

JACOB

Making the Bible Come Alive

The blessed one

WHO WAS THIS PERSON?

- Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah and the twin brother of Esau.
- The name Jacob is derived from the Hebrew verb "to supplant". Jacob was born holding on to the heel of his twin brother Esau. Therefore, Jacob in Hebrew means "one who takes by the heel" (Genesis 25:26).
- Jacob stole his brother's birthright and his father's blessing. He was then called the "supplanter" (Genesis 27:36).
- Jacob deceived his father to get his blessing.
- Jacob had a vision of a ladder and named the place Bethel.
- Jacob was deceived by Laban and had to work 14 years to get his wife Rachel.



WHAT IS THIS PERSON KNOWN FOR?

- He believed God's promise of blessings to him.
- From the time of his birth until his struggle with God (Genesis 32:24-29), Jacob was associated with cunning and deception.
- Jacob committed notorious acts of deception against his twin brother Esau. Jacob offered his "hungry" brother a bowl of red stew in exchange for his birthright. Thus, he received a double portion of his father Isaac's inheritance (Genesis 25:29-34). In addition, Jacob robbed Esau of the blessing that their father (Genesis 27:1-29, Genesis 27:35) was going to give him.
- Jacob also cheated his uncle Laban. In exchange for 20 years of service, Jacob tricked Laban into giving him the wages he wanted - spotted and speckled sheep and goats - by plucking branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees and placing them at the troughs where the stronger animals came to drink and mate (Genesis 30:25-43).
- (Hosea 12:2) "Now the Lord is bringing charges against Judah. He is about to punish Jacob for all his deceitful ways, and pay him back for all he has done."





WHY DO YOU THINK THIS PERSON HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN GOD'S STORY?

- **Jacob is first mentioned in the Bible in Genesis 25.** When Jacob's mother Rebekah was pregnant with him and his twin brother Esau, she asked God why her two babies were fighting in her womb (Genesis 25:22). God told her that the enmity between the two brothers was a foreshadowing of the two nations that would be born from them: Jacob would be the ancestor of Israel (Genesis 32:28, Genesis 35:10-13) while Esau would be the ancestor of Edom (Genesis 36). Furthermore, Esau, the older twin, would become the servant of Jacob who was the younger (Genesis 25:23).
- **Jacob is a biblical hero who illustrates how God can in his grace change and renew us.** He is best known in the Bible for his cunning and deceitful ways, not only for the things he did to his twin brother Esau. He lost to God in a wrestling match, but Jacob received God's blessings he had asked and he also got a new name: Israel.
- **God blessed Jacob and gave him a new name: Israel.** (Genesis 32:28) God gave Jacob a new identity, no longer associating him with cunning and deceiver. He became a new person, with God's blessings and a divine purpose to give birth to the Israelite nation.
- **Like Jacob, we can enter into a relationship with Jesus today** by asking forgiveness for our sins and declaring Jesus as our savior and redeemer. By confessing our sins before him, God gives us new life as his children and we enter into a relationship with him, with his blessings and promises. Jacob got a new identity with his new name: Israel. When we come to Jesus, we experience a transformation. All is new: our thoughts, our behaviour, our way of living and much more.
- **Many characters in the Bible have questioned God.** Nothing is wrong with asking God questions and wanting to know more about the Bible. Real christian faith is not blind, but it is based on how God has worked in our lives. We can ask Him questions and become a new creation in Him.

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Pose the following two questions to your children, one at a time. Allow for interaction and discussion, letting them share their thoughts while you guide the conversation.

- What life lessons can I learn from this Bible character about how I should and should not live?
- Based on what I have learned from this Bible character, how can I live in a way that is pleasing to God.

MORE IN GOD'S WORD

Challenge yourself to find five minutes each day for a week, to quiet your spirit, finding a spot where you are not distracted, and practice just listening to God and being in tune with Him. Take your Bible to that quiet place. Use some of that time to pray, and some time to just meditate on His Word. Keep your ears and your heart open to what God is wanting to say to you. It's not a matter of IF He wants to talk to you. He does want to speak. But, He also wants you to be ready and positioned for listening, so you can actually hear in your heart what He is saying. Then, respond in obedience with a heart that is open to what God would have you to do. God called Samuel three times. How many times is He calling you? The more you spend time in His presence, the less He will have to try calling you over and over again. Maybe you will hear His voice the very first time He calls!

