

**Genesis**  
**St. Jerome Adult Bible Study**  
**Lesson 6 – Answers**  
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1. Rebekah (the name means “cow”) was a beautiful virgin who was kind to strangers and obedient to her father. She favored Jacob over Esau and helped him steal Esau’s blessing – perhaps she was only doing the will of God.
  
- 2a.
- 2b. Barrenness is an oft-repeated theme throughout the scriptures. The word “barren” occurs 25 times in the Bible and most significantly in connection to the births of Isaac (Genesis 21), Jacob’s sons, Samson, the prophet Samuel, and, of very great importance, the birth of John the Baptist to the old and barren Elizabeth. The barren-yet-conceiving motif has much relevance to salvation history.
  
3. Rebekah was concerned about the turmoil she felt in her womb. Sure that the twins were struggling against each other, she turned to God for advice and He tells her that the boys represent two nations or peoples that will quarrel with each other. However, He says, one will surpass the other and the older will serve the younger. Rebekah is consoled.
  
4. Esau and Jacob were opposites. Esau was a rugged, reddish-colored, outdoorsman while Jacob was a stay-at-home mellow kind person.
  
5. When a parent favors one child over another, there are usually issues for all of them. The parent can feel guilt which might color his or her relationship with other family members; the favored child would certainly have a distorted view of its siblings and an overly generous opinion of itself; the less favored child would harbor resentment and self-doubt.
  
6. In the ancient near east, the birthright of the firstborn son included the promise of a major share of his father’s property and his father’s blessing, which itself was very important.
  
7. In what is beginning to seem like a recurring theme, Isaac passes Rebekah off as his sister to King Abimelech. His father, Abraham, also tried to claim that his wife, Sarah, was his sister – once to Abimelech and once to pharaoh. All three events were the result of the man’s fear for his life.
  
8. Esau, who came to despair over his lost birthright and his mother’s favoritism toward Jacob, in order to cause distress to Isaac and Rebekah, married Canaanite women instead of someone from among Abraham’s family.
  
9. Rebekah, who favored her son Jacob over her firstborn son Esau, overheard Isaac tell Esau that he would give Esau his blessing. She then contrived to have Jacob deceive Isaac by posing as Esau and receiving the blessing instead.

10. Rebekah favored Jacob over Esau because, when they were struggling within her womb, God told her that the younger, Jacob, would become the father of nations as well as Esau's superior. Further, Jacob was a genteel lad while Esau was a hunter and outdoorsman. Also, Esau disappointed Rebekah by marrying Canaanite women.
11. Jacob pretended to be Esau by covering himself in lamb's wool to simulate Esau's hairiness; this subterfuge fooled Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing intended for Esau.
12. The blessing that Jacob receives from his father Isaac promises wealth and power.
13. Rebekah is afraid that Esau will kill Jacob for stealing his father's blessing. She also wants Jacob to marry a kinswoman instead of a Canaanite. For those reasons, she dispatches him to Haran and the home of her brother Laban.
14. It was more difficult for Jacob to marry Laban's daughter than it was for Isaac to marry Rebekah. Isaac's servant, whom Abraham sent to fetch a bride, carried with him the brideprice which was to be paid for Rebekah's hand. Jacob, on the other hand, had no property, money, or livestock to give as a dowry.
15. Laban was a cheat. First, he agrees to allowing Jacob to marry Rachel but, on the wedding night sneaks Leah into his bed. When Jacob makes a deal with him to depart for home, Laban once again tries to cheat him out of what he had agreed to pay him but his plan backfires and Jacob wins out.
16. Leah and Rachel, who are sisters with Leah being the older, have some tension between them. Once again, a barren wife is seen by a fertile wife as somehow inferior and, since Jacob loves Rachel better than Leah, Leah is also resentful.
17. Rachel was barren until "God remembered" her and she became pregnant with Joseph.
18. Mandrake is a small, perennial plant native to the Middle East. It was thought to be an aphrodisiac and fertility drug. It is often called love apple or devil's apple. According to Genesis 30:14-16, a barren Rachel bargained with Reuben (Leah's oldest son) for some mandrakes which he had found. Leah, however, produced the children. Only when God "remembered Rachel" did she bear Joseph (30:24). Thus Israel learned that God controlled fertility; superstition and human manipulation cannot supply what God chooses not to.