jacob instead. Jacob took a goat and placed the hair on his arms and neck so that his father was fooled into believing that Jacob was his hairy brother Esau, and Isaac gave Jacob the blessing. Esau then returned from his hunt to discover that Jacob had stolen the blessing. Isaac had asked the Lord for the line of the Messiah to come down through Jacob.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

In Exodus 20, God gave a list of ten important laws to live by. While most of these laws are very simple to understand (don’t steal or lie, for example), others are not so straightforward. The tenth commandment says, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house... or anything that is your neighbor’s.” But what is coveting? Genesis 25-27 give us a clear example.

Isaac had two sons, and he promised that he was going to bless his oldest son, Esau, and ask that the promises that God gave to Abraham would in turn be passed on to him. Esau had a brother named Jacob, and from birth Jacob was a tricky one. He wanted the blessing for himself. He wanted to be the one whose family blessed the whole world, and from whose line will eventually come Messiah. Jacob wanted this so badly that he would do anything to get what his brother had coming to him. That is coveting: wanting something that someone else has so badly that you will gladly break God’s law in order to get it. It is when you see something that someone else has and you think you deserve it more than them, so you go and do whatever it takes to get it from them. Jacob wanted Esau’s blessing, and he was willing to go to some extraordinary lengths to possess it.

LOOK (Continued)

Why did God allow Jacob to “steal the blessing”? First, it seems like Esau didn’t really care about God’s plans at all. After all, he sold his birthright (the land) to Jacob for a bowl of soup (Genesis 25:29-34). Esau didn’t want to do things God’s way. He wanted to live his own life, no matter what that looked like. God allowed Jacob to obtain the birthright and the blessing even though he wasn’t the oldest son. He did so because Esau wasn’t worthy of having those things. Jacob wasn’t worthy of them either, not yet, but Jacob would change. He will develop an absolute dependence on the Lord.

The Bible records everything that happened, the good things and the bad. It shows us families that are messed up, and it shows us how sin can make bad situations even worse. This is one of those situations that Jacob’s deceit made far worse, to the point where his own brother wanted to kill him. It was part of God’s plan to give Jacob the blessing, but he didn’t need to sin to get it. Had he trusted the Lord and not coveted, he could have avoided a lot of difficulty.

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the class how Jacob stole the blessing from Esau. Ask what it means to “covet,” and where we see coveting in today’s story.

Pray: Ask the Lord to help us be happy with the things that He has given us, and to desire the things that are above more than the things that are below. Praise Him that He can take a man like Jacob and turn him into an Israel.

Parent Question: How did Jacob fool his father, and steal the blessing?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Genesis 25 & 27 by David Guzik

B. The children of Isaac: Jacob and Esau.

1. (19-26) The conception and birth of Jacob and Esau.

This is the genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begot Isaac. Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger." So when her days were fulfilled for her to give birth, indeed there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

a. **Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she was barren:** Even the son of promise did not come into the promise easily. It only came through waiting and prayer. We can trust that the prayers of a husband for his wife have a special power.

i. Even so, it was some 20 years until they would have children (Genesis 25:20, 26), and these were the only children born to Isaac and Rebekah.

b. **So she went to inquire of the LORD:** As Rebekah sought God, the LORD spoke to her regarding the sons within her womb.

i. It is good to desire that the LORD would speak to us, but we must realize we do not hear perfectly from God. We can become far too confident in our ability to hear from the LORD, and forget that it is easy for us to stop listening when God wants to keep speaking. We may add to what the LORD is saying, or hear it clearly but misunderstand the timing or application of what the LORD says to us.

ii. In connection with God's eternal word (as is the case with Rebekah here), God gave a unique gift to *perfectly* listen, a gift given only in connection with the revelation of His written, eternal word.

c. **Two nations are in your womb:** What God said is simple; Rebekah would give birth to twins. The twins would each father nations. One shall be greater than the other, and the younger will be greater than the older.

i. Jewish legends say Jacob and Esau tried to kill each other in the womb. Also, every time Rebekah went near an idol's altar, Esau would get excited in the womb, and when she would go near a place where the LORD was worshipped, Jacob would get excited.

d. **Indeed there were twins in her womb:** The truth of the unseen promise was fulfilled by something that could be seen. When the time came for them to be born, there were in fact twins in Rebekah's womb and God's word was true

e. **And the first came out red:** Circumstances surrounding the birth of each child were responsible for their names. **Esau** referred to the hairiness of the first-born child. **Jacob** referred to the way the second born was holding on to the heel of his brother.

i. Additionally, the idea of a “heel-catcher” *meant* something in that day. It had the idea of “trickster,” “con-man,” “scoundrel,” or “rascal.” It wasn’t a compliment.

f. **And the older shall serve the younger:** God chose to go against the accepted pattern of the younger serving the older. In Romans 9:10-13, the Apostle Paul used this choice of Jacob over Esau before their birth as an illustration of God’s sovereign choice.

i. God’s choice of Isaac instead of Ishmael seems more logical to us. Yet His choice between Jacob and Esau, regarding which one would be the heir of God’s covenant of salvation, was just as valid, though it seemed to make less sense.

ii. Paul wrote that God’s choice was not based on the performance of Jacob or Esau. The choice was made when they were *not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil* (Romans 9:11).

iii. God announced these intentions to Rebekah before the children were born (*The older shall serve the younger*), and repeated His verdict long after Jacob and Esau had both passed from the earth (*Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated*, Malachi 1:2-3).

iv. Some object, questioning the fairness of God making such a choice before Jacob or Esau were born. Yet we should regard the *love* and the *hate* God spoke of in Malachi 1:2-3 and Romans 9:10-13 as having to do with His purpose in choosing one of these two to become the heir of the covenant of Abraham. In that regard, God’s preference could rightly be regarded as a display of *love* towards Jacob and *hate* towards Esau. The real thought in Malachi 1 and Romans 9 is much more like “accepted” and “rejected” more than it is like our understanding of the terms “loved” and “hated.”

v. God did *not* hate Esau in the sense of cursing him to a doomed life in either this world or the next. All told, Esau was indeed a blessed man, in some ways more well-adjusted than Jacob (Genesis 33:4-9). Yet in regard to the passing of the covenant, it could be rightly said that God hated Esau and loved Jacob.

vi. “A woman once said to Mr. Spurgeon, ‘I cannot understand why God should say that He hated Esau.’ ‘That,’ Spurgeon replied, ‘is not my difficulty, madam. My trouble is to understand how God could love Jacob.’” (Newell in *Romans, Verse by Verse*)

vii. Our greatest error in considering the choices of God is to think God chooses for arbitrary reasons, as if His choices were random and senseless. God chooses according to His divine wisdom, love, and goodness. We may not be able to understand God’s reasons for choosing, and they are reasons He alone knows and answers to; but God’s choices are not random or capricious.

2. (27-28) The different characters of Jacob and Esau.

So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

a. **Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man:** Like so many siblings in a family, Jacob and Esau were very different from each other in their personality and tastes. And as is sometimes the case, each parent had a “favorite” child.

b. **Jacob was a mild man:** The Hebrew word for **mild** has the idea of “wholeness” instead of someone who is weak or effeminate. The Hebrew word *tam* (**mild**) is used of Job in Job 1:8: *Then the LORD said to Satan, “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?”*

Genesis 27 - Jacob Deceptively Gains the Blessing of Isaac

A. Rebekah and Jacob plot to deceive Isaac.

1. (1-4) Isaac’s deathbed request to Esau.

Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.” And he answered him, “Here I am.” Then he said, “Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

a. **Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old:** Isaac believed his time had come to die, and this was his way of settling his affairs, sort of a last will and testament.

i. **Isaac was old**, but perhaps not near death. Martin Luther calculated Isaac’s age to be 137 at this point; he lived to be 180. Isaac lived 43 more years.

b. **That my soul may bless you before I die:** Strangely, Isaac insisted on giving the blessing to Esau, the one whom God did not choose, who despised his birthright, and who married pagan wives. It seems Isaac plainly rejected godly thinking and spiritual wisdom, instead thinking only of the good food he received from Esau’s hunting.

i. Actually, it seems Isaac acted more in human wisdom in regard to his glorying in Esau’s manly hunting prowess. We later find that he actually could not taste the difference between what Esau hunted in the field and what his wife Rebekah could prepare from the flock.

2. (5-10) Rebekah advises Jacob to deceive his father Isaac.

Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, “Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.’ Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death.”

a. **Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you:** Instead of trusting God to fulfill what He had promised in Genesis 25:23, Rebekah went about to do what she thought was right in man-centered wisdom and strength. Her good intentions did not justify this self-centered approach.

b. **I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves:** Isaac was no less scheming than Rebekah. In the willfulness of his old age, he was determined to pass on the blessing to Esau, despite what the LORD had said and what the boys had shown in their lives.

i. The fact Isaac tried to dispense the blessing *secretly* showed he knew what he wanted to do was wrong. Sadly, in this house, no one trusted anyone else.

3. (11-17) Preparations are made for Jacob's deceptive attempt to steal the blessing.

And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

a. **Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him:** Jacob, true to his name ("trickster" or "scoundrel"), was happy to go along with this plan. His only concern was if it would *succeed*.

i. When we are willing to abandon the question of right and wrong, and when our only concern is what *works*, we agree with the modern idea of *pragmatism*, as many in the church do today.

b. **His father...Rebekah...Esau...Jacob:** Significantly, at this point, each of these actors in this drama acted in man-centered wisdom and energy, not according to divine or spiritual wisdom and energy. Even Esau, in agreeing to Isaac's plan to give him the birthright, disregarded his previous promise to allow Jacob to have the birthright.

i. The worst aspect of this all is they seem to regard the blessing as *magical*, as something detached from God's wisdom and will. But the most Isaac could do is recognize *God's* call and blessing on Jacob. Only God could truly bestow the blessing. Esau could receive the blessing from Isaac a hundred times, but it only mattered if God in heaven honored it.

B. Jacob receives the blessing Isaac intended for Esau.

1. (18-27a) Jacob lies to his father, pretending to be Esau.

So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought it to me." Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing,

a. **I am Esau your firstborn:** Sometimes it is difficult to discern a lie, and whether a statement is sin or not comes back to the question of intent. But other times it is not difficult at all, and here Jacob clearly lied to his father.

b. **Because the LORD your God brought it to me:** Jacob, the scoundrel, did not hesitate to bring in God as a party to his deception.

- i. Jacob could do this because his only concern is for *what worked*. Since he (rightly) knew God that wanted him to have the birthright, he justified any lie or sin he committed in the pursuit of the birthright and told himself that it was a stand for righteousness.
 - ii. Jacob probably used the promise and calling of God as an excuse for sin; he justified it to himself by saying his sinful conduct acted towards the fulfillment of the promise of God.
- c. **Are you really my son Esau?** Even under repeated questioning Jacob stayed confirmed in his lie. Partially, Jacob took advantage of his father's good nature. Isaac probably would not believe that his Jacob would lie to him so repeatedly.

2. (27b-29) The blessing is given to Jacob.

And blessed him and said: "Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed. Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you!"

- a. **And blessed him:** Isaac blessed Jacob as the spiritual head of the family. *Isaac* had the right (not Ishmael) to pass on this blessing related to the covenant of Abraham. The son (Jacob or Esau) who received this blessing was able to pass it on to his descendants.
 - b. **May God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth:** The words of the blessing were filled with pictures of the LORD's rich bounty, and they echoed some of the words of the covenant God made with Abraham.
 - c. **Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be those who bless you:** Again, it is important to see it wasn't the bestowal of these words upon Jacob that made him blessed. Instead, Jacob was blessed because God chose him long before (Genesis 26:23). What mattered was that *God* said *the older shall serve the younger* (back in Genesis 25:23), not that *Isaac* said **be master over your brethren**.
- i. "The point is that the sovereign will of God is done, in spite of our or any other person's opposition to it." (Boice)