

## Proper 23C<sup>2</sup>:

# Jacob and Esau

**Storyteller:** (*spreads out the Desert Bag*) This is the Desert Bag. So many wonderful and important things happen in the desert, we need to know what it is like. We can't get the whole desert into our church, so here is just a little piece of the desert. *The Storyteller smooths the sand while s/he talks.* The desert is a dangerous place. There is little water, and almost nothing grows there. It is hot in the daytime and cold at night.

### Genesis 25:19-28; 27:1-45

Isaac was the son of Abraham, and he was forty years old when he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel. She was also the sister of Laban, the Aramean from northern Syria.

Almost twenty years later, Rebekah still had no children. So Isaac asked the Lord to let her have a child, and the Lord answered his prayer.

Before Rebekah gave birth, she knew she was going to have twins, because she could feel them inside her, fighting each other. She thought, "Why is this happening to me?" Finally, she asked the Lord why her twins were fighting, and he told her:

"Your two sons will become two separate nations. The younger of the two will be stronger, and the older son will be his servant."

When Rebekah gave birth, the first baby was covered with red hair, so he was named Esau. The second baby grabbed on to his brother's heel, so they named him Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when they were born.

As Jacob and Esau grew older, Esau liked the outdoors and became a good hunter, while Jacob settled down and became a shepherd. Esau would take the meat of wild animals to his father Isaac, and so Isaac loved him more, but Jacob was his mother's favorite son.

One day, Jacob was cooking some stew, when Esau came home hungry and said, "I'm starving to death! Give me some of that red stew right now!" That's how Esau got the name "Edom."

*If any of the children reach out to touch the sand, smile at them but say "You may work with the desert bag later in the Story Room. Right now we all need to be ready to listen to the story. This is how you get ready. Demonstrate folding your hands in your lap. Then smooth the sand in one smooth motion around the edges of the desert bag, reinforcing the limits imposed by the edge of the bag."*

At the edges of the desert are two great rivers: the Nile -- *place a strip of blue felt down the right side of the desert, slanting in toward your knees* -- flowing in to the Mediterranean Sea, -- *put the blue sea down next to your knees touching the mouth of the Nile* -- and the Euphrates flowing from the mountains east of the sea down toward the Indian Ocean. *Leaving a small space between the Mediterranean and its headwaters, put the Euphrates down from near your left knee, slanting toward the far corner of the desert bag on your left. You are North. From your perspective the two rivers slant away from each other making a blunted "V" with a small gap near its base.)* People can live beside the rivers, and between the two great rivers is the land that God promised to Abraham and Sarah, and to their children and all their children's children.

### Story Materials

- ☐ Desert Bag
- ☐ Euphrates, Nile, and Mediterranean
- ☐ Rachel
- ☐ Isaac
- ☐ Twin babies
- ☐ Jacob
- ☐ Esau
- ☐ Bowl of Stew

Tray, basket or shallow open box to hold the story

2 This story and the one next week, are not aligned with the Revised Common Lectionary. We are inserting them in order to provide the background for the "Jacob Wrestles" story on Proper 25A

Jacob replied, "Sell me your rights as the first-born son."

"I'm about to die," Esau answered. "What good will those rights do me?"

But Jacob said, "Promise me your birthrights, here and now!" And that's what Esau did. Jacob then gave Esau some bread and some of the bean stew, and when Esau had finished eating and drinking, he just got up and left, showing how little he thought of his rights as the first-born.

#### Genesis 27:

After Isaac had become old and almost blind, he called in his first-born son Esau, who asked him, "Father, what can I do for you?"

Isaac replied, "I am old and might die at any time. So take your bow and arrows, then go out in the fields, and kill a wild animal. Cook some of that tasty food that I love so much and bring it to me. I want to eat it once more and give you my blessing before I die."

Rebekah had been listening, and as soon as Esau left to go hunting, she said to Jacob, "I heard your father tell Esau to kill a wild animal and cook some tasty food for your father before he dies. Your father said this because he wants to bless your brother with the Lord as his witness. Now, my son, listen carefully to what I want you to do. Go and kill two of your best young goats and bring them to me. I'll cook the tasty food that your father loves so much. Then you can take it to him, so he can eat it and give you his blessing before he dies."

"My brother Esau is a hairy man," Jacob reminded her. "And I am not. If my father touches me and realizes I am trying to trick him, he will put a curse on me instead of giving me a blessing."

Rebekah insisted, "Let his curse fall on me! Just do what I say and bring me the meat." So Jacob brought the meat to his mother, and she cooked

But Abraham and Sarah had only one child, Isaac. And although Isaac married Rebekah, *put Isaac and Rebecca in the desert bag*, for nearly twenty years Isaac and Rebekah had no children at all! Isaac and Rebekah prayed to God for a child, and at last God granted their prayer. They had twins!

*Put Esau in the desert bag next to Isaac.* First, a little boy was born who had lots of red hair all over, so they called him "Red", or "Esau" which means "red". The second little boy was born right after Esau – he was grabbing Esau's heel as he was born. So they called him "Grabby", or "Jacob" which means "grabby".

27 As Jacob and Esau grew older, Esau liked the outdoors and became a good hunter, while Jacob settled down and became a shepherd. 28 Esau would take the meat of wild animals to his father Isaac, and so Isaac loved him more, but Jacob was his mother's favorite son.

27 After Isaac had become old and almost blind, he called in his first-born son Esau, who asked him, "Father, what can I do for you?"

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11 "My brother Esau is a hairy man," Jacob reminded her. "And I am not. 12 If my father touches me and realizes I am trying to trick him, he will put a curse on me instead of giving me a blessing."

13 Rebekah insisted, "Let his curse fall on me! Just do what I say and bring me the meat." 14 So Jacob brought the meat to his mother, and she cooked the tasty food that his father liked. 15 Then

she took Esau's best clothes and put them on Jacob. 16 She also covered the smooth part of his hands and neck with goatskins 17 and gave him some bread and the tasty food she had cooked.

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15 Then she took Esau's best clothes and put them on Jacob. 16 She also covered the smooth part of his hands and neck with goatskins 17 and gave him some bread and the tasty food she had cooked.

18 Jacob went to his father and said, "Father, here I am."

"Which one of my sons are you?" his father asked.

19 Jacob replied, "I am Esau, your first-born, and I have done what you told me. Please sit up and eat the meat I have brought. Then you can give me your blessing."

20 Isaac asked, "My son, how did you find an animal so quickly?"

"The Lord your God was kind to me," Jacob answered.

"My son," Isaac said, "come closer, where I can touch you and find out if you really are Esau." Jacob went closer. His father touched him and said, "You sound like Jacob, but your hands feel hairy like Esau's." And so Isaac blessed Jacob, thinking he was Esau.

Isaac asked, "Are you really my son Esau?"

"Yes, I am," Jacob answered.

So Isaac told him, "Serve me the wild meat, and I can give you my blessing."

Jacob gave him some meat, and he ate it. He also gave him some wine, and he drank it. Then Isaac said, "Son, come over here and kiss me." While Jacob was kissing him, Isaac caught the smell of his clothes and said:

"The smell of my son is like a field the Lord has blessed.

God will bless you, my son, with dew from heaven and with fertile fields,

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21 "My son," Isaac said, "come closer, where I can touch you and find out if you really are Esau." 22 Jacob went closer. His father touched him and said, "You sound like Jacob, but your hands feel hairy like Esau's." 23 And so Isaac blessed Jacob, thinking he was Esau.

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the LORD has blessed.

28 God will bless you, my son, with dew from heaven

and with fertile fields, rich with grain and grapes.

29 Nations will be your servants and bow down to you.

You will rule over your brothers, and they will kneel at your feet.

Anyone who curses you will be cursed;

anyone who blesses you  
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30 Right after Isaac had given Jacob  
his blessing and Jacob had gone,  
Esau came back from hunting. 31  
He cooked the tasty food, brought it  
to his father, and said, “Father,  
please sit up and eat the meat I have  
brought you, so you can give me  
your blessing.”

32 “Who are you?” Isaac asked.

“I am Esau, your first-born son.”

33 Isaac started trembling and said,  
“Then who brought me some wild  
meat right before you came in? I ate  
it and gave him a blessing that  
cannot be taken back.”

34 Esau cried loudly and begged,  
“Father, give me a blessing too!”

35 Isaac answered, “Your brother  
tricked me and stole your blessing.”

36 Esau replied, “My brother  
deserves the name Jacob,[a] because  
he has already cheated me twice.  
The first time he cheated me out of  
my rights as the first-born son, and  
now he has cheated me out of my  
blessing.” Then Esau asked his  
father, “Don’t you still have any  
blessing left for me?”

37 “My son,” Isaac answered, “I  
have made Jacob the ruler over you  
and your brothers, and all of you  
will be his servants. I have also  
promised him all the grain and  
grapes that he needs. There’s  
nothing left that I can do for you.”

38 “Father,” Esau asked, “don’t you  
have more than one blessing? You  
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Then Esau started crying again.

39 So his father said:

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37 “My son,” Isaac answered, “I have made Jacob the ruler over you and your brothers, and all of you will be his servants. I have also promised him all the grain and grapes that he needs. There’s nothing left that I can do for you.”

38 “Father,” Esau asked, “don’t you have more than one blessing? You can surely give me a blessing too!” Then Esau started crying again.

39 So his father said:

“Your home will be far  
from that fertile land,  
where dew comes down  
from the heavens.

40 You will live by the power  
of your sword  
and be your brother’s slave.

But when you decide to be free,  
you will break loose.”

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41 Esau hated his brother Jacob  
because he had stolen the blessing  
that was supposed to be his. So he  
said to himself, “Just as soon as my  
father dies, I’ll kill Jacob.

42 When Rebekah found out what  
Esau planned to do, she sent for  
Jacob and told him, “Son, your  
brother Esau is just waiting for the  
time when he can kill you. 43 Now  
listen carefully and do what I say.  
Go to the home of my brother Laban  
in Haran 44 and stay with him for a  
while. When Esau stops being angry  
45 and forgets what you have done  
to him, I’ll send for you to come  
home. Why should I lose both of my  
sons on the same day?”[b]

46 Rebekah later told Isaac, “Those  
Hittite wives of Esau are making my  
life miserable! If Jacob marries a  
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