



LEVEL 3  
**3·4**  
LESSON 4

# *Imperial Academy Bible Lessons*



The Life of Jacob

# The Life of Jacob

**A**fter the Flood, people once again turned away from God. Nimrod and Semiramis led people into believing in many false gods. So God called one man and severely tested his faith and obedience. This man was Abraham. Because he believed God's promises and obeyed Him, God blessed Abraham with many blessings.

However, most of the promises God gave Abraham did not happen during his lifetime. These promises were for his descendants, most of whom would be born long after Abraham died.

Promises of blessings for Abraham's descendants were passed on to his son, Isaac. Abraham knew that he had to prepare Isaac to faithfully obey God. Then God could richly bless Isaac and his descendants, as He had promised in His covenant with Abraham.

After his wife, Sarah, died, Abraham began to think seriously about whom Isaac should marry. Isaac would carry on God's covenant, and he would need the right wife to

support him. Abraham did not want his son to marry a Canaanite because they were of a different race.

When Isaac was 40 years old, Abraham instructed his chief servant to travel to his homeland in Mesopotamia and find Isaac a wife from his own people.

The servant obeyed, loading up 10 camels with gifts and journeying east.

## **SERVANT MEETS REBEKAH**

As the servant journeyed, he thought about the crucial choice Abraham had entrusted to his care. He looked to the God of Abraham for guidance. After several days of traveling, he arrived at the city of Nahor and stopped at a well. The women of the city came and went from the well every evening to draw water.

"Great God of my master Abraham," the servant prayed, "please lead me to the right woman for Isaac. Give me a sign by having her offer to draw water for both my camels and myself." The servant faithfully looked to God for help, but he was also specific in his request.

Before he even finished his prayer, a beautiful young woman named Rebekah came to the well. When the servant asked her for a drink of water, she immediately responded and even offered to draw water for all of his camels. God had miraculously answered the servant's prayer in detail.

Recognizing that God was blessing his efforts, the servant gave Rebekah a gift of jewelry.

"Who is your father?" the servant asked. "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor," she responded. Nahor was Abraham's brother, which meant that Rebekah was Isaac's second cousin; she was from among

Abraham's people. The servant bowed his head and thanked God for His guidance, then asked Rebekah if her family could provide lodging for him and a place for his camels.

Rebekah rushed to her house to tell her family about this encounter. After hearing her story and seeing the gifts she had been given, her brother Laban ran to the well and invited the servant to his home.

Laban unharnessed the camels, fed them, and gave them space among his animals where they could rest. After cleaning up for a meal, the group prepared to eat. However, Abraham's servant said he first



Rebekah gives water to Abraham's chief servant.

wanted to discuss the reason for his visit. He explained to Rebekah's family exactly how everything had happened, saying that Rebekah was an answered prayer from God.

The family agreed that it was God's will that she go with the servant back to Isaac. The servant gave Rebekah's family gold, silver, jewels and other fine things as gifts in honor of Rebekah. They celebrated that evening over dinner.

The next morning, the servant prepared to head back to Canaan to finish the task Abraham had given

him. Rebekah's family, however, was not ready for her to leave and wanted her to remain home for at least 10 more days. But because God had worked everything out so perfectly, Abraham's servant wanted to bring her back as soon as possible. They left the choice up to Rebekah.

"I will go," she said. After loading the camels, Rebekah, her maids and Abraham's men began the journey back to Canaan to meet Isaac.

Several days later, as they neared the end of their journey, Rebekah saw a man walking in the fields and



Isaac and Rebekah are introduced.

asked the servant who he was. He told her that it was Isaac. Out of respect, she covered her face with a veil. The servant introduced the two and explained to Isaac everything that had happened.

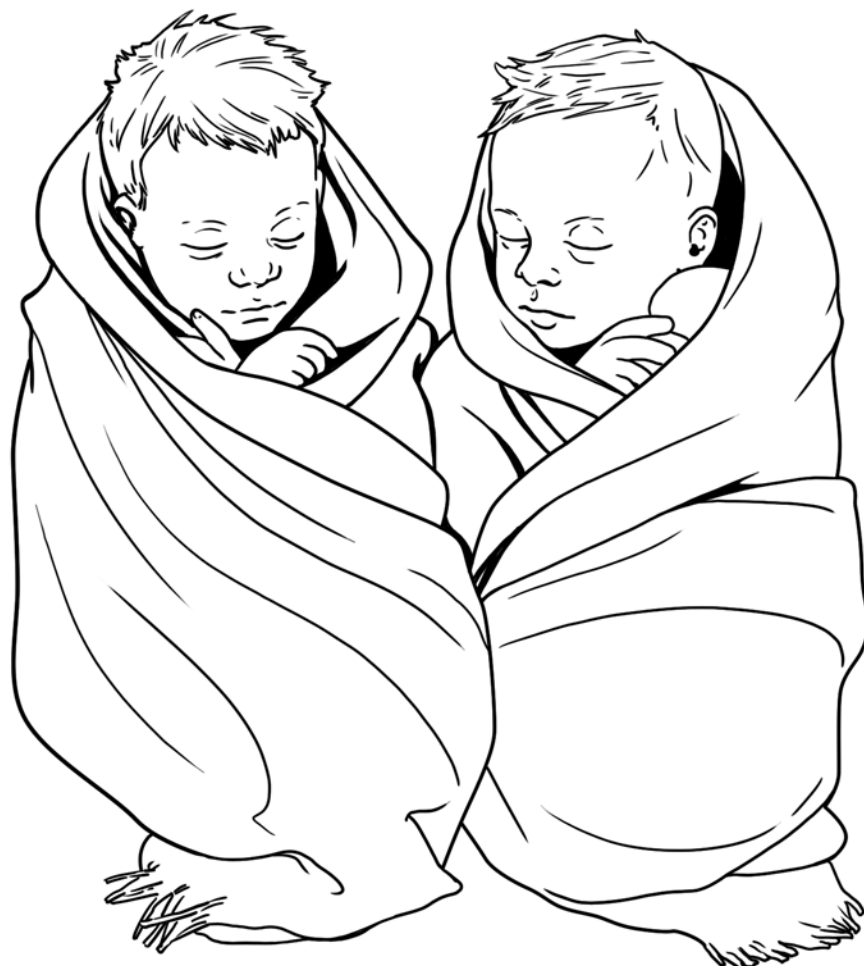
A little while later, Isaac and Rebekah were happily married.

### **BIRTH OF TWO NATIONS**

After 20 years of marriage, Isaac and Rebekah still did not have any children. They deeply wanted a family, and they knew God's promise to Abraham needed to be fulfilled.

Isaac prayed earnestly to God that He would bless them with a child. God answered that prayer, and Rebekah eventually became pregnant.

Both Isaac and Rebekah were very excited. However, she began to experience unusual pains. She prayed to God to find out why she was experiencing this. God told her that in her womb were two sons! He said that these boys would grow up to become the fathers of two nations. One would grow to be stronger than the other, He said, and the older would serve the younger.



Jacob and Esau

Rebekah eventually gave birth to twin boys, as God had said. Isaac and she named the older son Esau and the younger Jacob. As the boys grew, their parents realized that they were very different from each other. Esau was a hunter, while Jacob took care of animals and grew fruits and vegetables. Esau often treated his father to the meat he obtained from hunting. Esau became very special to Isaac, whereas Rebekah favored Jacob.

It was the custom for the parents to leave the land, cattle, money and other possessions to the firstborn son. This was called the birthright. Along with these blessings, he would also inherit the promise that God made to Abraham and his children. Esau was the firstborn.

### **ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT**

One evening, Esau returned home from a long hunting trip, tired and hungry. Jacob had prepared a lentil soup that smelled delicious. Esau begged his brother to give him a bowl of it.

Jacob recognized how desperate his brother was. Growing up, Jacob had been taught about the promises that were made to his grandfather Abraham. He also knew of the great wealth that came with the birthright. He thought that he might be able to bribe Esau to surrender the birthright.

“I will only give you soup if you give me your birthright,” Jacob said.

Esau knew how valuable the birthright was, but he was also very hungry.

“I am about to die,” Esau said. “What good will the birthright do me if I die of starvation?”

Esau gave up his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup.

Neither Esau nor Jacob told their parents what had happened. If Isaac had known, he would have been very disappointed with his son.

### **JACOB TRICKS ISAAC**

When Isaac had become quite old and blind, he called Esau to him. He told him to take his bow and arrows, hunt a deer, and cook the meat for him to eat. After he had eaten, Isaac would give Esau the birthright blessing. Esau immediately left and did as his father instructed him.

Rebekah had overheard Isaac’s instructions to Esau. She favored Jacob, so she wanted him to have the birthright and the blessing.

Do you remember what God had promised Rebekah before the twins were born? “The \_\_\_\_\_ shall serve the \_\_\_\_\_” (Genesis 25:23). But Rebekah did not trust God and tried to work it out her own way. “Go to your flocks and bring in two young goats,” she told Jacob. “I’ll cook the meat just the way your father likes it, and he’ll believe it was prepared by Esau.”

Jacob had bribed the birthright from Esau, but he did not think this trick on Isaac to get Esau’s blessing



Esau sells his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup.

would work. Esau was very hairy, and he was not: Isaac would realize Jacob was trying to trick him. But Rebekah told him, "I'll take care of the details; you just get the two goats."

Jacob brought her the meat, and she prepared it the way Isaac liked it. She then took the goat skins and put them on Jacob's hands, arms and neck. She told Jacob to put on some of Esau's clothing and to take the meat to Isaac, so he would bless him.

Jacob went along with the plan. He entered Isaac's tent and said, "My father."

"Yes, I'm here. Who are you?" responded Isaac.

"I am Esau, your firstborn son," Jacob lied. "I have brought you the

meat that you asked for. Sit up and eat, and then you can bless me."

"How could you have returned from hunting so soon?" he asked.

Jacob told another lie: "God led me to find the deer quickly."

Isaac was still suspicious. He asked Jacob to come near him, so he could feel his hands and arms.

"Your voice sounds like Jacob," he said, "but your skin feels like Esau. Are you actually Esau, my son?" he asked directly.

Jacob lied to his father for the third time, saying, "I am."

After eating the meat, Isaac blessed Jacob, saying, "I pray that the great God will give you well-watered, abundant fields, with much



Jacob tricks his father into giving him the firstborn's blessing.



produce. May nations and peoples serve and bow down to you. Cursed be everyone that curses you and blessed be those who bless you.”

After Isaac finished giving the blessing, Jacob left the tent.

Right after Jacob left Isaac’s tent, Esau returned. He prepared the meat and took it to his father.

“Father, sit up so you can eat the meat you asked for,” Esau said upon entering. Surprised and unsure of what was happening, Isaac responded, “Who are you?”

“I am Esau, your firstborn,” he replied.

Isaac said nothing for a moment. He was trembling.

“If you are Esau, then who was just

here? I prayed for God to give the blessing to him, and he *will* receive the blessing.”

Esau was shocked. “Bless me too, Father!” he cried.

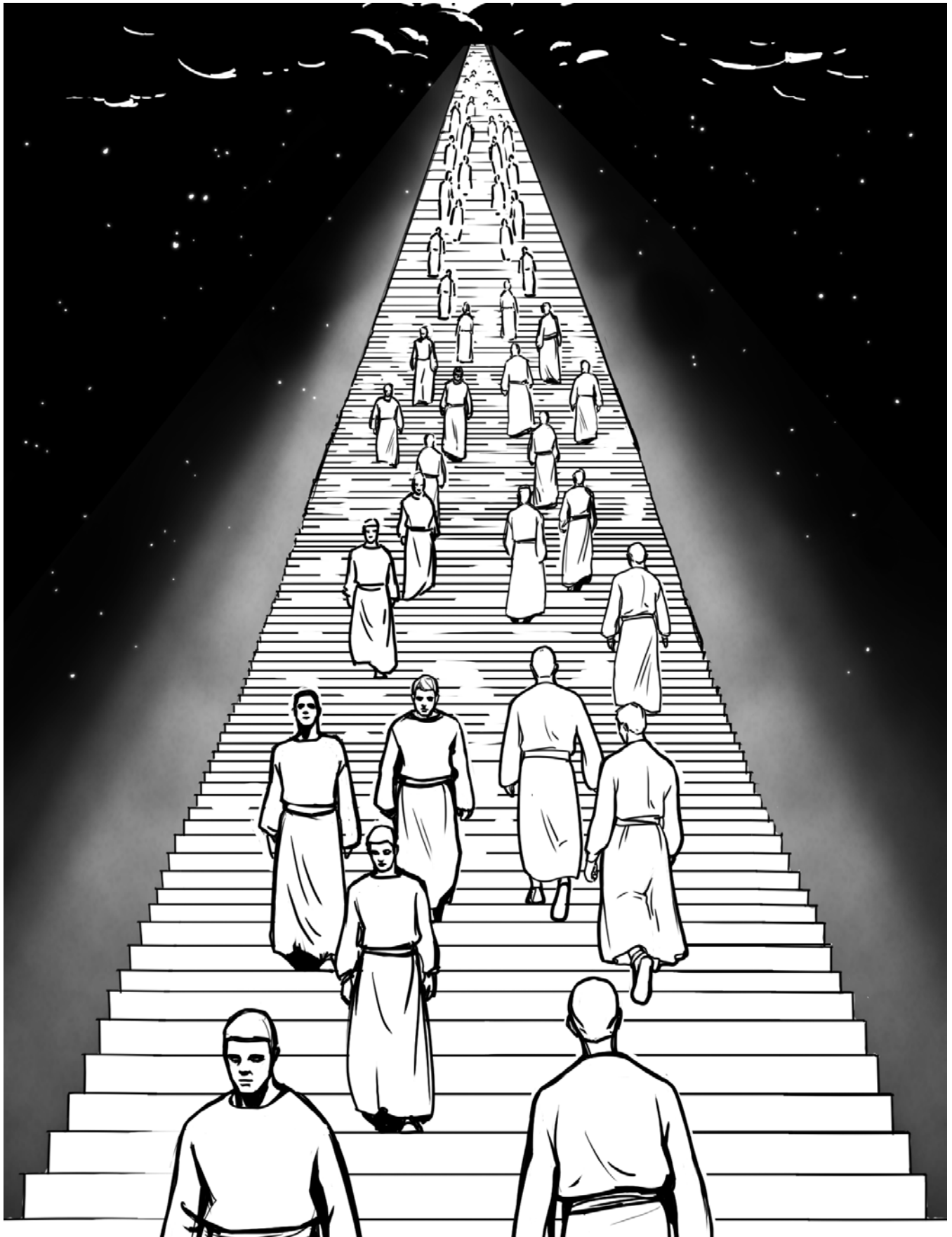
“I cannot” Isaac said. “Your brother tricked me and stole your blessing.”

“It was Jacob!” exclaimed Esau, his voice cracking with emotion. He began to weep. “He has now tricked me twice. First he stole my birthright, and now he has taken my blessing. Do you not have any blessing left to give me?”

“You and your family will settle far away from the prosperous land,” Isaac told Esau. “You will have to hunt and fight for your life. Your family will serve your brother’s family. But



Esau returns as Jacob leaves Isaac’s tent.



In his dream, Jacob saw a long staircase stretching from the ground to the sky.

eventually, you will break free and serve him no longer.”

Esau was very angry. He hated his brother and thought, *Once my father dies, I will kill Jacob for doing this, and get the birthright back for myself.*

Rebekah discovered Esau’s intent. She feared for Jacob’s life, and told him to flee to Haran and stay with her brother Laban. Rebekah did not tell Isaac the real reason she wanted Jacob to leave. Instead, she asked him to send Jacob away to marry one of Laban’s daughters.

Isaac reminded his son of the blessing that he had been given. He reminded him of the promise made to Abraham and the multitude that would be born to him. Then he sent Jacob away to Haran.

Jacob had successfully bribed away the birthright and tricked away the blessing from Esau. But because he had used manipulation and lies, he would have a hard life ahead of him.

## **A UNIQUE DREAM**

Jacob began his long and potentially dangerous journey to Haran. After the sun set on the first night, he stopped to sleep. He gathered several stones together for a pillow, laid some padding over it, and laid down to sleep.

That night, he had an unusual dream. He saw a long staircase on the ground that extended into the sky. Angels were walking up and

down the staircase, and at the top stood God.

“I am the God of Abraham and Isaac, your father,” God said to Jacob. “I will give you and your children the land where you lie. Your family shall be as the dust of the Earth, and spread out in every direction. I will be with you in everything you do and never leave you. Eventually, I will bring you back to this place.”

Jacob woke up afraid. He knew that something special had just happened. Then he noticed something: The stones he had laid out for a pillow had miraculously merged into one, solid stone. Jacob anointed the stone with oil, to mark the significance of the miracle and the dream.

Jacob praised God and promised that if He would help him and eventually bring him back to his father’s house, then he would worship God and pay Him a tithe of all that God gave him.

Jacob continued on his journey to Haran, now knowing that God was with him.

# BIBLE MEMORY Isaac's Blessings to Jacob and Esau

Isaac's blessing to Jacob: Genesis 27:28-29

Isaac's blessing to Esau: Genesis 27:39-40

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## Unscramble the Words

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