

## ● Lesson 8

# JACOB: FATHER OF THE 12 TRIBES

*“Oh what a tangled web we weave,  
When first we practice to deceive!”*

*Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832)*

Jacob’s name means “deceiver,” and as we will soon see, he lived up to that name! We will also see that even though his life was a web of deceit, lies, and trickery, God graciously used and blessed Jacob.

Jacob’s grandfather Abraham had been told by God that he would be the father of many nations and that his descendants would outnumber the stars. Abraham’s son Isaac had two sons: Jacob and Esau. Jacob became the father of 12 sons. These 12 sons and their descendants became the 12 tribes of Israel. Even though Abraham did not live to see all of these descendants, God was fulfilling His promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations.

Jacob was the second child born to Isaac and Rebekah, only moments after his twin brother Esau was born. Since Esau was the firstborn, he was to receive the **birthright** and the **blessing** of his father, Isaac. But in a moment of Esau’s weakness, Jacob convinced Esau to sell his birthright to him.



1. Read Genesis 25:29-34. For what did Esau sell his birthright? \_\_\_\_\_

Later, Jacob and his mother deceived Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob as well, which was reserved for the firstborn (Genesis 27). Because of this **deceit**, Jacob had to flee from his brother’s anger, leaving his home and loved ones behind. He probably never saw his mother again. On the journey to his uncle’s house, he had a dream as he lay sleeping in the field.

2. Read Genesis 28:10-22. What did Jacob see in his dream? v.12 \_\_\_\_\_

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## Memory Verse

“**A**nd in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

Genesis 28:14b-15

2166 B.C.

.....Birth of Abram

2080 B.C.

Birth of Ishmael .....

2066 B.C.

.....Birth of Issac

# Twelve Sons of Jacob (Tribes of Israel)

Jacob (Israel)			
Leah	Zilpah (Leah's servant)	Bilhah (Rachel's servant)	Rachel
1 Reuben	7 Gad	5 Dan	11 Joseph
2 Simeon	8 Asher	6 Naphtali	├─ Manasseh
3 Levi			└─ Ephraim
4 Judah			12 Benjamin
9 Issachar			
10 Zebulun			
Dinah			

Many years after Jacob died and the Israelites reached the promised land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, the land of Canaan was divided among the descendants of the sons of Jacob (Joshua 13 – 21). Levi did not receive land because his tribe was assigned by God to minister in the tabernacle as priests. Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, received two separate portions of land. Dinah was Jacob's only daughter and did not receive any portion of land. (See map in Lesson 19.)

3. Who spoke to him? v.13 \_\_\_\_\_

4. What promise did Jacob receive? vv.13-15

When he awoke, Jacob realized the presence of God was in that place, and he made a vow to take the Lord as his God.

Jacob met his match in his Uncle Laban, who also knew a few things about trickery and deceit. Jacob ended up working for Laban for many years. He gained two wives and twelve sons. In the end, Jacob figured out a way to cheat Laban and became a very wealthy man.

Later, Jacob obeyed God's command to return to his home and restored his relationship with his brother, Esau. During the trip home, he met God (in the form of a man) during the night.

5. Read Genesis 32:22-30. What did Jacob and the man do? v.24 \_\_\_\_\_

## Word Works 1

Find the names of Jacob's 12 sons. They are listed in Genesis 35:23-26.

L S I S S A C H A R  
 F N B E N R J O R A  
 R A V T L E V I A T  
 O P W H E U R D S S  
 P H L M P B S A H H  
 J T S I M E O N E A  
 L A O A R N S N R D  
 N L G O D I T O L U  
 N I M A J N E B J J  
 Z L G N U L U B E Z

2005 B.C.

Birth of Jacob

1991 B.C.

Death of Abraham

6. What did Jacob receive from this man? vv.28-29

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This time his blessing was received rightfully, without using deceit.

Despite his repeated lies and cheating, God's grace was evident in the life of Jacob. God forgave Jacob, gave him a new name (Israel), and blessed him. And God blessed His people through Jacob. God blessed all believers through Jacob. The Lord's promise of blessing was ultimately fulfilled when Jesus was born as a direct descendant of Jacob's son, Judah, and then gave His life in payment for our sins.

By trusting in what Jesus did on the cross for you and me, we can experience forgiveness and blessing as Jacob did. Through the life of Jacob, we learn that finding favor with God does not depend upon being born into a certain home or living by certain rules, but on the grace of God alone! God doesn't want us to lie and cheat like Jacob did, but whatever sins we commit can be washed away and forgiven when we are sorry for what we've done and confess those sins to the Lord (read I John 1:9).

7. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. How are we saved? (see also Romans 3:23-24) \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Do we earn salvation by anything we do? Explain.

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9. How do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Catechism Corner

1. Where does God show us how we may be saved? (Q. 2)

*In the holy Scriptures, also called the Bible.*

2. Like Jacob I'm not always a "model" Christian, and because of this, I don't always "feel" like a Christian. How can I be assured that I'm saved? (see John 5:24)

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## Word Works 2

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Bible names often have special meanings. Look up these references and match the names with their meanings.

Esau (Genesis 25:25, 30)	face of God
Israel (Genesis 32:28)	father of many nations
Bethel (Genesis 28:17, 19)	one who struggles with God
Abraham (Genesis 17:5)	laughter
Jacob (Genesis 27:36)	house of God
Peniel (Genesis 32:30)	deceiver
Isaac (Genesis 21:6)	red; hairy

## Fast Fact: Birthright

- In ancient Israel the birthright was something given to the firstborn son in every family.
- It meant he enjoyed a special status in the family for his entire lifetime.
- One who received the birthright had an important role with much responsibility that was not to be taken lightly.
- He was given a leadership role in the family, ranking second only to his father.
- At his father's death, he became leader of the family and also inherited a double portion of the estate.