Jacob, Esau and the Birthright

Genesis 25:19-34 and chapter 27 and 28:1-5
2. God promised Abraham and later his son, Isaac, that a great nation would come from them. They would have many descendants.

Isaac and Rebekah were married for twenty years before they had children.
Finally, Rebekah became pregnant. And guess what. She was going to have twins!

But there was a problem. Rebekah could feel the twins fighting inside of her. She did not like that at all so she asked God about it.

The Lord said to her, "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger."

Genesis 25:23, NIV
4. When the twins were born they were very different from one another. The first boy was red and very hairy when he was first born and they named him Esau. Isaac liked Esau the best.
The second boy was born right after the first one (in fact he was holding his brother's heel when he was born!) and his parents named him Jacob. Rebekah liked Jacob the best.
6. Parents should love each of the children and not have favourites. But Isaac and Rebekah were not good parents in this way. As he grew, Esau loved to be outside and was a very good hunter. His father, Isaac, loved to eat the tasty meat from the animals Esau caught. Esau was his father's favourite son.

Jacob was quieter and enjoyed working around home. His mother, Rebekah, loved him best.
One day Jacob was home cooking some stew. Esau had been out hunting and when he returned, he was very hungry.

"Jacob, give me some of that red stew," begged Esau. "I'm starved!"

"Not unless you sell me your birthright," said Jacob.

"Birthright? If I die, my birthright won't do me any good," said Esau. "And I'm just about to die! Sure, I will give you my birthright if you will give me some stew."
8. So, after Esau promised to sell his birthright to Jacob, Jacob brought him bean stew, bread, and something to drink. Esau thought he had made a good trade but really Jacob was the one who got the better deal. Jacob had played a mean trick on his brother.
Because he was the oldest, Esau would have received special treatment when his father died. To have the birthright was a very special privilege and duty. He would be in charge of many things. But Esau did not take this seriously. He gave all of that away for some stew.
Esau had given up his birthright to his younger brother but there was something else that was very special in a family. The father of the family would give a special blessing to his son. In the blessing the father would say who would get the most respect and who would be the leader of the family. He would give good wishes of wealth, power, and safety for his son's future.
11. When Isaac was very old he called Esau, his oldest and favorite son, to him and said, "I am going to give you the special family blessing today. Go and hunt for some wild game to cook the tasty food that you and I like to eat so much. We will eat together and then I will bless you."

So Esau set off to go hunting.
12. But someone else overheard what Isaac was saying. Remember how we said Esau was Isaac's favourite son and Jacob was Rebekah's favourite son? Well, Rebekah did not want Esau to have the blessing. She wanted her favourite son, Jacob, to get the blessing instead of Esau.

Rebekah decided to trick (or deceive) her husband. She called Jacob to her so they could make a plan together. Jacob should have stopped his mother but he went right along with the plan.

Rebekah told Jacob that they would trick Isaac. They needed to fool him into thinking that Jacob was Esau so that he would give him the blessing instead.

Here's how the plan would work. First, she told Jacob to go and kill two goats so that she could prepare them just the way that Isaac liked. Isaac would eat the goats and think they were the wild game that Esau had hunted.
Next, they had to make Jacob's smooth skin feel like his hairy brother's skin. Rebekah put goatskins on Jacob's arms and neck so that Isaac would feel them and think it was hairy Esau. She also put Esau's clothes on Jacob. All of this should fool Isaac because Isaac was old and blind.
So, when Jacob went into his father's tent his father could not see that it was Jacob. He wasn't sure so he asked to feel Jacob's hands. When he felt the goatskin he thought it was Esau's hairy hands. When he tasted the goat meat he thought it was wild game that Esau had hunted. When he smelled Esau's clothes on Jacob he really thought it was his oldest son. Isaac had been tricked!
So Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob. This was so important that, once the blessing had been spoken, it could not be taken back.

He said, “May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed.”
Isaac had just finished giving his blessing to Jacob when Esau came in from hunting. He
fixed some tasty food just like his father had asked and took it to his father so that he could
receive the blessing.

"Who are you?" asked his father.

Then he realized he had been deceived. "Someone else has already hunted an animal and
brought it to me. I blessed him and the blessing cannot be changed." Isaac was very sad and
angry. His own son had deceived him.

"Esau became very angry and begged his father to bless him too. "Jacob tricked me two
times," Esau cried. First he took my birthright and now he has taken my blessing."
17. Esau was so angry that he decided to kill Jacob once his father died. When Rebekah heard about Esau's plans, she sent Jacob to stay with her brother Laban until Esau calmed down. She told Isaac that Jacob could find a wife there. Everyone in the family was hurt because Rebekah and Esau decided to lie and trick Isaac.
So then, get rid of all evil and all lying. Do not be a hypocrite. Do not be jealous or speak evil of others. Put all these things out of your life.

1 Peter 2:1 (International Children’s Bible)
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18. Tricking someone is called deceit. This is what the Bible says about deceit.

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