



# God Chooses Jacob over Esau

*Genesis 25:21–26; 27:1–29*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will learn that God promised to bless Jacob instead of Esau.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Explain why God blessed Jacob instead of Esau.
- Identify how God blessed Jacob.
- Understand that God's blessing on Jacob was not based on Jacob's righteousness.

## KEY VERSE

"The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb,.... and the older shall serve the younger'" (Genesis 25:23).

## APPLICATION

- We all are sinners. Call out for God's mercy.
- Don't commit one sin to make up for another sin.
- Be patient for God to keep His promise. Don't take matters into your own hands.

## NEXT WEEK

Jacob Wrestles with God  
Read Genesis 32.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level



## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Background

Genesis 27 gives the account of a family tragedy. It is the account of Isaac and his relationships with God, with his wife, and with his sons. Isaac’s father, Abraham, had been a man of faith; he had obeyed God and worshiped Him. But Isaac’s love for the Lord never seems to have developed into the controlling preoccupation it had been for Abraham. As a result, the members of Isaac’s household became egocentric, self-serving, and underhanded in their dealings with one another. Their relationships were regrettably devoid of honesty, respect, and love. As they struggled against the Lord’s sovereignty, they made victims of themselves and of one another. Yet, because of His promise to Abraham, God continued to work out His plan for Abraham’s descendants, despite their arrogant resistance and interference.

When Isaac was about 137 years old, he lost his eyesight. Although he would live for another 40 years, he felt that his death might be imminent. Therefore, he prepared to pass on the family blessing to his oldest son, Esau—despite knowing that God had chosen Jacob to inherit the blessing (Gen. 25:23). Isaac should have announced God’s blessing to the son whom the Lord Himself had chosen. Instead, he sought to circumvent God’s will and award the blessing to Esau, his favorite son. Isaac’s actions showed selfish arrogance and were based on human preference rather than on commitment to God. Esau was unworthy of the blessing. His lack of concern for the spiritual heritage of his grandfather was reflected in the sale of his birthright to Jacob and in his forbidden marriages to Hittite women. But these facts, even accompanied by the knowledge that God had chosen Jacob to receive the promise (Gen. 25:23), were insufficient to persuade Isaac.

Rebekah overheard Isaac promise the blessing to Esau, and because she loved her son (literally, her “favorite”) Jacob more than Esau, she set out to foil Isaac’s plan. Seeing Isaac’s unwillingness to conform to God’s plan, Rebekah and Jacob should have openly confronted the patriarch and left the results in God’s hands. Instead, they decided to trick Isaac. Although Jacob and Esau were over 70 years old by this time, Rebekah gave Jacob commands with imperative urgency, and he complied. Jacob had initial misgivings that his father would discover the truth anyway, through his senses of smell, touch, and hearing. He feared that, if discovered, he would receive a curse rather than a blessing because he was taking advantage of an old man’s weakness. Rebekah must have found a solution to this problem as she was skinning the goats: she would bind their hides to Jacob’s arms and neck.

The sad lack of honesty in Isaac’s relationship with his sons is revealed in his words: “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not” (27:21). His dependence on hearing to identify those around him would have been well developed, and the person standing before him sounded like Jacob, even though he otherwise gave every evidence of being Esau. Isaac had decided to bless this person, yet doubts left him unsure. Having made every effort

### Additional Reference Materials

*The MacArthur Study  
Bible* by John MacArthur

*Paradise to Prison:  
Studies in Genesis* by  
John J. Davis

to determine the truth through circuitous means, Isaac asked Jacob directly, "Are you really my son Esau?" To this question, Jacob offered a direct lie: "I am."

Isaac ate the goat meat and drank the wine. Then he said to his son, "Come near now and kiss me," willfully setting aside all previous doubts. Isaac's blessing took poetic form as he recalled the characteristic of Esau that he loved best: his love for the hunt and the open field. Esau was a "man's man" who had often provided Isaac with delicacies from the earth. At first Isaac spoke of Yahweh, the faithful Maker of covenants with His chosen people. Then he abruptly changed to speak of Ha Elohim, the true God, Creator of everything. In Genesis 27:28, he said, "May God give you of the dew of heaven." The mention of dew was significant because the Palestinians relied heavily on dew for irrigation of their crops. Isaac also invoked God to give his son the "fatness of the earth," the fat, fertile places. Then he attempted to reverse the Lord's earlier verdict that the older son would serve the younger.

No sooner had Jacob left Isaac's quarters than Esau suddenly appeared. Jacob barely escaped being caught in the act. Esau's words were very similar to those Jacob had used, showing how carefully the deception had been planned. The older brother spoke with greater deference to his father, however. Isaac was caught by surprise. He said (literally), "Who thou?" In rapid succession, Isaac realized that Esau had been deprived of the blessing he had intended to give him and that the blessing had gone to Jacob. Blessings and cursings made through deceit or ignorance were considered invalid, but Isaac refused to change his words. Apparently, he finally recognized God's sovereign hand in the situation and repented. Because of Isaac's sudden reversal of heart, the writer of Hebrews could say, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come" (11:20).

Hebrews 12:16 calls Esau an immoral, godless person who sold his birthright for a single meal. He had wanted nothing to do with God, and yet on hearing from his father's lips the finality of his loss, this 70-year-old man had a temper tantrum. Again, we see signs of a dishonest relationship between father and son, for Esau tried to manipulate Isaac with tears and pleadings, demonstrating a complete lack of self-control. Yet he could not change his father's mind (Heb. 12:17).

Esau's final remarks revealed the selfishness and spiritual meanness of his heart; he was indeed a wicked, godless man, and Isaac must have been forced at that moment to admit that his oldest son's nature was incongruous with that of the patriarchs. This man who had played away his life in the fields, mindless of God's will, now was bitterly seething with anger toward his brother. He had been injured, and he feigned innocence. Suddenly and dramatically, Isaac was confronted with the fact that he had reared a son who was worthy only of God's curse. Esau's descendants were condemned to live in the barren land of Edom. They would be ruled over by Jacob's posterity, only occasionally shaking off their subservience.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth”  
(Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Review Questions

*Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.*

Who was Isaac, and what was special about him?  
*He was Abraham’s promised son.*

Why did God ask Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering?  
*He wanted to show whom Abraham loved more, Him or Isaac.*

Why can we put more trust in God’s promises than we can in man’s promises?  
*Because God always does what He says He will do.*

What relationships or things in your life would be hard to give up (sacrifice) for God?  
*[Let the students respond with their own answers.]*



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### Basketball Review

Divide the students into two groups. Put up a foam basketball goal. Ask each group a review question. When a student gives a correct answer, he can try to shoot the basketball into the hoop. If he makes a goal, his team receives one point. The team with the most points wins the game.



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### Butcher-Paper Brothers

Select two students to lie down on butcher paper and make poses (hands on hips or waving, for example). Trace around them with a black pen. Identify which is Jacob and which is Esau. Allow the students to take turns decorating Esau (with red skin, hairy arms, etc.) and Jacob (as a gardener, wearing a chef’s hat, holding veggies, etc.). Cut out the shapes through two layers of paper, leaving a one-inch border. Add shreds of paper between the layers and staple all around. Set the 3-D boys on either side of you as you teach the lesson. Point to them throughout the story or while discussing their differences.



### Guess Who?

Seat the students in a large circle in the middle of the room. Have one of the teachers or helpers sit on a chair in the middle of the circle. Place a blindfold on the teacher. Have students come up to the teacher, and allow him to touch their arms. You may wish to bring in a piece of fur or cloth to put on each student’s arm. See if the teacher can guess who the student is. Take enough time to allow each student a turn. In today’s lesson, we will see how Jacob tried to trick his blind father and steal his blessing. If you teach a large class, you may wish to select only four or five students to try tricking the teacher.



### Touch and Smell

Blindfold the students. Pass around several roughly spherical objects. Here are some ideas: orange, softball, tennis ball, apple, lemon, ball of yarn, ball of string, onion, or potato. Have students try to identify these items by touch and smell. It's not so easy, is it? In our Bible lesson, we will hear about how Isaac was fooled when he could only touch and smell.



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### Life's Story

Show the class a current newspaper. What kinds of things are going on in the world? Does God know about all this? God has a plan for our world and our lives. What happens to His plan when people do bad things? Does anything take God by surprise? Why not? Because God is in control of the future.



### Mystery Touch/Smells

See the Practice section for this activity. It could easily be modified to use before the Bible lesson.

## PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included to use during worship time. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

### Bible Lesson

#### Reading of the Text

Read Genesis 25:21–26 and 27:1–29.

#### Introduction

Is God the Creator of everything? Yes. Genesis 1:1 says that God has created everything. Is He the King of everything? Yes. Revelation 19:16 tells us that He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Since God is the Creator and the King, He is in charge of everything. If you look outside, you can see the blue sky. What allows us to see the sky? We can see the sky because the sun shines on it. When it is nighttime, what can you see in the sky? You probably see stars. We see stars because the sun no longer is shining. Did you know that God is the one who makes the sun shine and not shine? Hebrews 1:3 says that God "uphold[s] all things by the word of His power." Today we are going to learn that God is in charge of everything. We will see how God controlled the life of two men: Jacob and Esau.



#### Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

**LOQ:** Why did Rebekah ask the Lord about her children who were not yet born?

**Answer:** In Genesis 24, the Lord brought Rebekah to Isaac to be his wife. About

20 years later, Isaac prayed for her to have children. And Genesis 25:21 says that “Rebekah his wife conceived.” This was a wonderful event for Isaac and Rebekah. Now they would have children of their own. On one particular day, Rebekah felt “the children struggl[ing] together” (Gen. 25:22). So she went to ask the Lord why this was happening.

**LOQ:** What did the Lord tell her?

**Answer:** The Lord said something very interesting to Rebekah. He said in Genesis 25:23, “Two nations are in your womb, two peoples shall be separated from your body; one people shall be stronger than the other, and the older shall serve the younger.” This is an amazing thing God said. We can be sure He said it because it is written in the Bible.

**LOQ:** Why do you think God told Rebekah this?

**Answer:** The reason God told her this was so she would know that God controls everything. In Psalm 139:13–14, David said to God, “You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well.” David knew that God had created him, and the same was true of Rebekah’s two children. God knew everything about her two children (Gen. 25:23). He told her that there were two sons in her womb. He told her that each son would be the father of a nation. He also told her that one son would be stronger than the other. Finally, He told her that the one who came out first would serve the one who came out second. God knew everything about these two sons because He planned it that way. The Bible says that He controls all things.

**LOQ:** What happened when the children were born?

**Answer:** Genesis 25:25 says that the first son came out of the womb, and he was red all over. They named him Esau. The second son came out holding Esau’s heel. They named him Jacob (Gen. 25:26). Esau was older, and Jacob was younger.

**LOQ:** Why do you think God told Rebekah that Esau would serve Jacob?

**Answer:** The reason is that God had planned to bless Jacob in a very special way. In God’s planning, Esau was not to receive this blessing—it was only for Jacob. Romans 9:10–13 tells us that God chose Jacob to be the leader.

**LOQ:** What did Esau do for his father, Isaac?

**Answer:** In Genesis 27:2–4, Isaac said to Esau, “Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.” Isaac was very old, and he was almost blind. Isaac wanted to give a blessing to Esau, so he asked him to do this for him.

**LOQ:** What did Rebekah do when she heard Isaac talking to Esau?

**Answer:** Genesis 27:6 says that Rebekah went to Jacob and told him that she had heard Isaac speaking to Esau. She told him to bring her two goats. She would prepare them for Jacob so that he could give the food to his father before Esau did (Gen. 27:7–10). Rebekah wanted to make sure that Jacob received the blessing instead of Esau because “Rebekah loved Jacob” and “Isaac loved Esau” (Gen. 25:28).

**LOQ:** What did Jacob say to his mother, Rebekah?

**Answer:** In Genesis 27:11–12, Jacob told his mother, “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.” But Rebekah told Jacob to obey what she said (Gen. 27:13). Rebekah took some of Esau’s best clothes and put them on Jacob (Gen. 27:15). She also placed some skins from the animals on Jacob’s hands and on the smooth part of his neck, so that Isaac would think he was speaking to Esau (Gen. 27:16). So everything was ready for Jacob. He was wearing Esau’s best clothes, he had a special meal ready to give to his father, and he had animal skins around his hands and on his neck so that Isaac would think he was touching the hands of his son Esau (Gen. 27:17).

**LOQ:** What do you think about what Rebekah and Jacob were doing?

**Answer:** What Jacob and Rebekah were doing was wrong. Jacob should not have lied to his father about who he was. Jacob was pretending to be Esau so that he could be blessed. That was something he never should have done.

**LOQ:** What did Jacob do to his father, Isaac?

**Answer:** Jacob tricked his father into thinking that he was Esau. In Genesis 27:18–20, Isaac wondered why his son had come back so quickly from preparing the special meal. In reality, it was Jacob, not Esau, who had come to see his father. When Isaac asked him his name, he responded by saying that he was Esau (Gen. 27:19). Isaac then told him to come near him so that he could touch him. When Jacob got close enough, Isaac felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau” (Gen. 27:22). Isaac, then, was not sure if it really was Esau, so he had Jacob give him the special meal (Gen. 27:25). Still not sure, he told Jacob to come close to him and embrace him (Gen. 27:26). After Isaac embraced Jacob, he gave Jacob the blessing (Genesis 27:27–29).

### Summary

In Genesis 25 and 27, God tells us why and how He blessed Jacob instead of Esau. Many people may not understand why God allowed it to happen this way, but we can say with certainty that God is in control over everything. God had long ago planned to bless Jacob instead of Esau. This was His will and choice. We need to be glad that He did this because He makes all the right choices.

### Application

What Jacob did was wrong. He should not have lied to his father. Do you lie to your parents? It is not good to do this; it is sin. If you have lied to them, go and tell them that what you did was wrong.





## Presentation Ideas

### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



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### Bedsheets and Bathrobes

Bring in bedsheets and bathrobes to dress up for today's Bible lesson. Get help from the other teachers and from the class to act out the story of Jacob and Esau. You may wish to be the narrator of the drama.



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### Birthrights and Blessings

Before class, cut out pictures of things that are part of an inheritance, such as houses, land, cars, and jewelry. At the beginning of class, ask students what happens to someone's house, car, and money when that person dies. (Show the students the pictures.) Explain to the students that when someone dies, all that he owned is called an inheritance. Usually these things eventually will go to the person's children. In today's story, we are going to learn about Jacob and Esau. Esau was older. In those days, the older son had a birthright. That means he got a double portion of the things his father owned. (Divide the pictures into two groups, one twice as large as the other.) Another name used for this was a blessing. In today's story, we are going to see why and how Jacob took the birthright from Esau.

## Praise and Worship

*God Is So Good*

*God Will Take Care of You*

*In His Time*

*My God Is So Great*

*Thou Art Worthy*

*Trust and Obey*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### Mystery Touch/Smells

Bring paper bags or bowls filled with various items. Some of these items could represent parts of today's lesson. Items could include: dried beans, a hairy or furry toy, wads of paper, silk or burlap, marbles, and sandpaper. Have the students close their eyes and try to identify what is in each bag or bowl. Explain that Isaac's eyesight was bad, so he had to rely on touch and smell. Rebekah and Jacob used this weakness to trick Isaac. Tell the students that Isaac also relied on odors. Put in

bags things that have distinct odors, and have the students try to identify what is in each bag. Suggested items include popcorn, lemons, rose petals, and cut grass.

**Variation:** Disguise an item and have students guess what it is. For example, put a cloth bag around an orange or a rock, or sandpaper around a book. Reveal the item to the students. Explain to them that Jacob was being deceitful when he tricked his father. Jacob was wrong to trick his father, and he sinned by lying to him.



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### Jacob and Esau Puppets

Before class, create puppets using foam balls, wooden craft sticks, and thin felt squares. Press the craft stick into the foam ball. Cover the ball with a piece of felt, and tie the bottom corners together with a piece of yarn. During craft time, give each student two puppets. Have each of them draw a face on the felt. Then, using red yarn, have each student glue red hair and a beard on the Esau puppet. Using brown yarn, have the students glue brown hair on the Jacob puppet.



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### Kid Gloves

Have the students use chalk to trace their hands on a piece of furry fabric. Have them do the same thing on felt, using a marker. Cut out each hand tracing, and staple the furry fabric to the felt to form a glove. A staple on each fingertip and two on the sides should be enough. Stapling should be done by an adult.



### Free Gifts

Near the end of class, have an awards ceremony. First, hand out awards to a few students who have achieved something (said the memory verse or won a game). Talk about how the students worked for the award, and ask them how they feel about receiving the award. Then hand out gifts to every student, giving no reason except that they are free gifts. Ask them how they feel about receiving free gifts. Now talk about God's free gift of grace, both to Jacob in the story and to us. Talk about the daily blessings God gives and His gift of salvation.



### Count Your Blessings

Enlarge the "Count Your Blessings" place mat at the back of this lesson to fit on an 11 x 17-inch piece of paper. Have the students fill in each of the boxes. If time permits, allow them to draw a picture in the center of the place mat. At the end of class, collect all the mats. Have them laminated, and give them back to the students the following week.



### "God Chooses Jacob over Esau"

Have students complete the work sheet at the back of this lesson. They can work on it individually or in small groups.



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### Journal Page: "An Inheritance in Christ"

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. Students can work on this page in class or at home.

### Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



### MEMORY VERSE

"The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb....And the older shall serve the younger'" (Genesis 25:23).

# Count Your Blessings

In our lesson about Jacob and Esau, we learned that God gives blessings to whomever He chooses (Gen. 25:23). Grace is God's free gift to us—we do not earn or deserve it.

Let's count our blessings and give thanks to the Lord (Psalm 92:1–4).

<b>People I Love</b>
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

<b>Favorite Foods</b>
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

<b>Favorite Toys</b>
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

<b>Hobbies</b>
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Dear God, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Amen.



# God Chooses Jacob over Esau



Genesis 25:21–26; 27:1–29

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Rebekah felt her children struggling inside her womb and asked \_\_\_\_\_ what was wrong (Gen. 25:22).
2. In Genesis 25:23 the Lord told Rebekah four things about her children. Fill in each blank with one of the following words: *two*, *serve*, *stronger*, *nations*.  
“Two \_\_\_\_\_ are in your womb,  
\_\_\_\_\_ people shall be separated from your body;  
One people shall be \_\_\_\_\_ than the other,  
And the older shall \_\_\_\_\_ the younger.”
3. To whom was Isaac going to give the birthright in Genesis 27:1–4? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Jacob deceived Isaac by \_\_\_\_\_.  
preparing savory food                      wearing Esau’s clothes  
making himself appear hairy
5. True or false: It was wrong for Jacob to deceive Isaac even though God had said he would receive the birthright. \_\_\_\_\_



## **An Inheritance in Christ**

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Christians have their inheritance in Christ. What is that inheritance like? Each verse below gives an example of a Christian's inheritance. Look up the verse; then draw a picture that represents the inheritance mentioned.

John 15:11

1 Corinthians 9:24–25

2 Timothy 4:8

Revelation 22:12

John 5:24

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John 15:11

1 Corinthians 9:24–25

2 Timothy 4:8

Revelation 22:12

John 5:24

Heaven is a beautiful place with streets of gold and gates of precious stones and pearls. Christ Himself is there. God has promised all believers a place in heaven. He also has given believers all they need to know to live a godly life. God deserves our thanks and praise.

\_\_\_\_\_

Gods Word tells me I can live a godly life by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I thank God for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

God deserves my praise because \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

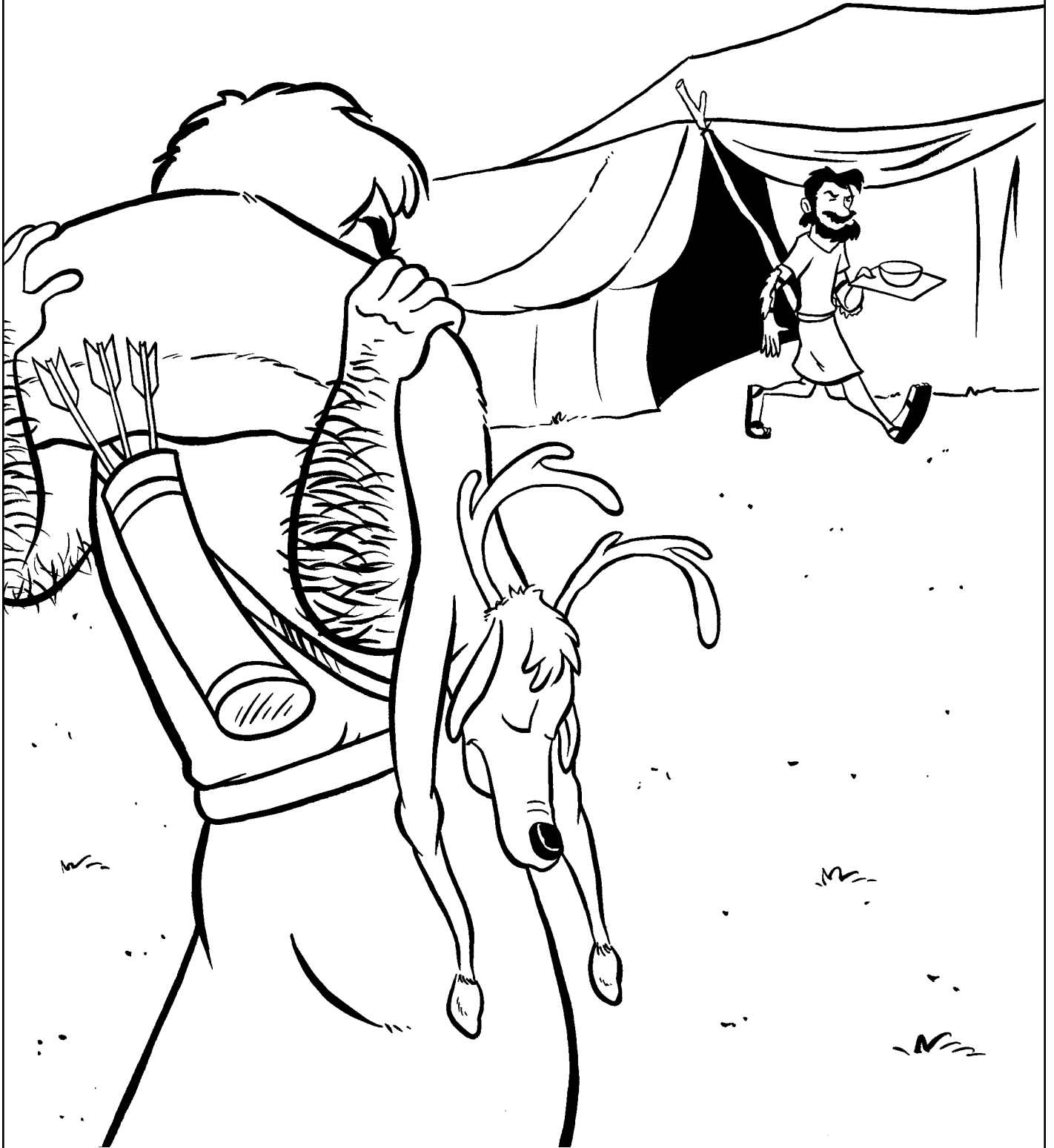
God deserves my praise because \_\_\_\_\_





**Jacob dressed like Esau and lied to Isaac, stealing Esau's blessing (Gen. 27:18–29).**





**Esau came back from hunting just after Jacob had stolen his blessing.  
When Esau found out, he was very angry (Gen. 27:30–45).**

