

The First Family

Date: 04.12.2026 | The Birth of Esau and Jacob
Scripture: Genesis 25:19-28

CENTRAL TRUTHS



PRESCHOOL:

God listens when people pray and has a special plan for each person.

YOUNGER KIDS (K5-2ND GRADE):

God answered Isaac's prayer and had a plan for Jacob and Esau before they were born.

OLDER KIDS (3RD-5TH GRADE):

God answered Isaac's prayer by giving him twin sons, and He showed that His plans are not based on birth order but on His purposes.

STUDENTS:

Before Jacob and Esau were born, God revealed that His purposes would be carried out through the younger son, showing His sovereign choice even in a broken world marked by conflict and sin.

ADULTS:

In the birth of Jacob and Esau, God demonstrated His sovereign freedom to accomplish His covenant purposes according to His will rather than human custom or merit. Even amid the effects of the fall—conflict, rivalry, and deception—God remains faithful to His promises and advances His redemptive plan through imperfect people.

MEMORY VERSE

And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you, I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Genesis 12:2-3



DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

*What does God require in the ninth and tenth commandments?
Ninth, that we do not lie or deceive, but speak the truth in love. Tenth,
that we are content, not envying anyone or resenting what God has
given them or us. New City Catechism q.12*



BACKGROUND INFO FOR LEADERS

Genesis 25:19–26 introduces the birth of Esau and Jacob, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, who will dominate the narrative of Genesis chapters 25–36. This passage is not merely a family story; it is a theological turning point that reveals God’s sovereign purposes in election, covenant, and redemption.

Like Sarah before her, Rebekah is barren. In **verse 21**, Isaac prays to the Lord on her behalf, and God graciously responds by enabling her to conceive. The pattern is significant: the covenant line continues not by human ability, but by divine intervention. From the very beginning, God makes it clear that His promises advance by grace, not by human strength or entitlement.

During the pregnancy, Rebekah experiences unusual turmoil in her womb. Unaware that she is carrying twins, she inquires of the Lord (**v. 22**), demonstrating a posture of dependence rather than self-reliance. God’s response reveals far more than the cause of her discomfort. He declares that two nations are in her womb and that “the older shall serve the younger” (**v. 23**). This announcement overturns normal cultural expectations, in which the firstborn son held priority, authority, and inheritance.

By sovereign decree, God chooses Jacob—not Esau—to inherit the covenant promises originally given to Abraham. This choice is not based on merit, behavior, or foreseen righteousness. Before either child is born or has done anything good or evil, God declares His purpose. As the apostle Paul later explains in **Romans 9:11–12**, this decision highlights that God’s redemptive plan rests on His sovereign will, not on human works.

The struggle between Esau and Jacob begins in the womb and foreshadows a lifelong conflict between the brothers and their descendants. This hostility echoes earlier fraternal conflict in Genesis, most notably between Cain and Abel, and serves as another

reminder of the pervasive effects of the fall. Sin has fractured human relationships at every level, including the most intimate bonds of family.

God's preference for the younger over the older is a recurring theme throughout Genesis and underscores a consistent biblical truth: God's ways are not governed by human norms or expectations. Abel is favored over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, Jacob over Esau, Joseph over his brothers, Perez over Zerah, and Ephraim over Manasseh. These reversals demonstrate that God's purposes are driven by grace rather than status, power, or tradition.

Malachi 1:2–3 later summarizes this divine choice with the statement, "I have loved Jacob, but Esau I have hated." This language does not describe emotional hostility but covenantal distinction. In Scripture, "love" and "hate" often function as terms of election and rejection rather than emotional preference (*cf. Genesis 29:30–31*). God set His covenantal love on Jacob, not because of Jacob's virtue, but because of His own sovereign plan.

Verse 26 adds further insight by naming the younger twin "Jacob," a name associated with the Hebrew word for "heel" and carrying the connotation of "one who grasps" or "deceives." Jacob emerges grasping Esau's heel at birth, symbolizing both his struggle for prominence and the deceptive tendencies that will mark many episodes of his life. Yet even Jacob's flaws do not thwart God's purposes. Instead, they magnify God's grace, as the Lord patiently transforms Jacob from a deceiver into Israel, the father of the covenant nation.

Chronologically, Esau and Jacob are born approximately fifteen years before Abraham's death (*Genesis 25:7–8*), emphasizing the continuity of God's covenant promises across generations.

Ultimately, this passage points beyond Jacob to the greater fulfillment of God's redemptive plan. Just as God chose Jacob apart from merit, so salvation comes not by works but by grace alone. The covenant line preserved through Jacob leads eventually to Jesus Christ—the true promised Son—through whom God brings blessing, salvation, and restoration to the nations. *Genesis 25* reminds us that God's purposes cannot be thwarted by human weakness, sin, or expectation. He is faithful to accomplish His promises according to His sovereign grace.

TELL THE STORY

Genesis 25:19-28



Read directly from scripture; use the simple summary below: Hey, Oh! Stories of the Bible or The Biggest Story Bible.

- The Biggest Story Bible- God's Tricky, Hairy, Blessed People (Genesis 25; 27)
- Hey-O! Stories of the Bible- Jacob and Esau (Genesis 25:19-34; 27-28:5; 29:9-13; 31:2-3; 32-33:11)

In Genesis 25, we learn about Isaac and Rebekah's twin sons, Esau and Jacob. These two boys would grow up to be very important in God's plan.

At first, Rebekah could not have children. Isaac prayed to God for her, and God answered his prayer. Rebekah became pregnant, which reminds us that God keeps His promises and helps His people when they ask Him.

While Rebekah was pregnant, the babies moved so much inside her that she became worried. She asked God what was happening. God told her she was carrying two sons, and they would become two nations. God also said something surprising: the older son would serve the younger son. This was unusual because in those days the oldest child was usually the most important.

God was showing that He chooses people for His plans not because they are the oldest, strongest, or best, but because He is God and knows what is best. Before Esau or Jacob were even born, God chose Jacob to carry on the special promise He had given to Abraham and Isaac.

The Bible tells us that the twins struggled with each other even before they were born. This shows that sin had already affected people's hearts. Just like with Cain and Abel, the Bible shows us that sin can cause problems even in families.

When the twins were born, Esau came out first. He was red and hairy. Jacob came out holding onto Esau's heel. That's how Jacob got his name, which sounds like the word for heel and can also mean one who grabs. Later in the Bible, Jacob sometimes tries to get what he wants in tricky ways, but God does not give up on him.

Even though Jacob was not perfect, God still chose him and continued to work in his life. This helps us remember an important truth: God uses imperfect people to do His good plans.

One day, God would send someone even greater than Jacob—Jesus. Just as God chose Jacob by grace, He offers us forgiveness and new life by grace through Jesus. This story reminds us that God keeps His promises, loves His people, and always has a plan to save.

REBUILD THE STORY



1. Who were the parents of Esau and Jacob? (*Genesis 25:19–20*)
2. What problem did Rebekah have before she became pregnant, and what did Isaac do about it? (*Genesis 25:21*)
3. Why did Rebekah ask the Lord for help during her pregnancy? (*Genesis 25:22*)
4. What did God tell Rebekah about the two children in her womb? (*Genesis 25:23*)
5. What surprising promise did God make about the older and younger son? (*Genesis 25:23*)
6. Which son was born first, and what was he like at birth? (*Genesis 25:25*)
7. How was Jacob born, and what detail at his birth hinted at future conflict? (*Genesis 25:26*)
8. How many children were born to Isaac and Rebekah, and how long before Abraham's death were they born? (*Genesis 25:19–26; Genesis 25:7–8*)

9. Why do you think God chose Jacob instead of Esau before either of them was born? What does this teach us about how God makes His choices? (*Genesis 25:23; Romans 9:11–12*)
10. How does the struggle between Jacob and Esau remind us of the effects of sin in families and relationships today?
11. Jacob was chosen by God even though he was not perfect. How does that give us hope when we mess up or make wrong choices?
12. How does this story help us understand that God's plan does not depend on being the strongest, oldest, or best—but on His grace?

GOSPEL EMPHASIS

Throughout the stories of Abraham's family, we see a repeated pattern of human weakness alongside God's unshakable faithfulness. Abraham and Sarah struggled to trust God's promises—Sarah laughed at the idea of a child in her old age, and together they tried to force God's plan through Hagar and Ishmael. In the next generation, sin and conflict appear even before birth, as Jacob and Esau struggle in the womb and continue in hostility throughout their lives. Yet through every failure, doubt, and sinful decision, God's plan never wavered. His covenant promises were not dependent on perfect people, but on His sovereign grace. Nothing—not sin, not fear, not human manipulation—could stop God from accomplishing His purposes for the family He chose through Abraham. This points us directly to the gospel. Just as God faithfully carried His plan forward through flawed patriarchs, He ultimately fulfilled His promise by sending Jesus, the true promised Son. Jesus came not because humanity succeeded, but because humanity failed. Through His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection, Jesus accomplished what sinful people never could—bringing salvation, forgiveness, and restoration. This story reminds us that our hope is not in our faithfulness to God, but in God's faithfulness to us.



WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

Use your Attributes of God poster as a guide.

PRAYER PROMPTS

Thank You, God, for the promises You made and kept with Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob. Thank You for being trustworthy and faithful to us as well. Thank You for using ordinary, sinful people to complete Your perfect will. Help us to see Your sovereignty and lordship in all things, even when we disobey or doubt.



THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING

Genesis 26