

God Chooses Jacob to be Messiah's Ancestor

About 8 minutes, from Genesis 25-27

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Rebecca

Isaac

Jacob

Esau

Prompter Shout a brief line, and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Esau Jacob, I've been out hunting without any luck, and I'm starved!
Give me some of your delicious stew!

Jacob I will, Esau, if you trade me your right as firstborn for it.

Esau Anything! I'm famished!

Prompter & Echoes How foolish!

Rebecca Jacob, listen quietly. Your father Isaac is old and soon will die.
I want you, my son, to receive Isaac's blessing as firstborn heir,
but his twin, Esau, was born first. Esau does not care about God.

Prompter & Echoes Rebecca starts scheming!

Rebecca Isaac's blessing would give Esau the birthright,
to inherit God's promise to my father-in-law Abraham.
Oh, listen! Esau's back, and my feeble husband Isaac is begging him.

Isaac Esau, my son, I am old and blind; my hour of death is near.
Take your bow and arrows, and go hunt game.
Prepare a tasty dish for me; you know what I love.
Bring it before I die, and I'll bless you before the Lord.

Prompter & Echoes Hurry!

Esau I go as my father said, to hunt and make his favorite stew.

Rebecca Jacob, Esau is out hunting, to make a stew for your father.
Isaac will eat it and give Esau the blessing of the firstborn.
But you, Jacob, must receive that blessing, not Esau!

Jacob I took care of it, mother.
Esau traded his birthright for a bit of my stew.

Prompter & Echoes Amazing!

Jacob So I have the right to my father's blessing of the firstborn;
it carries God's promise that goes on from generation to generation.

Prompter & Echoes God's blessing for all nations!

Rebecca But your father Isaac must confirm it with his blessing.
Jacob, I once felt a fierce battle in my womb, and prayed for mercy.
The Lord told me that two nations were warring in my womb;
one would be stronger than the other,
and the older would serve the younger.

Jacob So even before I had been born, God had destined my descendants to be a strong nation! But how do I get my father to bless me?

Rebecca Jacob, bring me two choice young goats from the flocks!
I will prepare them for your father, just as he likes it.
You'll take it to him, so he may eat and bless you before he dies.
He is blind now, and he will think you are Esau.

Jacob But Esau is hairy, and my skin is smooth.
My father may feel me, and curse me instead of blessing me!

Rebecca Let the curse be on me, my son.
Just obey me. Go get two young goats.

Prompter & Echoes He runs and returns!

Rebecca Jacob, the meat is roasting. Now, put on Esau's clothes.
Here, let me tie the young goats' skins on your hands and neck.

Prompter & Echoes Mmm! The stew smells good!

Rebecca Now, Jacob, take this delicious stew I made to your father.
Give him plenty of wine first. Quickly, before Esau gets back!

Prompter & Echoes Hurry!

Jacob My father, I have brought you what you desired.

Isaac Who are you my son?

Jacob I am Esau your firstborn. I did as you wished.
Eat of my game, and bless me.

Isaac But how is it that you got back so quickly, my son?
Please come near; let me feel you, to know if you are really Esau.
Now, the voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's; they are hairy.
Are you really my son Esau?

Jacob Of course, my father!

Isaac Let me eat the game that you have brought me now,
and then I will bless you.

Rebecca Our plot is working. Isaac drinks the wine and eats the stew.

Jacob Now, my father, give me your blessing! (*Kneel before Isaac*)

Isaac Ah! Come, my son. (*Place hands on Jacob's head.*)
May God give you the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth.
May many peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you.
Be master of your brothers, and may they bow down to you.
Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you.

Rebecca Look! Esau is back from hunting. He's making his stew!
What will happen?

Jacob Oh, oh! Esau is taking it to our father Isaac.

Prompter & Echoes What will happen?

Esau Let my father rise and eat of his son's game,
and then you may bless me.

- Isaac What did you say? Who are you?
- Esau I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.
- Isaac Then, who brought game to me a while ago?
I blessed him, and yes, he shall be blessed.
- Rebecca The blessing for Jacob came from God,
and his father Isaac cannot take it back.
- Esau (*Loudly and bitterly*)
Bless me! Bless me, too.
Oh my father! Please!
- Prompter & Echoes Bless me!
- Isaac (*Shake your head and embrace Esau.*) Oh, my son Esau!
Your brother came deceitfully; he took away your blessing.
- Esau (*Angrily*) He is rightly named Jacob — one who steals another's place.
He took away my birthright and the blessing that goes with it.
(*Kneel before Isaac.*)
Father! Have you not reserved a blessing for me?
- Isaac Son, I made him your master. What is done is done.
All his relatives I have given to him as servants.
- Esau Do you have only one blessing, my father?
Bless me, too, O my father!
- Isaac (*Lay hands on Esau.*)
Far from the fertile earth shall be your dwelling.
By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve;
until you become restless and break his yoke from your neck!
- Rebecca Soon after, Isaac dies.
- Esau Mother, when the days of mourning for my father are over
I will kill Jacob.
- Prompter & Echoes He'll slay his own brother!
- Rebecca Jacob, your brother Esau plans to kill you! Go to Haran,
to my brother Laban; stay there until Esau's fury subsides.
Hurry!
- Rebecca Years go by, and Jacob returns to his home.
He is fearful, but Esau has forgiven him.
It turns out as God had ordained,
and God gives Jacob a different name;
it means "Triumphant with God."
- Prompter & Echoes In Hebrew the name is *Israel*.