

J A C O B

A Change in Character

Intro; Some folks honor deceitfulness...

A. *George Meisinger* tells this story in a sermon on *Judas*...

1. **Don Richardson** wrote a book that I encourage everyone to read. The title is [Peace Child](#) and is the story of his missionary labors among a tribe in **Papua, New Guinea**.
2. *When Richardson had finally learned their language, there came a day when he had opportunity to tell them the Gospel. He started with Christ's miraculous birth, His life and ministry, and then proceeded to the end of Jesus' time on earth.*
3. *He set the stage talking about how Jesus made His final journey to Jerusalem, the incredible reception of the people on Palm Sunday, then the treachery of Judas who worked behind the scenes to betray Jesus to death. To his amazement, when he finished telling them about the traitor, the people showed complete delight in Judas. Richardson was appalled at their reaction.*
4. *He discovered that the **highest virtue in their culture was deceit**—and Judas was the greatest example of deceit about which they had heard. Here was a man who successfully betrayed to the death a great and good man, thus Judas became their instant hero.*
5. *It was obvious to Richardson that he had his work cut out for him to evangelize this tribe. You need to read the book to discover the beginning and end of this incredible and true missionary story –George Meisinger.*

B. **There's several problems with being deceitful.**

1. First, it is sin. God will hold us accountable if we are deceitful. We must be honest and truthful.
2. *1 Pet 3:10 For "He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking deceit.*
3. Another problem with being deceitful is that others will try to **out-deceive us**. We may try to take advantage of others. Yet others try to use us too.

C. **We are studying mighty men of God.**

1. We have a **physical** example of what **Mighty Men** are in David's army. David was so successful because he had many 'mighty men' or valiant warriors.
2. *2 Sam 23:8 These are the names of the mighty men whom David had: Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time.*
3. *2 Sam 23:14-17 David was then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. 15 And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" 16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate, and took it and brought it to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. 17 And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is this not the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.*
3. We need to be **spiritual** mighty women and men of God. We must become **valiant warriors** in the Lord's service today.

4. *Eph 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*
5. As God's mighty women and men we must do great things. We must;
 - a. **Be good examples;** Matt 5:13-16
 - b. **Do good deeds;** Titus 3:8
 - c. **Worship God;** Heb 10:23-25
 - d. **Teach men the Gospel;** Act 8:4
 - e. **Help others;** Matt 10:40-42
 - f. **Stand for the truth;** Jude 3 & 4
 - g. **Be faithful unto death;** Rev 2:10, Matt 10:22

D. We are looking at Jacob today.

1. The name **Jacob** means, 'heel-catcher or supplanter.' **Supplant** means, 'oust somebody: to take somebody's place or position by force or intrigue' –MS® Encarta.
2. Jacob lived up to, or **down to**, his name. He was a deceitful person many times. Yet the Supplanter was himself Supplanted several times.
3. We will look at Jacob today and see how he became a mighty man of God.

I. Jacob became the one who received the covenant promise.

A. This was first to Abraham and then to Isaac.

1. **Abraham** is Jacob's **grandfather** and **Isaac** is his **father**. Isaac had two children and **Jacob is the youngest**. The promise should have then gone to **Esau**, the oldest.
2. *Gen 18:17-18 And the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, 18 since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?"*
3. *Gen 26:3-5 "Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."*
3. Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Boys will be boys and fight but they started fighting in the womb.
4. **Gen 25:19-28;** The two boys were **very different**. **This is common**. The **favoritism** of Isaac and Rebekah probably did not help the boys.
5. The **sins of the fathers are often visited on the children**. Isaac said Rebekah was his sister as his father said of Sarah –Gen 26:6-11. Jacob will also show favoritism to one wife and her children.

B. Jacob lived down to his name...

1. Jacob and Esau were very different. Esau thought of the moment. Jacob looked to the future.
2. **Gen 25:29-34;** Jacob used Esau's lack of forethought to steal his birthright. **It was worth much more than a bowl of soup and a piece of bread**.
3. Also, we should help our brothers and not take advantage of their weaknesses. Jacob knew how important the birthright was to the future and stole from his brother. –double portion, special blessings, etc.
4. The **Nuzi Tablets** from the 14 and 1500's BC were excavated between 1925 and 1941 at **Nuzi**,

SE of Nineveh. They tell how the firstborn could transfer his rights to another, even someone not his brother.

5. One person sold his birthright to his brother for **3 sheep**. He was either foolish as Esau was or his father did not have much.
6. What Jacob did was legal. However it was not morally right. The inheritance was worth so much more than soup and bread and again, Esau was his brother.
7. **Gen 27:1-5**; Isaac is aged and ready to give the family blessing to Esau. This **may be separate from the birthright**. This is spiritual, the birthright was physical. Or Isaac may intend to give it to Esau anyway.
8. **Gen 27:18-29**; Jacob, with his mother's guidance, again supplants his brother. He tricks his father and gets the birthright.
9. **Prophecy is fulfilled** in what Jacob did –**Gen 25:23**. Jacob knew how important the birthright was and wanted it. Yet he was dishonest in how he got it—Gen 27:35-36.
10. *Rom 3:8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?; as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*
11. *Heb 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.*
12. **Isaac gives the blessing by faith**. He doesn't know who he is blessing. But he believes in the blessing he is giving and in who it is from.

C. Regardless of how it happens, Jacob received the promise.

II. Jacob finds a greater '*heel-catcher*' than himself...

A. Jacob has deceived his father and take Esau's birthright.

1. **Gen 27:41 – 28:5**; Rebekah gets Isaac to send Jacob to Haran to get a wife. It is supposed to be for a few days but turns out to be **20 years**.
2. **Gen 28:10-15**; The covenant promise is given to Jacob. God had chosen him before birth. Now he receives the **real blessing**.
3. **Gen 28:16-22**; This is the **vow of Jacob**. It is a good vow. This does not mean he has not been worshipping Jehovah. He knows who Jehovah is.
4. Here he vows to do certain things if God does as he promises and helps him in his journey. They are;
 - a. Jehovah will be his God (perhaps **one and only God**),
 - b. He will make that spot God's house; perhaps a **regular place of worship**,
 - c. He will give Jehovah a tenth of all God blesses him with; perhaps in **sacrifice**
5. We notice a **big difference** between **Isaac sending Jacob** back for a wife and **Abraham sending his servant** for a wife for Isaac.
6. Abraham send **ten camels of goods** to trade for a wife for Isaac –Gen 24:10. Isaac sends Jacob **alone and with very little** if anything. There may be several reasons for this;
 - a. Isaac has become poorer; doesn't seem so
 - b. Jacob has to leave quickly; probably
 - c. Rebekah expects better treatment from her brother...
 - d. Jacob is expected to stay away awhile –Esau may not cool down for awhile... if ever...
 - e. Isaac is angry with him; good chance
7. Traveling alone such a distance would be dangerous. Yet Jacob has very little choice. **He faces the consequences of his actions.**

B. Jacob has to work for his wife –wives.

1. **Gen 29:15-30**; He works 7 years for Rachel. Laban deceives him and gives him Leah.
2. Jacob is **out-deceived**. He now has to work another 7 years for Rachel. This 7 probably seemed a lot longer.
3. **Gen 29:31 – 30:25**; Jacob then begins to have children. He is very different from his father and grandfather. He has 12 children within 7 years –2 wives and 2 handmaidens and a lot of competition...

4. **Gen 30:25-43**; Jacob works another six years to have something to go back to Canaan with. He has a large family to support.
5. **Gen 31:3-7**; Jacob has **again been out-deceived by Laban**. However God has been with him and he has come out on top, not by deceit but by trust in the Lord.
6. **Gen 31:19**; Rachel takes the teraphim or household gods of her father. The Nuzi tablets probably tell us why she did this. *“These implied leadership of the family and, in the case of a married daughter, ensured her husband the right of the property of her father”* –Unger’s New Bible Dictionary.
7. Laban chases Jacob but they separate with Jacob agreeing to not return. The Teraphim will do him no good –he does not know Rachel has them.

C. Jacob returns to Canaan with a large family, servants and flocks of animals. God has done His part.

III. Jacob becomes committed to Jehovah God.

A. Jacob returns to Canaan and settles in Shechem –33:18.

1. **Gen 33:18-20**; He buys land there and settles down. **He is not supposed to do that**. He is not supposed to mingle with the people of the land. This leads to trouble in several ways.
2. **Gen 34**; We have the **Rape of Dinah** in this chapter and the trouble that results when her brothers trick the men of the city into be circumcised and killing them while they are in pain – vs 25.
3. Jacob now lives in fear because they are strangers in the land and not natives. The other Canaanites will be afraid they will do the same to them and threaten them.

B. Jacob is called to fulfill his promise made over twenty years earlier.

1. Jacob has probably been in the land several years. He made a promise to God well over 20 years ago and has not fulfilled it yet. He seems to have **forgotten**.
2. **Gen 35:1-4**; God reminds him to go back to Bethel. God has done His part, it is past time for Jacob to do his.
3. We make a vow to serve the Lord when we are baptized. We call Him, ‘**Lord**’, and need to obey Him.
4. *Luke 6:46* **“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”**
5. We need to **remember our vows to God** from time to time. The **Lord’s supper** is just one time. **Every worship period** is another. Sometimes God must remind us in some way.
6. Notice that they must get rid of all their **foreign gods**. This may have happened from **settling in the land and associating with the people**.
7. **Gen 35:5-7**; God is with him in his travels. The inhabitants of the land are afraid. God does this.
 - a. He may make them afraid thinking Jacob will do to them what his sons did to the people of Shechem.
 - b. A **result** of this is they will **not want to associate** with him. This is good. It will **keep them from the idols...**
8. Jacob worships God there as he had said he would. He may give the **tenth** of his flocks for sacrifice. He evidently stays here for a while –vs 8.
9. **Gen 35:10-15**; God changes his name from **Jacob** (Supplanter) to **Israel** (*Prince or Mighty One of God*). Jehovah repeats the covenant promise to Jacob.
10. There will be one more consequence to his deception. Ten of his sons will deceive him into thinking Joseph is dead.

C. It has been a long road, but Jacob has changed and learned to trust and obey the Lord.

Conclusion; We can all change our character, behavior and life.

A. We learn several lessons from Jacob.

1. **First** we must **keep our promises**, whether to God, to man or to our spouses.
2. *Ecc1 5:4-5 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed; 5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.*
3. **Second** we see we can change. We may be **deceitful** or **wicked** or **immoral**. But we can turn to God and be saved.
4. *1 Cor 6:9-11 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.*
5. **Third** there are **consequences to sin**, whether deceit or immorality or whatever. Those **consequences may be here or in the day of judgment**.
6. *Ezek 18:20 "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself."*
7. **Jacob became a hero of faith** and a mighty man of God. He changed and became what he should have always been. **We can too.**

B. We begin by becoming a Christian.

1. We must **believe** in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. He died for us that we might be saved.
2. We must **repent** of our sins and turn to God. We are then baptized (immersed in water) to have our sins washed away to become a Child of God.
3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
4. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
5. See also Matt 28:18-20, Act 8:35-39, 17:30-31, 18:8, 22:16, Rom 6:3-7, Gal 3:26-29, 1 Pet 3:21, etc.

C. Can we help anyone serve God and become His mighty person?