

Jacob's New Name

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 32–33

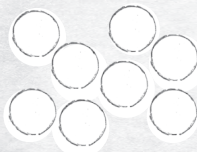
MAIN POINT: God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 26:24

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.

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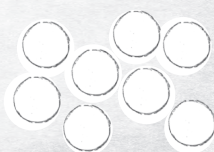
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jacob found himself stuck between a rock and a hard place. After stealing his older brother's blessing, he fled his home to escape Esau's anger. He spent time with his uncle Laban, got married, and fathered many children. Overall, Jacob prospered, but his time with his uncle Laban did not end well. Laban's sons accused Jacob of taking their father's wealth.

God told Jacob to leave, and Jacob did not hesitate. He gathered his family and all of his possessions and headed home to Canaan with Laban in pursuit. But uncertainty awaited Jacob in his homeland. His brother Esau was there. The last time Jacob saw Esau, Esau wanted to kill him.

God had reaffirmed to Jacob the promise He gave Abraham and Isaac, and He had promised to be with Jacob. But with Laban behind him and Esau before him, how could Jacob possibly survive?

Jacob tried to prepare for his meeting with Esau. He strategically divided his family into separate groups. He sent gifts ahead of them to appease Esau. That night, Jacob anxiously awaited word from Esau, and that is when he encountered the Lord.

Did Jacob win the wrestling match? Was he stronger than the Lord? The victory was ironic; Jacob did not win by strength (God proved His power by crippling Jacob with just a touch) but by confessing his dependence on God's blessing. Jacob had nowhere else to turn. He could not succeed by his own strength. Jacob held onto God and would not let go. God poured out His grace on Jacob. He blessed Jacob and gave him a new name, Israel. From Jacob's descendants—from the nation of Israel—God would bring into the world His Son, Jesus.

Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people with the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into God's family, we also receive a new name: children of God (John 1:12).



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32–33

God had made a covenant with Jacob's grandfather, Abraham. Then God told His promise to Jacob's father, Isaac. God had a plan for Jacob too. Even though Jacob was the younger brother, God wanted Jacob to receive the blessing for his family.

Years before, Jacob tricked his father and his brother; he stole the blessing from Esau. Then Jacob ran away to escape Esau's anger. God met with Jacob and promised to be with him. After 20 years, God told Jacob that it was time to go home.

Jacob began the trip with his family and all of his possessions. Going home meant that Jacob would see his brother Esau again. Jacob was afraid that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his blessing. So Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau that he was coming. When the messengers came back, they told Jacob that Esau was coming to meet Jacob, and he had 400 men with him.

Jacob was very afraid! God had promised that his family would be as numerous as the stars, but how could that happen if Esau was going to kill them all? Jacob made a plan. He divided his family into two groups. If Esau attacked one group, maybe the other group could escape. Then Jacob asked God to keep His promise. Jacob prayed, "Please rescue me from my brother Esau."

Jacob sent a large gift of animals—goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys—to try to make Esau happy. Maybe then Esau would forgive him.

That night, Jacob moved his family across the stream where they might be safer, but Jacob stayed behind. A man

appeared. (The man was actually God Himself!) The man wrestled with Jacob all night. Jacob refused to give up, so the man injured Jacob's hip.

"Let Me go. The sun is coming up," the man said.

But Jacob would not let Him go. "I will not let You go unless You bless me," Jacob said.

"Your name will no longer be Jacob," said the man.

"Your name will be Israel because you wrestled with God and men, and you have won." The man blessed Jacob. The sun came up, and Jacob limped because of his hip.

Now Jacob looked and saw Esau and his 400 men coming to meet him. **Jacob went to meet Esau.** He bowed down seven times to show respect to his brother. **Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. He was not angry anymore.** The two brothers cried together. "Why did you send so many animals ahead of you?" Esau asked.

"I wanted to make you happy," Jacob said."

"I have enough," said Esau. "You keep them."

"Please take my present," said Jacob. "God has given me more than I deserve.

Esau agreed to take the gifts, and he **returned to his home. Jacob and his family traveled on to Shechem (SHEK uhm), and Jacob bought land for them to live on. He was finally home in the land God had promised him.**

Christ Connection: God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people with the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God (John 1:12).



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S
WORD? GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Jacob gave gifts to Esau generously because God had blessed Jacob and had given him grace.

(Gen. 33:11)

Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jacob's New Name

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 32–33

MAIN POINT: God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 26:24

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.

Welcome time

ARRIVING ACTIVITY: Name game

Guide kids to think of a word that they can add to their names to help others learn more about them. The word kids choose should begin with the same letter as their names. Some examples might be Apples Anna or Baseball Brad. Guide each child to share his phrase and to explain why he chose the word he did.

SAY • Can you imagine having a new name? In our story, God changed Jacob's name. Today, we'll find out more about this name change and what Jacob's new name was!

Activity page (5 minutes)

Guide kids to complete the activity page by decoding the message. The correct answer is *Israel*.

SAY • **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.** This was another picture of God's faithfulness to the promise that He made to Abraham. God's people would be known as Israel long after Jacob was gone.


- "Coded Covenants" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Thumb war competition

Guide kids to find a partner. Explain that each pair will play thumb war. Guide the winner in each pair to find a new partner. The partner who did not win must sit in his chair. Continue play until one kid is the champion!

SAY • You all are very strong! Our story today has quite a challenge, but it wasn't a thumb war challenge. It was more like a wrestling challenge. When God changed Jacob's name to Israel, God had been wrestling with Jacob all night. We'll learn more about what happened today!



LOW PREP

OPTION 2: Toss and tell

Ask kids to stand in a circle. Explain that you will toss a playground ball to one child, and she will share about a time that she made a promise or that a promise was made to her. Guide that child to then toss the ball to another child. After all kids have had a chance to share, play again. This time, ask kids to share one thing that they remember learning about Jacob from the last two sessions.

• playground ball

SAY • God continued the promise He made to Abraham to Isaac and Jacob. God always keeps His promises. In today's story, **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.** This was to show that God would continue to be faithful to not just Jacob but to all of His people.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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Countdown

- countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (2 minutes)

- leader attire from previous week
- theme background slide (optional)

[Large Group Leader enters in mismatched pieces of sports gear. She may have on a catcher's helmet, shin guards, and elbow pads, while moving a basketball on stage with a hockey stick.]

LEADER • Hello again, my friends and teammates! You guys did a great job last session learning about Jacob and Esau, and I know you will do just as well today! Are you ready to play some games and learn even more today? Where is your gear? You might need it for this story!

Giant timeline (2 minutes)

- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

LEADER • Before we learn something new, it's important that we review what we've already learned. That way, we can remember that all of the Bible fits together as one story. We learned that **God created everything for His glory**, and then later He saw that all the people of the world were sinful. God sent a flood to destroy all the earth, but He saved Noah and Noah's

family, as well as at least two of each type of animal.

Noah's family had many children so that the earth was soon filled with people again. God told people to spread out, and but they didn't listen. God confused their languages so that people would have to spread out and live among people who they could understand. Then, **God promised to bless all the world through Abraham.** Abraham was Isaac's father, and Isaac was Jacob's father. God showed His faithfulness to the promise He made for each of these people, and promised that He would continue to be faithful throughout time.

Last week, we learned that **Jacob stole Esau's blessing**, and yet even though Jacob sinned, God still kept His promise and would one day send Jesus through Jacob's family.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Today, we will continue learning about Jacob.

We'll learn about a time that **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.** God and Jacob were wrestling when this happened! I told you that you might need your sports gear for this story! God had a plan for Jacob and Jacob's family. ***What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.***

• Big Picture Question Poster

Key passage (4 minutes)

LEADER • God is faithful to His promises, even when His people aren't faithful to Him. We'll see that throughout Scripture. We see God's promise in Genesis 26:24, our key passage.

• Key Passage Poster
• "I Am With You" song

Sing together “I Am With You.”

Sing (4 minutes)

- “Rest in His Promise” song

LEADER • How would you feel if God told you that He would be with your family and would bless them? Well, God has continued that promise, and now all who trust Jesus are included! We have been blessed by Jesus’ death and resurrection that paid for sin. All who trust in Jesus are given God’s Holy Spirit, who is always with them. Let’s praise God for keeping His promise to Abraham and even to us!

Sing together “Rest in His Promise.”

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Help kids turn to Genesis 32–33 in their Bibles.

- Bibles
- “Jacob’s New Name” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Main Point Poster

LEADER • Our story today comes from Genesis 32–33. We know that God changed Jacob’s name, but let’s see how that happened.

Open your Bible to Genesis 32. Show the video, or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided.

For a shorter version of the story, read the bolded text.

LEADER • God showed so much grace to Jacob. Jacob sinned against Esau, and as a result, Jacob had to go live in a new place with his uncle Laban. When God told him to return to the land he had come from, Jacob was scared. He would have to see Esau, and Esau might still be very angry at him. During the night, God wrestled with Jacob, and Jacob wouldn’t let Him go. Jacob’s wasn’t stronger than God, but he learned that he was weak and needed God’s blessing. God blessed Jacob and changed His name to Israel. This would be the name of God’s people would be

Note: Grace is anytime God gives us what we do not deserve. Help kids understand that Jacob didn’t deserve to be blessed by God, but God chose to bless him anyway.

known by!

After wrestling with God, Jacob went to meet Esau. Esau loved his brother, even though Jacob had wronged him. Esau showed Jacob grace. He came to Jacob and hugged him and asked him to come live among his family. Esau shows us a beautiful picture of what God's forgiveness looks like.

Ask the following review questions:

1. Jacob went home because God told him to do so, but why he was afraid? (*Jacob was afraid that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his blessing; Genesis 32:9-12*)
2. What did Jacob do to make Esau happy? (*Jacob sent gifts, Genesis 32:13-18*)
3. What happened when a man came to Jacob? (*The man was God, and He wrestled all night with Jacob. When morning came, Jacob said he would not let God go unless He blessed Jacob. God changed Jacob's name to Israel; Genesis 32:24-28*)
4. Was Esau still angry at Jacob? (*no, Genesis 33:1-11*)
5. ***What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.***

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • God changed Jacob's name. Let's watch our video and see how Samuel tries to change his own name.

Show the "Unit 3, Session 2" video.

LEADER • What was Samuel doing? Has anyone ever imitated you? How did you feel? How is this similar to our story? How is it different? Jacob didn't choose to change his name; instead God gave him a new name. This wasn't just any name, either. It had huge

• "Unit 3, Session 2"
discussion starter video

significance because this would be the name that God's people would be called. We learn about the nation of Israel throughout the Bible, and now, all who trust Jesus are added to God's people because Jesus paid for sin on the cross we are called God's children!

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions. If this is not possible, encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Big picture question and prayer (3 minutes)

Show the big picture question poster.

LEADER • Before we go, can anyone tell me our big picture question and answer? ***What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.*** Yes! God is in control, and nothing can stop His plan!

Before transitioning to small groups, make any necessary announcements. Lead kids in prayer. Thank God for sending Jesus through Jacob's family. Ask God to help kids trust Him to carry out His perfect plan, even when it seems scary or difficult. Pray that God would change the hearts of kids to want to follow Him even more.

Dismiss to small groups

• Big Picture Question
Poster

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- balloons, 1 per kid
- bouncy ball, 1 per kid (optional)

Inflate one balloon for each child. If children have latex allergies in your children's ministry, choose non-latex balloons or substitute a bouncy ball in this game. Explain that kids will try to keep their balloons in the air while saying one word of the key passage each time they touch the balloons. (If using a ball instead, kids will say one word before the ball bounces.)

SAY • Aren't you glad that God will always be with us and that He will keep His promise? God never fails. He is always faithful to keep all of His promises.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Slide or Poster

Write the answers to the following questions on index cards and hide them around the room. Explain that you will ask a question and kids will try to find the card with the correct answer.

SAY • Aren't you glad that God used Jacob to serve Him, even though Jacob sinned? God would one day send Jesus through Jacob's family. **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.** God kept His promise to Abraham, Isaac, and now Jacob, and this promise continues

throughout the generations to today. We receive this same promise when we trust Jesus!

Ask the following questions:

1. Why was Jacob afraid to go home? (*He was afraid Esau would still be angry, Genesis 32:11*)
2. What happened when Jacob's name was changed? (*God came to him and wrestled with him all night. Jacob wouldn't let Him leave until God blessed him; Genesis 32:24-28*)
3. What was Jacob's new name and why was the name so important? (*Israel—the name of God's covenant people; Genesis 32:28*)
4. How did Esau respond when Jacob came home? (*Esau had forgiven him and was happy to see him, Genesis 33:4-11*)
5. ***What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.***

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: New names

SAY • For this game, each person should choose a new name. We'll stand in a circle and take turns telling our new names. You'll want to remember as many as you can!

Guide kids to tell their new names. Explain that you will start the game by saying, "Hi. I'm (new name). Next up is (another person's new name.)" That child will do the same. She will say, "Hi. I'm (new name). Next up is (another person's new name.)" Any person who doesn't answer when her name is called, calls out a name that isn't in the circle, or can't think of a new name within three seconds must sit down. Play until one child remains. You may choose new



names and play again if time remains.

SAY • God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people. God proved His faithfulness to Jacob and his family. God planned all along to bless Jacob, even though he was the younger of the two twins. ***What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.*** God showed that His plan was to continue His promise through Jacob's family by changing Jacob's name to Israel.

OPTION 2: What does your name mean?

SAY • God changed Jacob's name to Israel, which is a combination of the Hebrew words for "wrestle" and "God." This name shows what God's people would continue to do. They would wrestle with following God, choose to go their own way, and turn back to Him over and over again. This name also showed that God was confirming His covenant with Jacob because it described the way that God's people would be close to God even when they wrestled with Him. Do you know what your name means? Let's see what your name means, and also create an acrostic of what we want people to remember about us when they hear our names.

Use a website or a book about the meaning of names to look up each child's name. Guide kids to write their names down the side of the sheet of paper so that they can add words that begin with each letter of their names. Guide them to choose words that they would describe themselves.

- construction paper
- markers
- book about the meaning of names

Journal and Prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal and instruct the kids to draw a picture of a time that they had to trust or rely on someone else for something. Writers may write about a time that they needed to trust someone else. Remind kids that Jacob had to trust that God. God knew that Esau would welcome Jacob, and He took Jacob back home at just the right time.

SAY • God is always faithful and we can trust everything that He says in the Bible is true. God led Jacob home at the right time and God gave Esau the strength to forgive Jacob for stealing his blessing. We can trust God's promises and His perfect plan!

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for being in control and always faithful. Ask God to help kids trust that He will keep His promises and that He is in control. Pass out this week's big picture card and remind kids to review the story and the picture throughout the week.

- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons or markers
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Kids

Journal Page

God the Covenant-Keeper

Key Passage: Genesis 26:24

Big Picture Question: What can stop God's plan?
Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.

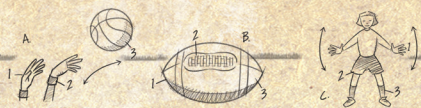
Session 1: The Stolen Blessing
Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-45
Jacob stole Esau's blessing.

Session 2: Jacob's New Name
Genesis 32-33
God changed Jacob's name to Israel,
the name of God's covenant people.

Session 3: Joseph Sent to Egypt
Genesis 37:1-36; 39:1-41:57
God used Joseph's suffering for good.

Session 4: Joseph's Dreams Came True
Genesis 42:1-46:34; 50:15-21
God sent Joseph to Egypt to establish
a remnant.

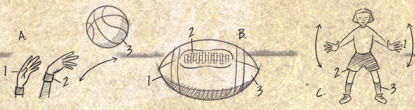




“I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your offspring because of My servant Abraham.”

Genesis 26:24

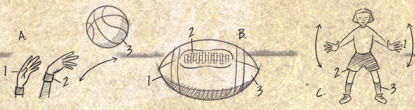




**I am the God of
Abraham thy father:
fear not, for I am with
thee, and will bless
thee, and multiply thy
seed for my servant
Abraham's sake.**

Genesis 26:24

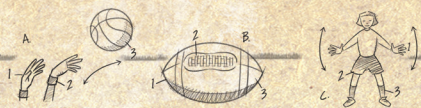




**“I am the God of
Abraham your father.
Fear not, for I am with
you and will bless
you and multiply your
offspring for my servant
Abraham’s sake.”**

Genesis 26:24





“I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.”

Genesis 26:24



God changed
Jacob's name
to Israel,
the name of
God's covenant
people.





Coded Covenants

INSTRUCTIONS: Use the code to complete the statement.

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 26:24

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- What can stop God's plan?
Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.

BIBLE STORY:

JACOB'S NEW NAME

- God told Jacob to go back to Canaan where Esau was.
- Jacob obeyed but was afraid.
- God came to Jacob and wrestled with him. At daybreak, Jacob asked God to bless him. God changed Jacob's name to Israel.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Tell about a time when you were afraid. What did you do?
- Have you ever been forgiven? How did you feel?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Conduct a family arm-wrestling competition. Remind kids that Jacob wrestled with God and Jacob wouldn't let God go until He blessed Jacob.
- Go further: Look online to discover the meaning of each family member's name. Discuss if the name is a good fit for each person.

Younger Kids Activity Pages
Unit 3, Session 2

God chang_d Jacob's n_me

to _____,



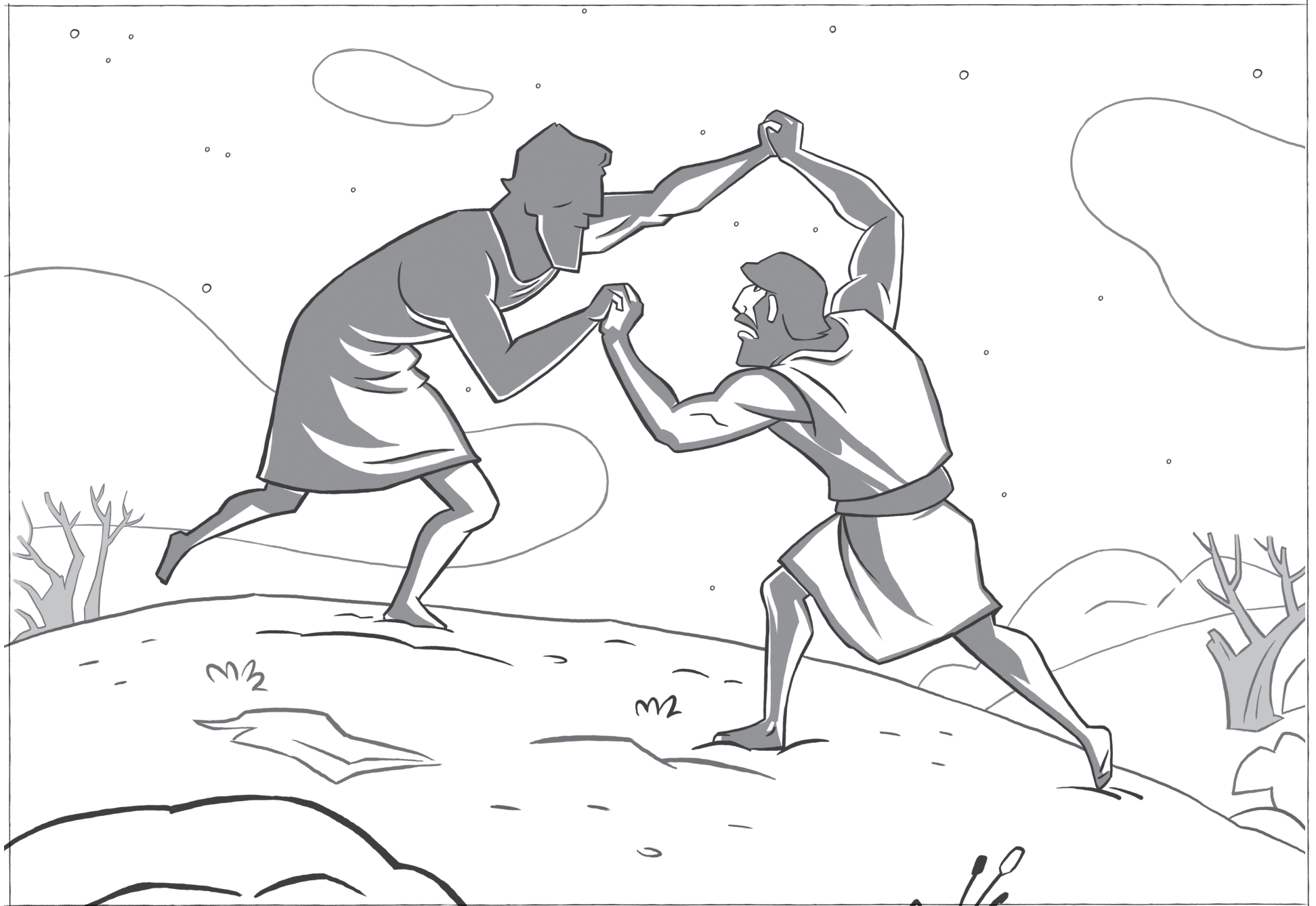
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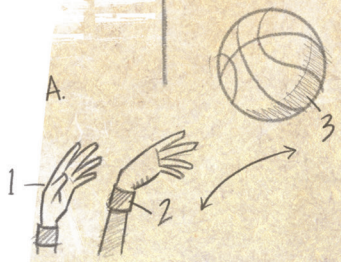
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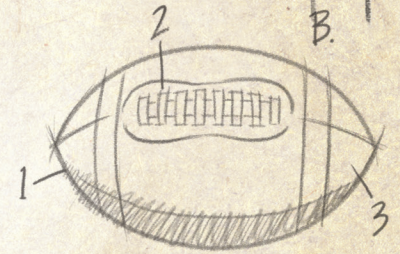


R A I S L E





What can stop God's plan?



What can
stop God's
plan?

Nothing can stop
God's perfect
plan.

