

## Lesson 10

# Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25:19–34  
Romans 9:4–13

### Memory Verse

“Thou shalt love the Lord  
thy God with all thy heart,  
and with all thy soul, and  
with all thy mind”  
(Matthew 22:37)

### Teacher’s Objective

At the end of the session,  
the students should  
be able to:

**Define** birthright

**Locate** the memory  
verse in the Bible

**Describe** how Jacob  
schemed to get his own  
way rather than trusting in  
God

**Express** how we can  
show love to God with  
words and actions

### Materials Needed

See “Teaching Activities”  
for specific activities

## Teacher’s Bible Study

**T**he tremendous promises made to Abraham were promised again to Isaac and to Jacob. Ishmael and Abraham’s other sons were rejected from this birthright. Esau, Isaac’s son and Jacob’s twin brother, sold it and was rejected. The promises, as confirmed to Isaac, are recorded in Genesis 26:1-5. To Jacob in Genesis 27:26–29, where material blessing of wealth in the things of the ground is added, with the prophecy that heathen nations shall be ruled by the birthright nations of Israel. Again in Genesis 28:13–14, where the still added detail that these nations of Israel shall eventually spread around the world is recorded.

The birthright which Esau sold to Jacob—the promise of national greatness and material wealth—never was handed to the Jews who are the tribe of Judah. So naturally we should not expect to find this promise fulfilled in the Jews today.

Just what is a *birthright*? It is that which comes by right of birth. The term *grace* means undeserved, unmerited favor—something that is not one’s right, not inherited by birth, but bestowed as a free gift. Nevertheless, they inherit a birthright (by birth, as one’s right). Consequently, the term birthright includes only the inheritance of *material* blessings, passed on from father to son—those blessings one cannot take with him, when he dies.

The story in Genesis 25 is an illustration of how profane Esau was. Read Hebrews 12:16. The reason Jacob received the birthright was that he did not despise it. Esau did as we read in Genesis 25:34. The bargain Esau made with his brother Jacob was seen as a joke to him.

Esau wanted his gratification here, and now! In contrast, Jacob had

**In preparation for this lesson, read the following scriptures.**

Genesis 25:19-34—Birthright sold

Joshua 7—A wrong choice by Achan

Joshua 24:1-28—A charge to Israel

1 Samuel 13:1-14—A wrong choice by Saul

Psalms 75—Praise to the God of Jacob

Matthew 22:34-40—The Great Commandment

## Presenting the Bible Story

**Genesis 25:19,20**

Isaac's wife, Rebekah, was his cousin (Genesis 24:15). Their marriage tied Isaac to Abraham's native country and family. The area was known as west Mesopotamia, and later known as Syria (Genesis 24:10).

**Genesis 25:21-23**

Just as Sarah was barren, without a child, so was Rebekah. Isaac knew that God had promised so many descendants that they would be as hard to number as the stars. He also knew that God kept his promises. Therefore Isaac prayed, and God responded to his prayer. Abraham did not pray to God when Sarah was barren (Genesis 16:1-4).

The birth and struggle for supremacy of Jacob and Esau manifested before they were born

While Rebekah was pregnant, the babies struggled with each other within her womb. She could not understand why. When Rebekah asked God about it, the Lord said, "Two nations[\*] are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger." During this time, for the younger son to rule over the older son was not the natural order of things. (\*The Israelites are the descendants of Jacob, and the Edomites are the descendants of Esau.)

**Hosea 12:3**

Birthright:

God reverses man's natural order, for His ways are not man's way

In a Hebrew family the firstborn son inherited the privilege of the family birthright. A special blessing from the father was also given to the oldest son. This blessing gave the eldest the responsibility to take care of the family after his father's death and leadership over his younger brothers. A birthright could be sold or given away only if the father thought the oldest son did not deserve it. Once the blessing was given, the birthright *could not* be taken back. This is one reason the father would wait until he was near death to pass on the birthright blessing. Israelite custom did not allow for daughters to receive a birthright at the death of their father.

**Romans 9:11,12**

**Genesis 25:24-26**

Rebekah gave birth to twins. We see from the description of them, they were not identical twins. The first one born was Esau. He was red and hairy. The name Esau means *red*. He grew up to be a man who enjoyed hunting, the outdoors and bringing home meat to his father. Jacob was the second twin born. He was grasping Esau's heel when he was born. The name Jacob means "may He [God] protect." His name also means "one who grabs." We will see how this is an appropriate name for him.

**Genesis 25:27-34**

Esau had an appetite for the here and now

Jacob and Esau grew up. Esau was a great hunter and he was his father's favorite son. They shared a love for the taste of wild game. Jacob was a tent dweller—perhaps staying closer to home—and was his mother's favorite son. Rebekah probably told Jacob how he was to be the leader, not Esau.

Jacob had an appetite  
for the spiritual, but  
he did not trust in God

One day after a hunting trip, Esau came home very tired and hungry. Jacob, had prepared some stew. Esau asked his brother for the cooked food saying he was going to die from hunger. Jacob knew his brother well and bargained with him—the food in return for the birthright. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of food, thus treating the birthright with contempt and holding it of no value to him..

By this example, Esau is not portrayed as a skillful hunter. Instead he is like the animal that is baited and trapped. He made the choice to satisfy his physical appetite then and there, and disregard the consequences.

Jacob is portrayed as the real hunter. He made the choice to have something that had far more value, and then he went after it with determination. Perhaps Jacob manipulated his brother to give up the birthright because he knew of the oracle (Genesis 25:23). Eventually God did teach Jacob that the use of deception is not how to show trust in God.. Remember his grandfather Abraham tried to do the same (Genesis 16:1-6).

### Art and Activities

Explore with your  
students the  
following questions:

Always close your  
class with prayer

## Teaching Activities

### Young Children

Provide copies of the Activity Page along with crayons or colored pencils.

### Older Children

Provide copies of the Activity Page puzzles.

## Explore the Subject

1. What does *scheming* mean?
2. Describe the scheming Jacob did.
3. Did Jacob understand that he should trust God?
4. Why is God's way better than our own way?

## Respond and Reinforce

1. Discuss memory verse.
2. While Jacob desired spiritual things and God's blessing, he set out to do things *his* way. When he did this, was he showing his trust and love for God?

## Activity Page

### Esau and Jacob Genesis 25:19-34

Below you will find words that describe the two brothers Esau and Jacob.  
Can you match the characteristics to the right brother?  
Read the scriptures and list your decisions under each name.

# Esau

- Favorite son of Isaac
- Favorite son of Rebekah
- Was an outdoorsman and hunter
- Was born first; the eldest
- Quiet and stayed near home
- Asked for the birthright in return for a bowl of stew
- “Despised,” or did not regard his birthright

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# Jacob

- His name meant *red*.
- Grabbed his brother’s heel when being born
- Had thick hair all over his body
- Son of Abraham
- Conspired to take his brother’s inheritance
- Physical appetite caused him to disregard a serious duty
- Was deceitful

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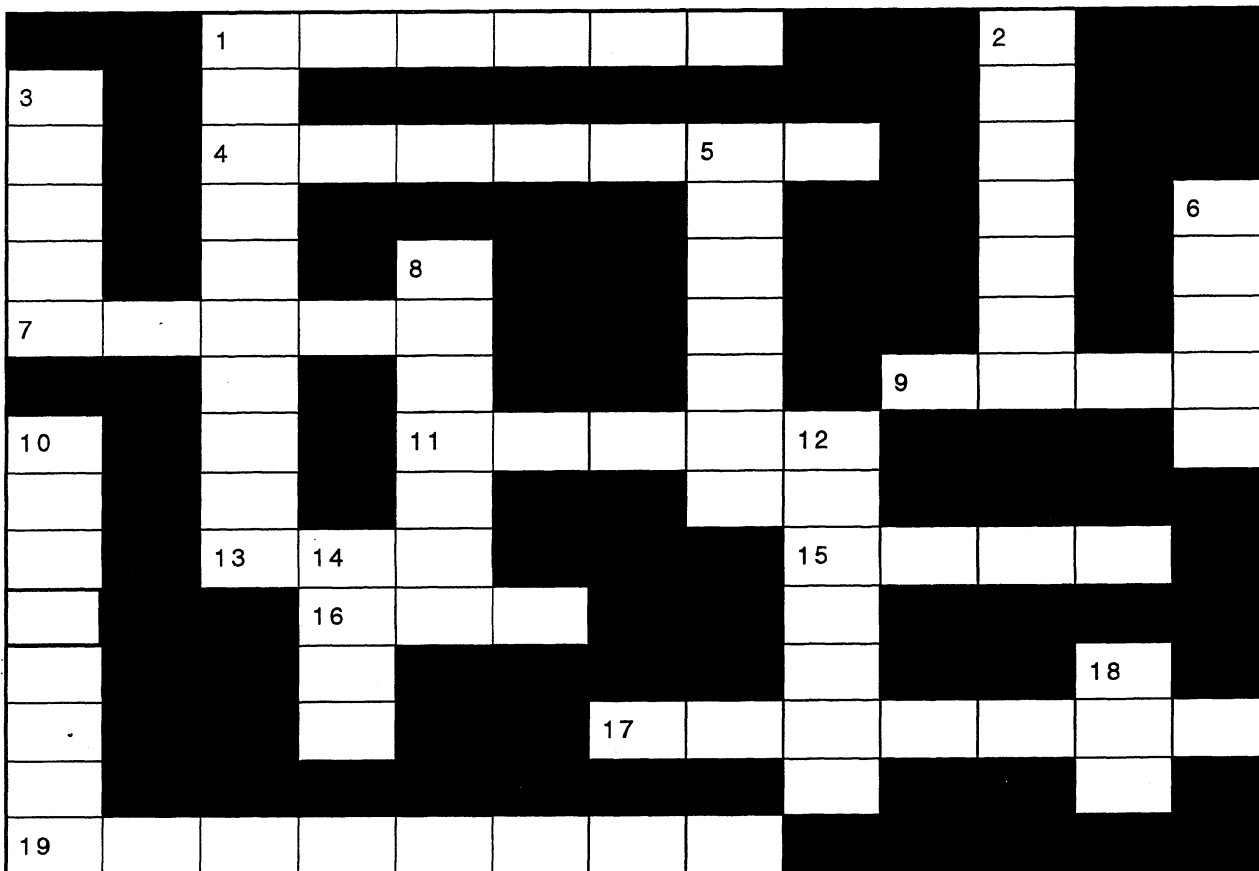
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# Activity Page

## Esau and Jacob Genesis 25:19-34

Read the scriptures and complete the crossword puzzle below.



### Across

1. Not producing; sterile.
4. Mother of Jacob and Esau.
7. The Lord said the older would \_\_\_\_\_ the younger (Genesis 25:23).
9. Jacob bargained with Esau to \_\_\_\_\_ his birthright (Genesis 25: 31).
11. Jacob and Esau's father's name.
13. Rebekah was the mother of how many nations (Genesis 25:23)?
15. A word or phrase by which a person or thing is designated.
16. "The \_\_\_\_\_ people shall be stronger than the other people..." (Genesis 25:23).
17. The first book of the Bible; means *beginning*, or *origin*.
19. To be misled or tricked.

### Down

1. Material blessings to a firstborn.
2. Old English word that means thick soup made with vegetables with or without meat. (see Genesis 25:29).
3. Two children brought forth at birth.
5. The grandfather of Jacob and Esau.
6. Esau was a cunning hunter, and a man of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 25:27).
8. The flesh of a deer.
10. "Thus Esau \_\_\_\_\_ his birthright" ( Genesis 25: 34).
12. Esau was a \_\_\_\_\_ hunter (Genesis 25:27).
14. The place in which babies develop before birth.
18. Esau said: "I am at the point to \_\_\_\_\_..." (Genesis 25:32).

## Activity Page

### Esau and Jacob

Genesis 25:19-34

Esau sells his birthright for food. Color the picture

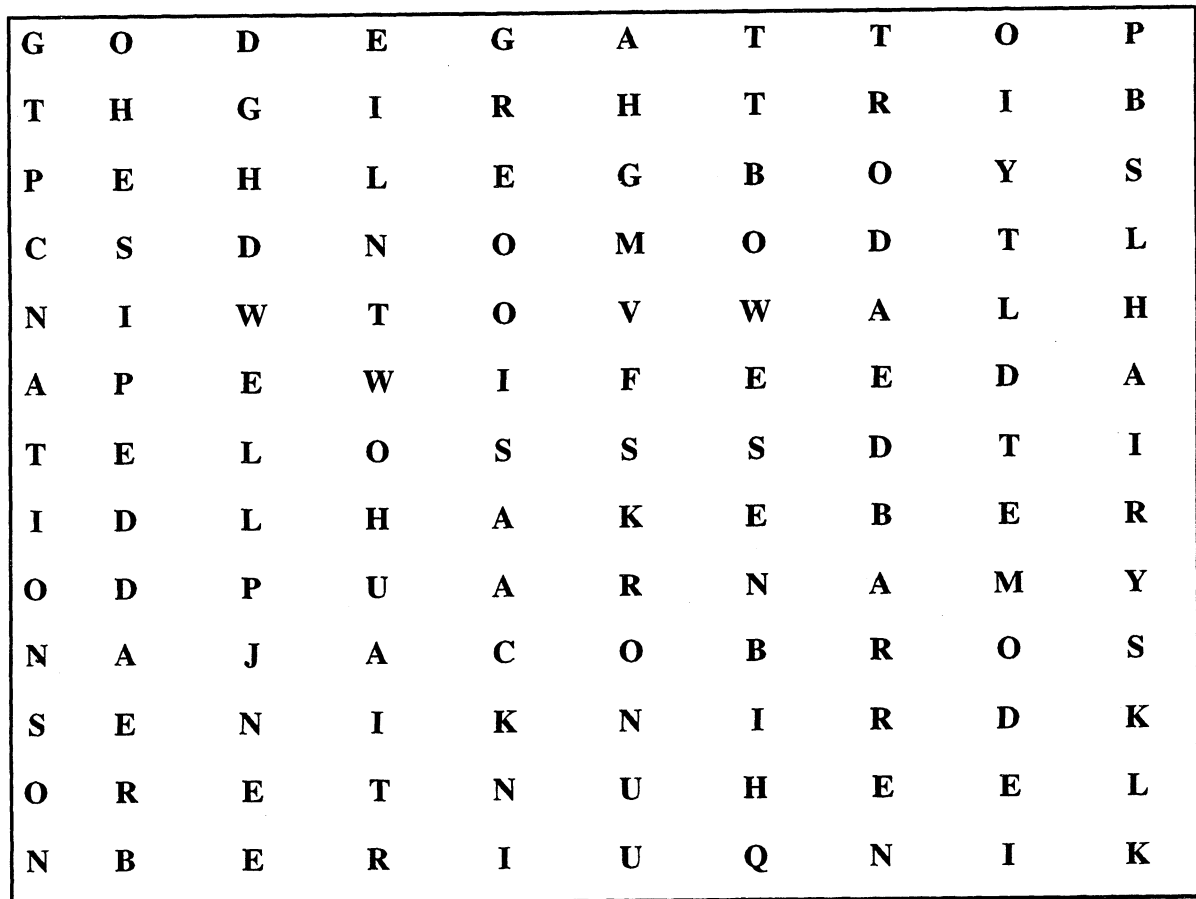


## Art Activity

### Esau and Jacob

#### Genesis 25:19-34

Read the scriptures and find the words listed below in the word search puzzle.



WIFE	FEED	TWO	DESPISE	POTTAGE	JACOB	DWELL	HEEL
WOMB	EAT	BOYS	BOW	LOVED	INQUIRE	MAN	BIRTHRIGHT
NATIONS	GOD	HUNTER	ESAU	SELL	RED	REBEKAH	KIN
HAIRY	ISAAC	EDOM	BARREN	BREAD	SON	TWIN	DIE