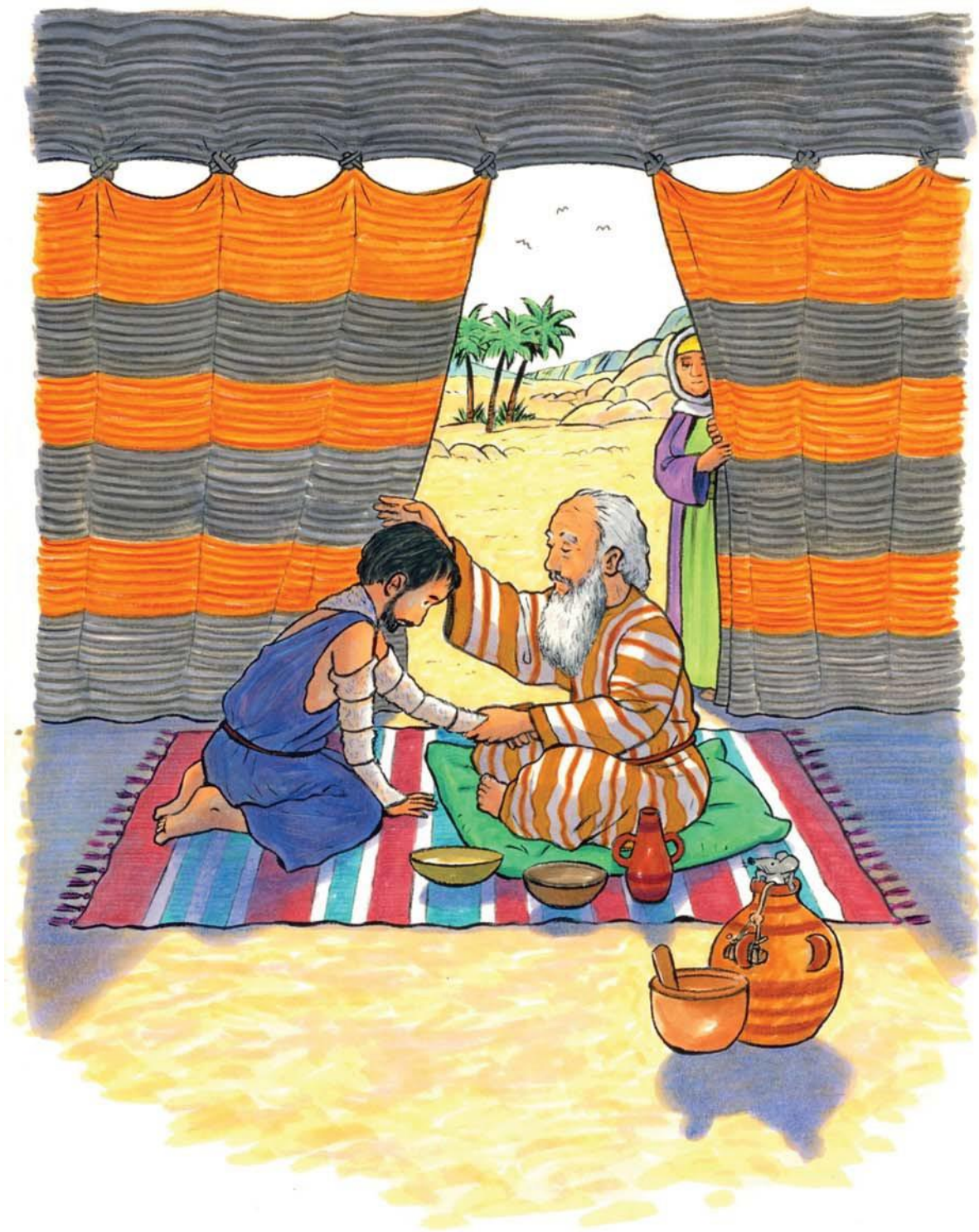


ESAU AND JACOB

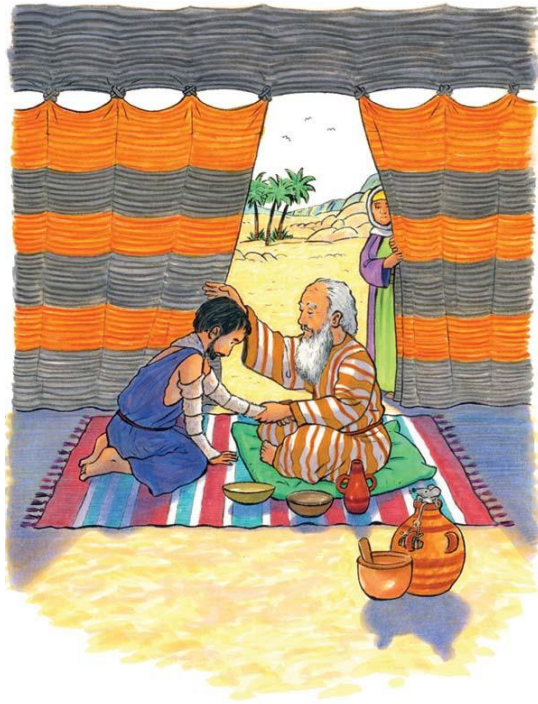
Genesis 25:20–34; 27:1–45



Contents

Message	God blesses those He wants to bless.
Learning Objectives	The children will learn: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Esau gives Jacob his birthright for a bowl of stew.■ Jacob receives the firstborn blessing, even though Esau is the oldest brother.
Bible Text	Genesis 25:20-34; 27:1-45

Esau and Jacob



Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as his wife. She was unable to have children. Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife. One day, God answered Isaac's plea and Rebekah was given twins.

The babies struggled within Rebekah's belly. She said, "If all is well, why am I like this?"

The Lord said to her, "Two peoples shall come out of the two children that you will give birth to. One people shall be stronger than the other. The older shall also serve the younger."

Esau and Jacob were born. Esau, the elder, had red hair and his skin was rough and hairy. He was a skillful hunter and spent most of his time out in the fields hunting. Jacob had smooth skin. He preferred to remain close to home.

Isaac, their father, was especially fond of Esau and enjoyed eating the meat that Esau brought home. Jacob was Rebekah's favourite son.

One day Jacob was cooking stew when his brother, Esau, arrived home after hunting. He was tired. Esau said to Jacob, "Please give me some stew. I am tired and hungry."

Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright."

Esau replied, "I am dying of hunger. What use is my birthright to me?"

Jacob said, "Swear to me that you are giving me your birthright." So Esau agreed to give Jacob his birthright. Jacob gave Esau bread and a bowl of lentil stew. Esau ate, drank, then went away. Esau's birthright was not important to him.

When Isaac was old and his eyesight was beginning to fail him, he called for Esau, his eldest son. Isaac said to him, "I am ill and do not know when I will die. Take your bow and arrow and go kill a deer. Then cook for me my favourite meal, and bring it to me. After I have eaten I will give you a blessing."

Rebekah heard Isaac's words. As soon as Esau had gone out hunting to kill a deer, she took Jacob to one side. She told Jacob, "I heard your father tell Esau that he was to hunt an animal and cook it. Esau was told to bring it to your father so that he may eat and bless Esau before he dies."

She then told Jacob, "Go to the herd and bring me two young goats. I will prepare a meal just as Isaac likes. You will take it to your father so that he may eat, and you may receive the blessing."

Jacob said to his mother, "My brother's skin is rough while mine is smooth. If my father touches me and discovers that I am deceiving him then he will not bless me. Instead he will curse me!"

His mother replied, "Do as I tell you."

Jacob brought his mother the young animals and she cooked his father's favourite meal. Then she dressed Jacob in Esau's best clothes and tied the goat skins around his hands and neck. She gave him the meal with some bread.

Jacob took it to his father. Isaac asked him, "Who are you?" Jacob replied, "I am Esau, your firstborn son. I have done as you asked. Come, sit down and eat the meal I have prepared, and bless me." Isaac asked his son, "How did you find the deer so quickly?" He replied, "The Lord, your God, showed me where to find it."

Isaac asked Jacob, "Please come nearer to me so that I can feel you and make sure that you are Esau." So Jacob went near to Isaac and he touched Jacob's arms. Isaac said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."

Isaac did not recognise Jacob, because his arms were hairy like Esau's. Isaac ate and drank. He kissed Jacob. He recognised the smell of Esau's clothes and gave Jacob the blessing.

Isaac said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of the field, which the Lord has blessed. May God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fat of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let people serve you. Be master over your brethren and let your mother's sons bow down before you.

Cursed be everyone who curses you. And blessed be those who bless you!"

Isaac finished giving Jacob the blessing. Just after Jacob left the room, Esau returned from hunting. He also cooked a tasty meal and took it to his father. "Who are you?" asked Isaac.

He replied, "I am Esau, your firstborn son."

Isaac was shocked and asked him, "Where is the hunter who has just brought me a meal and to whom I gave the blessing? This blessing cannot be undone."

When Esau heard this, he screamed and was very upset. He said to his father, "Bless me too, my father!"

Isaac answered, "Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. By your sword, you shall live, and you shall serve your brother. It will come to pass, when you become restless then you shall break his yoke from your neck."

Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing that Isaac gave him. Rebekah was worried that Esau would kill Jacob so she told Jacob to go to her brother Laban in a far away land.

Jacob had to run away to escape from Esau's anger.

Suggestions for the Teacher

Lead-In

Show the picture to the children. Discuss with them what they see. Ask what she/he may feel...

Let some of the children play the story in a role-play. Instruct them before.

Provide disguise / fancy dress and additional materials like a spoon, a table, a plate, lentils,

Alternative:

Ask the children to stand up if they have a brother or sister. Then ask the children who have an older brother or sister to sit down. Explain to the children still standing that in Biblical times they would have special privileges as the firstborn.

We learn today what happened when the eldest gave up his firstborn birthright to his brother.

Lesson Instructions

Begin telling the story...

Discuss with the children...

- What is the motive of Esau's actions? (Esau only sees the momentary gain.)
- What are the first-born's rights and privileges? (He inherits twice as much as each of his brothers and usually takes the position as head of the family after the father's death.)
- Earthly gain cannot last forever. A blessing has an eternal value.
- Does Jacob receive the blessing rightfully? (Esau willingly gives his firstborn birthright to him.)

Have the children repeat...

- Esau gives Jacob his birthright for a bowl of stew.
- Jacob receives the firstborn blessing even though Esau is the oldest brother.

Real-Life Application (explain the following)

- To someone who is thirsty water may have the greatest value.
- However, some items have a more lasting effect. (E.g. the Bible is more than a normal book.)
- We should not exchange our godly childhood (birthright) for anything of earthly value.
- What can this be? (Transient pleasure, time offers on Sunday school time, ...)

<p style="text-align: center;">Repeat the Message God blesses those He wants to bless.</p>
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