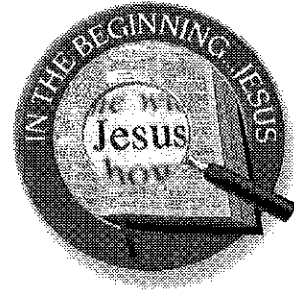


# In the Beginning...Jesus

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## Lesson 12

### Jacob's Deceit and God's Design

#### Themes:

- Before his birth, God chose Jacob to inherit the covenantal promise made to Abraham and Isaac.
- Neither Jacob nor Esau deserved God's special promises.
- God chose to be merciful to Jacob.
- Man's sin cannot thwart God's design.

#### Scripture:

Portions of Genesis 25; 27-28

#### Memory Verse:

Review Isaiah 53:3-8

#### Visuals for lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
  - GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM.
  - JACOB and ESAU (from Lesson 11).
  - JACOB A-B.
  - STEW.
  - JACOB'S DECEIT.
  - G, D, SIGN.
  - HEART.
- A family heirloom or something valuable.
- Bowl of canned stew (or something that looks like stew).
- 2 name-tags—Label one JACOB and the other ESAU.
- Tape.
- Optional: glass of lemonade .

#### Pre-Class Preparation:

- You could ask a child to help you with the lemonade stand skit during the lesson.
- Ask two boys to help with a Jacob and Esau skit during the lesson.

## Lesson

**Illustration: Display** a family heirloom to the children. Explain to the children the significance it has to your family and then quickly pose the following scenario:

*Suppose this heirloom was given to me to keep in our family so that some day I would then pass it on to my own children. Suppose that one hot day as I was working outside in my yard I became really thirsty! Right next door, a child had a lemonade stand. I didn't have any money, but I did have an idea. I ran in the house and got my family heirloom and traded it for a cool glass of lemonade. What would my actions be showing?*

**Note:** If desired, before class you may want to prepare a child to act out the role of the child with the lemonade stand. Use a real glass of lemonade and give him a short script to act out. For example, you could say, "I am so thirsty! Could you please give me a glass of lemonade? I don't have any money." And the child could say, "What about that beautiful (heirloom) you have? If you give me that, I'll give you the lemonade."

Explain that your actions would be showing that you don't treasure the family heirloom. It isn't as important to you as having your thirst satisfied instantly. Tell the children that as valuable as this particular family heirloom might be, there is another kind of family "heirloom" or inheritance that is much more important.

**Display GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM.** Quickly review some of the covenant promises God made to Abraham (as summarized in **Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22**):

*I will make you a great nation—with offspring as numerous as the stars.  
I will bless you and protect you.  
I will make your name great.  
I will give to you the land of Canaan.  
I will be your God.  
The whole world will be blessed through you.*

*The covenant that God made with Abraham was like a family heirloom—an inheritance to be treasured and passed on to the next generation—Abraham's offspring. After Abraham died, which of his sons was to inherit these special promises? [Isaac.]*

Point out that in the last lesson we learned about how God continued to work out these promises in the life of Isaac by directing the people and events that led to Isaac's marriage to Rebekah and the birth of their twin sons, Esau and Jacob. **Display ESAU and JACOB** (from Lesson 11). Did that mean God's special promise would be shared by both brothers? [No.] Which brother did God choose to inherit the special promise made to Abraham and Isaac? [Jacob.] Did God make this choice after the twins were

born? [He made it before the twins were born.] Take **JACOB A-B** and tape one within the outline on **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM** and the other within the **ABRAHAM** sign on the **GOD—MAN** visual to the right of **ISAAC**.

*Ask: Do you think everyone liked this plan and agreed with it? Who might not like this plan? Let's look in the Bible and see what happened next.*

Have the children turn to **Genesis 25:27-33**. Choose children to read the verses:

*When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

*Once when Jacob was cooking stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was exhausted. And Esau said to Jacob, "Let me eat some of that red stew, for I am exhausted!"...Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright now." Esau said, "I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?" Jacob said, "Swear to me now." So he swore to him and sold his birthright to Jacob.*

**Note:** Before class you could prepare two boys to read and act out **Genesis 25:29-33** and then have them proceed as follows:

Choose two boys to come up front. Place the **ESAU** nametag on one, and the **JACOB** nametag on the other. Give the boy playing Jacob the bowl of stew to hold.

*Ask: According to the verses that we read, what did Esau sell to Jacob? [His birthright.] What is a birthright?*

Explain that in Old Testament times a birthright was the privilege that the firstborn son received. In this case, Esau *assumed* that because he was the older brother, God's special promises to his grandfather Abraham and then to his father Isaac belonged to him. Tape **ESAU** over **JACOB** on **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM** and give the visual to the boy playing Esau to hold.

*But what did Jacob have that Esau wanted more? [A bowl of stew.] (Have the boy playing Esau trade his sign for the bowl of stew.) What did this show about Esau's attitude toward God's special promises?*

Read **Genesis 25:34b**:

*Thus Esau despised his birthright.*

**Display** the **HEART** and give it to the boy playing Esau to hold against his chest. Did Esau deserve to inherit the promises that God had made to his grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac? No! Take the visual and the stew away from the boy playing

Esau and have him return to his seat.

*But what about Jacob? What did his words and actions show? What had he assumed belonged to Esau as his older brother? [God's favor—God's promises to Abraham and Isaac.]*

Point out that unlike Esau, Jacob wanted God's promises to be his. However, Jacob thought that he needed to act on his own to get them. He took advantage of the fact that his brother despised his birthright and thought that he could use this opportunity to buy the favor of God.

**Display =STEW** and lightly tape it over the middle of **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**. Remove **ESAU** from over **JACOB**.

*Jacob thought that he could simply buy God's special promises with a bowl of stew. What did this show about Jacob's attitude? Did he deserve to receive God's promises? No. (Take the visual from the boy playing Jacob and have him return to his seat.)*

Emphasize that neither Esau nor Jacob understood the value of God's promises or the way in which they were to be received. But this was not the end of the story. This seemingly simple event between Jacob and Esau led to another important event later on.

**Story:** Isaac blesses Jacob. As briefly as possible, summarize the events of Genesis 27. (You may want to read directly from a few key verses.) Emphasize the following points:

- When Isaac grew old, he still believed that the special promise should be passed on to Esau, his oldest and favorite son, and not to Jacob.
- Tape **ESAU** over **JACOB** on **GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM**.
- Rebekah and Jacob schemed together to trick Isaac into giving Jacob the promise. This time Jacob would use deceit to get his father's blessing. Remove **=STEW** and tape **JACOB'S DECEIT** in the middle of the visual.
- Isaac was fooled and passed on his blessing to Jacob thinking that he was Esau. Remove **ESAU** from over **JACOB**.
- When Esau found out what had happened, he became very distressed and then very angry with Jacob—he had chosen to forget that he had sold his birthright to Jacob earlier. He could not hold Jacob responsible for his decision.
- Isaac could not reverse or take away the blessing he had made to Jacob.

Emphasize that both Esau and Jacob had acted in sin in one way or another in this event. Both Esau and Jacob were undeserving of inheriting God's promises. Remove **JACOB** from the visual.

So what happens now? Will everything be okay?

Quickly read **Genesis 27:42b-43**:

**[Rebekah said to Jacob,] Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran and stay with him a while until your brother's fury turns away.**

*Was everything now okay for Jacob? Did receiving the blessing from Isaac mean that his problems were now over?*

Point out the because of Jacob's deception, he had to flee his own home and go to his uncle who lived far away from the land God had promised to Abraham and Isaac. Was God's plan ruined because of Jacob's deceit?

Read **Genesis 28:10-12** and choose children to read verses **13-14**:

**Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reached to heaven.**

**And behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed."**

*Does anything sound familiar in these verses? [Allow the children to respond.] Who had God made these same promises to? [Abraham and Isaac.] (**Display GOD'S PROMISES TO ABRAHAM** again.) Was God going to take away His promise because of Jacob's deceit? [No.] Jacob's deceit could not ruin God's plan. God showed mercy to Jacob, and God caused Jacob's deceit to serve God's design.*

Tape the **G**, **D**, and **SIGN** over the appropriate letters on **JACOB'S DECEIT** so it now reads: **GOD'S DESIGN**. Emphasize that the Bible is God's story, not Jacob's. God decided the beginning, the ending, and everything in between. Jacob's deceit could not ruin God's plan. God took Jacob's deceit and caused it to serve His design—to continue fulfilling His promise. Tape **JACOB** back on the visual.

*Was God's plan now complete? Was Jacob, sleeping outside under the*

*stars, a great and strong nation? Were all the families of the earth now blessed by this man who lied to his father and had to run away from the anger of his brother? The story isn't over yet! God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all a part of the great mystery of Jesus' death on the cross.*

**Note:** Before the next lesson, carefully remove the tape from **JACOB** and glue it in place on the **GOD—MAN** visual.

### Application

- Ask the children to recall something they have wanted very badly (e.g., a puppy, a new bike, seeing a friend who lives far away, etc.). Was it something that was good? Is it wrong to try to get something good through being tricky or taking advantage of someone else's wrong actions? What was right about what Jacob wanted? But what was wrong about how he went about getting it? Was he acting by faith—depending on God to keep His promise that He made before Jacob was even born (**Genesis 25:23**). What could Jacob have done differently? The fact that he acted as he did is evidence of what in his heart? Read and discuss **Jeremiah 17:9**. *Have you sometimes treated other things or people as more precious than God and His promises?* Give the children some concrete examples of what this looks like. What does this show us about our own heart at times? What does this show each of us about what we desperately need?
- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 12 in their workbooks. Read the verse that is printed in the notebook section on the page. What do the words from **Proverbs 19:21** mean? How do they relate to today's lesson? Did Esau, Jacob, Isaac, and Rebekah all have plans about who should receive the blessing and how it should be received? Read and discuss **Proverbs 3:5-7**. *Are you trusting in God or are you trying to do things your own way—depending on your own knowledge and understanding? If you trust in the Lord with all your heart, what does He promise to do? [Make straight your paths.] How was Jacob "leaning" on his own understanding? In the end, what did he learn about God's purpose? Did he learn this the easy way or the hard way? What could have been avoided if he had trusted God in the first place? Do you sometimes act like Esau? How? Do you sometimes act like Jacob? In what ways?*
- Remind the children of the **JACOB'S DECEIT** visual that was used during the lesson. Why was it wrong for Jacob to trick his father? Why was it wrong for Isaac to want to give the blessing to Esau? Why was it wrong for Rebekah to scheme against her husband? Why was it wrong for Esau to

demand the blessing? How did God cause the actions of sinful people to serve His design and plan? Read and discuss the following verses: **Job 42:2** and **Isaiah 14:27**. *Can you think of other examples of God causing the actions of sinful people to serve His design?*

- Point out that even though Jacob's deceit could not ruin God's design, Jacob still suffered the consequences of his sin. In what ways? Who had he hurt? What did it do to the relationships with his father, brother, and mother? Most importantly, how did his sin offend God? When he took matters into his own hands, what was he saying about God's goodness and His ability to keep His promise? Ask the children: *Have you felt the consequence of your own sin? Can you remember a situation in which your sin affected the people around you? What consequences did you suffer because of it? Most importantly, how did your sin offend God? Is there anything you can do about this?* Read and discuss **1 John 1:8-9**. Who is the "He" in these verses? See verse 7.

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