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Title: What Would I Do If I Was Jacob?

Purpose: Inspire hope for those chosen by God to turn from our sinful ways, provoke us to submit to God's calling and fulfill the purpose for which He chose us.

Truth for Today: If God can choose Jacob, a liar and deceiver, to one day fulfill His purposes, He can do the same for me if I choose to follow His ways.

Topic: Jacob, Discipleship, Predestination, Chosen, Sowing and Reaping

Text: Matthew 1: 1-2

Series title: What Would I Do If...

Series purp.: Provoke people to follow God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit above all else  
What Would I Do If I Was Jacob?

## I. Introduction

A. Review series: "What Would I Do If..." We're looking to Biblical characters to show us the result of their good and bad decisions so we can live a life pleasing to God. The overarching theme is nothing in this life is more important than following God's will, God's Word and the Holy Spirit. Last week we asked ourselves, "What Would I Do If I Was Peter?" Today we'll ask ourselves, "What Would I Do If I Was Jacob?" E.g. sandals. Genealogy of Jesus [Mt. 1:1-2 (NLT)] This is a record of the **ancestors of Jesus the Messiah...**<sup>2</sup> **Abraham** was the father of **Isaac**. Isaac was the father of **Jacob**.] To be in the lineage of Jesus, we'd think he was a godly man, but he wasn't at 1<sup>st</sup>. He was chosen by God before birth but lived as a godless unbeliever who lied and deceived people until he had an encounter with God that changed his life.

B. Title: What Would I Do If I Was Jacob? (4 what-ifs)

## II. What would I do if knew God chose me for salvation or a special calling...ignore Him or follow Him?

A. God is sovereign (He is in ultimate control) and He chooses who He wills, i.e. predestination for salvation (Calvinism) & actions (hardened Pharaoh's heart) [Ro. 9:10-16 (NLT)]...our ancestor Isaac. When he married Rebekah, she gave birth to twins. <sup>11</sup> But **before they were born**, before they had done anything good or bad, she received a message from God. (This message shows that **God chooses people according to his own purposes**; <sup>12</sup> **he calls people**, but not according to their good or **bad works**.) She was told, "Your older son (*Esau*) will serve your younger son (*Jacob*)." <sup>13</sup>...**"I loved (chose<sup>3</sup>) Jacob, but I rejected Esau."**]

B. App. If we're a Christian, it's because God chose us before we chose Him. If we're following God's plan for our life, it's because God predestined a path for us to follow. Yet in both cases we have free will and can choose or reject what God chooses for us. This is a tension of truth. Knowing that God loved and called me before I was born in spite of my sins, and will give me eternal life should bring me to my knees in gratitude and make me serve Him the rest of my life. E.g. Jesus cross

C. How do I know if God has chosen me to be a Christian? Our heart is drawn to God. We feel conviction over sin or we're inquisitive about God. That's the Holy Spirit at work. Don't say no when God tugs at your heart, say yes. // a calling pulls our heart.

III. What would I do if realized people will treat me like I treat others? Will I change?

- A. Context: Earlier Jacob stole Esau's rights as 1<sup>st</sup> born with stew. Now Isaac is dying and sent Esau to prepare wild game and bless him. Jacob lies to steal Esau's blessing. [Ge. 27:15–16 (NLT) Then she (*Rebekah*) took Esau's favorite clothes...and gave them to her younger son, Jacob. <sup>16</sup> She covered his arms and...neck with the skin of the young goats...<sup>20</sup> Isaac asked, "How did you find it (*the wild game*) so quickly, my son?" "The Lord your God put it in my path!" Jacob replied.] Jacob was a liar and deceiver and would one day find out we reap what we sow.
- B. Context: he ran away to escape Esau and wants to marry Rachael, Laban's daughter. [Ge. 29:25 (NLT) But when Jacob woke up in the morning—it was Leah! "What have you done to me?" Jacob raged at Laban. "I worked seven years for Rachel! Why have you tricked (ESV deceived) me?"] Somehow, it's ok when we lie and deceive but go ballistic when someone does it to us.
- C. Jacob learned a hard lesson. We reap what we sow, i.e. what we do to others will be done to us. [Galatians 6:7 (ESV) Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.] E.g. Negative: Jacob deceived Isaac and Laban deceived him. Positive: If I want a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance when I mess up, I need to give others a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance; if I want people to help me when I'm in trouble, I need to help others in trouble; if I want friends, I need to be a friend.

IV. What would I do if I was in a crisis? Would I cry out to God or rely on myself?

- A. Sometimes it takes a crisis or an encounter with death to turn our hearts to God. Context: headed home, afraid of Esau, [Ge. 32:6–7 (NLT)...the messengers... reported, "We met...Esau, and he is already on his way to meet you—with an army of 400 men!" <sup>7</sup> Jacob was terrified... <sup>9</sup>Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my grandfather Abraham, and God of my father, Isaac...<sup>11</sup> O Lord, please rescue me from the hand of...Esau. I am afraid that he is coming to attack me...<sup>12</sup> But you promised me...I will multiply your descendants until they become as numerous as the sands along the seashore..."]
1. Jacob had a heart problem. He had never totally surrendered to God. [Genesis 28:21 (NLT) if I return safely to my father's home, then the Lord will certainly be my God.] God can use a crisis to bring us to the end of ourselves and make us aware of our need for Him. That night Jacob had a wrestling match with God... Jacob was desperate and held tightly to God until God blessed him. God changed his name from Jacob (he who fights with God<sup>2</sup>) to Israel (a prince of God<sup>2</sup>), E.g. personal test. At 19 my life was empty without God.

V. Conclusion: What will I do when I realize how faithful God has been to me?

- A. After Esau forgives and welcomes Jacob, [Ge. 35:1–3 (NLT) Then God said to Jacob...Build an altar there...<sup>2</sup> So Jacob told everyone in his household, "Get rid of all your pagan idols, purify yourselves...<sup>3</sup> We are now going to Bethel, where I will build an altar to the God who answered my prayers when I was in distress. He has been with me wherever I have gone."] No longer was God his father's God, He was his God and he began to serve Him. An altar was a place of worship. He and his family got rid of worldly ways, began living holy lives, and served Him all their days.

1. The question all of us must ask ourself is, what will I do if I'm in Joseph's shoes?

## VI. Response

- A. Prayer: What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
- B. Souls: I feel God is drawing my heart to follow Him. Maybe a crisis or conviction has made you aware of your need for God. What do I do? Problem-Solution-Decision

## VII. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

1. Webster, N. (2006). In [\*Noah Webster's first edition of An American dictionary of the English language\*](#). Foundation for American Christian Education.
2. Eerdmans Bible Encyclopedia
3. Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973). [\*A handbook on Paul's letter to the Romans\*](#) (p. 184). United Bible Societies.

## VIII. Supplemental material

- A. Summary: Later in life Jacob became known as Israel. He had 12 sons who became the 12 tribes of Israel around which the OT revolves as God's Chosen people. He was in the lineage of Jesus Christ and today the nation of Israel is named after him. However, Biblical history shows us he didn't start out as a godly man but as a deceiving knucklehead.
- B. God's choice is called predestination, Def. God determined whatever comes to pass<sup>1</sup>, i.e. However, we're not robots. We must balance this with free will. We can say yes or no to God's choice. We can go our way or His. God wants all to be saved but He lets us make our own choice. After we're saved, He calls us to a lifestyle and a purpose. We can say yes or no.
- C. Context: running away from Esau, [Ge. 28:20–21 (NLT) Then Jacob made this vow: "If God will indeed be with me and protect me on this journey, and if he will provide me with food and clothing,<sup>21</sup> and if I return safely to my father's home, **then the Lord will certainly be my God.**] Jacob is unaware of what God was doing in his life. God's unseen Hand is bringing him to a place to depend on God, not himself.