

# GENESIS

## Lesson 45 w/Answers

## The Twins

Have you ever known anyone that was a twin? We tend to think that twins look alike, act alike, dress alike, and think alike, but sometimes nothing like that actually happens. The story of Jacob and Esau illustrates this in so many ways.

In this lesson, we will study both of them and see how different each one was. We will discover that in spite of their differences, God used them to accomplish His will and to continue the promise he made to Abraham.

*<sup>21</sup> Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was childless. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant. <sup>22</sup> The babies jostled each other within her, and she said, "Why is this happening to me?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. <sup>23</sup> The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger." <sup>24</sup> When the time came for her to give birth, there were twin boys in her womb. <sup>25</sup> The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau. <sup>26</sup> After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave birth to them. <sup>27</sup> The boys grew up, and Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the open country, while Jacob was content to stay at home among the tents. <sup>28</sup> Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob."*

Genesis 25:21-28 [NIV]

We can already see from these initial verses that the twins struggled among themselves from the time they were created. In fact, Jacob got his name, "heel puller," from grasping Esau's heel at birth.

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### ***Consider the referenced scriptures below and respond to the following:***

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1. What are some other differences we note in this passage between Jacob and Esau? See Genesis 25:24-34.
  - a. ANSWER 1: Esau is born very hairy and he was red all over; he probably had red hair as well.
  - b. ANSWER 2: Jacob, on the other hand, is not described as anything out-of-the-ordinary but attempts to use Esau to get his way. The term "heel puller" indicates someone who cheats and deceives to get their way. Two examples of Jacob as a cheater and deceiver are noted: First, in Genesis 25:29-34, Jacob uses Esau's hunger to obtain Esau's birthright. Second, in Genesis 27:1-29, Jacob uses deception to secure Isaac's blessing—a blessing that was intended for Esau. Further, Jacob will also use guile again when he is working for Laban in Genesis 30:29-43.
2. After "the boys" grew up, what differences do we observe? See Genesis 25:27-28.
  - a. ANSWER 1: Esau became what we might call today a "man's man." He became a "skillful hunter," and he lived outside in "the open country." Clearly he was an independent man in many ways.
  - b. ANSWER 2: Jacob, however, "was content to stay at home among the tents."
  - c. ANSWER 3: Esau was loved by their father, Isaac, while Jacob was loved by their mother, Rachel.
3. We can also see differences in how the twins married. Compare Jacob's search for a wife described in Genesis 28:1-5 with the descriptions of Esau's choices for wives found in Genesis 28:6-9 and Genesis 26:34-35.
  - a. Genesis 28:1-5
    - i. ANSWER: Jacob follows his father Isaac's instructions and, like Isaac, will find a wife among his relatives at Uncle Laban's, his mother, Rebekah's brother.
  - b. Genesis 28:6-9
    - i. ANSWER: Esau is mad at his father and knows that Canaanite women displease him, so he marries Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael's son. So we have a picture of Esau totally rejecting his father and his heritage by going to the family of Ishmael (Abraham's son by Hagar) to find a wife—just to upset his father.
  - c. Genesis 26:34-35
    - i. ANSWER: In this passage we see that, earlier in Genesis, Esau was mad at his father and did something similar by taking a Hittite wife. We should also note that Esau was forty years old at the time he did this—some thirty years before Jacob deceives Isaac to get Esau's blessing (in Genesis Chapter 27).

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In summary, we see Jacob as a person who listens to his mother and father, but uses deception to get his way—in contrast to Esau who is headstrong, impetuous, and independent. We also see that in spite of their shortcomings, God uses both of them to accomplish His will. Similarly today, Jesus uses us, even though we sin, to accomplish his will as we move closer to his coming return.

Today is a good day to reflect on your walk with Jesus. Do you know him? And if you do, are you living in his will? If you don't know Jesus as your personal savior, today is the day you should surrender to him. He has a plan for your life and will use that plan to bless you and to further his kingdom.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Jeremiah 29:11 [NIV]

In Christ,

Wes