**Jacob and Esau**

**A Bible Story From**

**Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45**

**Bible Story Number: 1010280**

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**Jacob and Esau**

**Bible Story**

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**Background**

God made a profound promise to Abram (called a covenant):

I will bless you and make you the father of a great nation.

I will make you famous throughout history.

I will protect your allies and punish your enemies.

I will bless the entire world through your descendants.

During these times, the firstborn male child would inherit the family estate. Esau was the firstborn of twins.

**Story from the Bible**

**Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-45**

This is what the Bible says.

Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah. Isaac prayed for Rebekah because she had not yet had any children. When Isaac was sixty years old, God answered Isaac’s prayer and Rebekah became pregnant with twins.

Rebekah could feel the babies pushing against each other. She was concerned about the fighting she could feel going on inside her womb. She prayed and asked God about it. God told her: There are two nations in your womb and they will form two separate peoples. One people will be stronger than the other and the older will serve the younger. (25:23)

When the babies were born, they were twin boys. The first to be born was red and his whole body was covered with hair; so they named him Esau. As he was being born, the younger twin was holding on to Esau’s heal; so they named him Jacob.

The boys grew up and were very different. Esau became a skillful hunter and enjoyed the open country. Jacob was a quiet man and enjoyed staying at home around the tents. Their father, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau and their mother loved Jacob.

One day when Jacob was cooking some stew, his older brother Esau came in from the open country. He was very hungry and asked Jacob for some stew. Jacob told his brother to sell him his birthright first and then he would give him some food. He told Esau that he must swear an oath before he would give him some of the stew. So Esau swore an oath selling his birthright to his brother Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and stew. Esau ate and then got up and left. In this way, Esau despised his birthright.

When Isaac was old, he lost his eyesight. He called for his son Esau, his firstborn son, and told Esau to go out and hunt some wild game and prepare his father some of his favorite food. Then Isaac would give Esau his blessing in the presence of the Lord before he died.

Rebekah was listening to all of this. As soon as Esau left to go hunt the wild game his dad wanted, she called Jacob in and told him what Isaac had said to Esau. Then she told Jacob to bring her two choice young goats so that she could prepare Isaac’s favorite food just the way he liked it so that Jacob could take it to his father and get his blessing.

Jacob told his mother that Esau was a hairy man and that his own skin was smooth. He asked her, “Suppose my father touches me. Then I will be revealed to him as a deceiver and bring a curse rather than a blessing on myself.” Rebekah said to Jacob, “Your curse be on me, my son. Just obey me and go get them for me.”

So Jacob did what his mother told him to do. Rebekah took some of Esau’s best clothes and gave them to Jacob. She covered his hands and the back of his neck with goatskins so that if Isaac touched him he would feel hairy like his brother.

Jacob went to his father with the food his mother had prepared. He told his father he was Esau. Isaac questioned him because his voice did not sound like Esau’s. He even touched his hands and was fooled by the goatskins. Isaac asked him if he was really Esau. Jacob lied and said he was. Isaac ate the food and called Jacob over to kiss him. When he caught the smell of Esau’s clothes, he gave Jacob his blessing.

Isaac blessed Jacob saying:

May God richly bless you and cause the earth to give you an abundance of grain and new wine.

May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers and may they bow down to you.

May those that curse you be curse and those that bless you be blessed.

Right after Isaac had finished blessing Jacob and Jacob had left, Esau came in from hunting and prepared some tasty food for his father. When he went to give it to his father, Isaac asked him who he was. When he replied that he was Esau, his father trembled violently and said, “Who was it that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it all before you came in, and I blessed him. Then indeed, he will be blessed!”

Esau heard what his father said and burst out in a loud and bitter cry and said, “Bless me too, my father!”

Isaac told him that his brother had come deceitfully and stolen his blessing. Esau asked if his father had a blessing for him, but Isaac told him, “I have made him a master over you, have given him all of his relatives as his servants, and have sustained him with grain and new wine. What then can I do for you?”

Isaac and Esau both realized that Jacob had deceived his father and Isaac had already given the blessing intended for Esau to his brother Jacob.

Esau held a grudge against his brother for stealing his blessing. He said that he would wait until after his father died and then he would kill his brother. Rebekah heard about Esau’s plan and told Jacob to leave and go to live with her brother Laban. She told him to stay there until his brother’s anger subsided and then she would send for Jacob.

That concludes this story from the Bible.

**Retelling the Story**

Let’s review this story by retelling it as a group. We want to retell it as faithfully as we can to the story from the Bible. We do not want to add to it or leave out anything important. Who will get us started?

**Questions**

* When did the struggle between Esau and Jacob first begin?
* How does the Bible describe the differences between these two brothers?
* What did Jacob do to steal his brother’s blessing?
* What blessing did Isaac give to Jacob?
* How did Esau respond when he learned that Jacob had stolen his blessing?
* What did Rebekah tell Jacob to do to escape his brother’s anger?
* What did you like about this story?
* What did you not like about this story?
* What did you learn about God from this story?

**Prayer**

Prayer is more than a way to end the session. It is time to talk to God. Public prayer is a model for others. Boldly ask God to guide participants to use the Bible story with others. Ask God to give you and the participant’s insight and understanding as you think about this biblical event.