

Teacher Background & Preparation Sheet

For Teacher Study Only – Not Read Aloud

LESSON IDENTIFICATION

Week #:	11
Date:	March 15, 2026
Lesson Title:	Jacob: God Changes Hearts
Primary Scripture:	Genesis 27–32
Bible Timeline:	Patriarch Period – After Abraham and Isaac, before Joseph (Genesis 12–50)

PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON

Children will learn that:

- God sees the heart and is able to change it.
- Sin brings real consequences, but God does not abandon His promises.
- God keeps His covenant promises even when people fail.
- God is faithful to transform sinners, pointing forward to the greater heart change found in Jesus Christ.

This lesson teaches that salvation and transformation come from God's grace, not human effort (Ezekiel 36:26; Philippians 1:6).

BOOK & PASSAGE BACKGROUND

Book Name:	Genesis
Traditional Author:	Moses
Date Written:	1400–1440 BC
Original Audience:	The people of Israel during or after the Exodus

Purpose of the Book

Genesis explains the origins of creation, sin, nations, and God's covenant promise to bless the world through Abraham's offspring (Genesis 12:1–3). It establishes God's redemptive plan that ultimately leads to Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:16).

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL CONTEXT

Patriarchal Society

The oldest son normally received the birthright — a double inheritance and leadership role (Deuteronomy 21:17).

Blessings Spoken by the Father

A father's spoken blessing carried legal and covenant significance. Isaac's blessing in Genesis 27 was not merely emotional — it declared covenant inheritance tied to God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 28:3–4).

Geography

Events occur in Canaan and later in Paddan Aram (modern northern Mesopotamia).

Daily Life

Families lived in tents, raised livestock, and traveled seasonally. Deception carried serious relational consequences because family structure determined survival and inheritance.

IMMEDIATE BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Before This Passage

Genesis 25 records God's prophecy before the twins were born: "The older will serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23). God's sovereign choice preceded Jacob's deception.

Esau despised his birthright (Genesis 25:34), showing his lack of spiritual concern (Hebrews 12:16).

After This Passage

- Genesis 33 records reconciliation between Jacob and Esau.
- Genesis 35 reaffirms God's covenant and changes Jacob's name permanently to Israel.
- Genesis 37 begins the Joseph narrative.

Why This Moment Matters in God's Plan

This passage shows God's covenant moving forward through Jacob despite sin and dysfunction, preserving the line that leads to Jesus (Matthew 1:2).

KEY THEOLOGICAL TRUTHS

CORE TRUTH #1: What This Lesson Teaches About God

God is sovereign and faithful to His covenant promises.

Genesis 28:13–15 — “I am the Lord... I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

- God’s purposes stand even when human actions are sinful (Romans 8:28).
- God is patient and merciful (Psalm 103:8).

CORE TRUTH #2: What This Lesson Teaches About People

People are sinful and prone to deception.

- Jacob deceives (Genesis 27).
- Rebekah manipulates.
- Esau despises spiritual things.

Romans 3:23 teaches that all have sinned.

Yet people can be changed by encountering God. Jacob wrestles with God in Genesis 32:24–30 — a moment of surrender and transformation.

CORE TRUTH #3: What This Lesson Teaches About Salvation

Jacob’s name means “heel grabber” or “deceiver.” In Genesis 32:28, God renames him Israel, meaning “he struggles with God.” This name change symbolizes identity transformation.

Salvation in Christ also brings new identity (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Jacob’s encounter points forward to heart transformation promised in Ezekiel 36:26 and fulfilled through Jesus’ saving work (John 3:3–6).

Jesus is our Savior who changes hearts — not just behavior.

CORE TRUTH #4: Trusting God’s Word

God fulfilled the prophecy of Genesis 25:23 exactly.

Centuries later, Paul confirms God’s sovereign choice in Romans 9:10–13.

The unity between Genesis and Romans shows Scripture’s consistency across 1,500 years of writing by over 40 authors.

Archaeological discoveries confirm the cultural practices of inheritance and blessings described in Genesis align with ancient Near Eastern customs.

CORE TRUTH #5: God as Trinity

Though the Trinity is more fully revealed in the New Testament, we see hints here:

Genesis 28:13 — “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham...”

Genesis 32:30 — Jacob says, “I saw God face to face.”

This visible encounter points toward the Son, who reveals the Father (John 1:18).

- The Father preserves covenant promise.
- The Son is the visible revelation of God.
- The Holy Spirit later works inward heart change (John 16:13).

God is one God in three Persons.

RELIABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

Manuscript Evidence

Genesis is preserved in the Dead Sea Scrolls, confirming textual stability over thousands of years.

Historical Reliability

Names, customs, and treaty language align with second millennium BC practices.

Prophetic Consistency

Genesis 12:3 promises blessing to all nations — fulfilled in Christ (Galatians 3:8).

Theological Unity

From Genesis to Revelation, God’s covenant plan unfolds consistently.

APOLOGETICS FOUNDATION

Is this just a made-up family legend?

The Bible includes embarrassing and sinful details about its heroes. Fabricated legends usually glorify founders. Scripture records Jacob’s deception honestly. This supports authenticity.

Why would God choose Jacob?

Romans 9:11 shows God’s purpose stands by grace, not works. God’s grace, not human merit, drives redemption.

ANTICIPATED CHILD QUESTIONS

Did God want Jacob to trick his father?

No. Deception is sin (Exodus 20:16). God used sinful actions without approving them.

Why didn't God stop the trick?

God had already promised the blessing would go to Jacob (Genesis 25:23). God's plan cannot fail.

Did God really wrestle Jacob?

Genesis 32:24 says "a man wrestled with him." Hosea 12:4 clarifies it was an angelic messenger. Jacob says he saw God (Genesis 32:30). This likely points to a visible manifestation of God, often understood as a pre-incarnate appearance of Christ.

Why did God change Jacob's name?

To show a changed identity. Like believers become new in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS

■ ■ Misunderstanding: God rewards lying.

Correction: God keeps His promise despite sin, not because of sin.

■ ■ Misunderstanding: Jacob earned God's love.

Correction: God's covenant promise was given before Jacob was born (Genesis 25:23).

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jacob needed heart change. We need heart change.

Jesus died for our sins and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Through faith in Christ, we are forgiven and made new (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Jacob's transformation points to the greater transformation found in Jesus our Savior.

Jesus is:

- Our **Savior** — forgiving sin.
- Our **Sanctifier** — changing our hearts daily (Philippians 2:13).
- Our **Healer** — restoring broken relationships.
- Our **Coming King** — fulfilling covenant promises completely.

TEACHER HEART PREPARATION

- Pray for children who may feel ashamed of past mistakes.
- Pray for confidence in teaching Scripture clearly.
- Pray that children would see that God does not give up on sinners.

***God changed Jacob. God changes hearts today. God is faithful to finish what He starts
(Philippians 1:6).***