

# YOUTH



LEVEL 3

# BIBLE

# LESSONS



LESSON 5



Beginning of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

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# BEGINNING OF THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

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**R**emember that our last lesson left Jacob traveling to Haran where his uncle Laban lived. After falling asleep one evening, Jacob dreamed of a stairway reaching to heaven. At the top of the stairway stood God. He told Jacob that He would be with him and bless him greatly.

Jacob woke up the next morning thankful that God was with him. On his way to Haran, he trudged along stony mountain trails and over hot desert sands. He then crossed the great Euphrates River. It was a long way to his uncle's home. Finally, Jacob came near the city of Haran, in the land of Mesopotamia.

## **JACOB MEETS RACHEL**

As he drew close to the city, Jacob spotted some shepherds and their flocks. He quickly ran to meet them at a nearby well. "Do you know my uncle Laban?" he asked one of the shepherds.

"Yes," the shepherd replied,

"and here comes his daughter Rachel with some of her father's sheep!"

Wanting to be of help, Jacob moved the large, flat stone from the well so the animals could be watered. As the animals drank, Jacob noticed how beautiful Rachel was.

Jacob walked over to where Rachel stood and greeted her. He was so thankful that God had led him to his relatives that he wept for joy.

Rachel was so surprised and excited to see her cousin \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank), she left him at the well and ran home to tell her father Laban. Laban ran to the well and invited Jacob to his home where he stayed for a month. During that month he worked for Laban in the fields and took care of his flocks (Genesis 29:1-14).

Jacob saw Rachel often during that month. The more he saw her, the more he liked her. Rachel had an older sister named Leah, who



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was closer in age to Jacob, but Rachel was the one he really liked.

Laban was happy with the work Jacob did for him. He asked Jacob if he would like to keep on working for him and what he thought would be fair wages, or pay, for his work.

“I shall work for you the next seven years if you will then give me Rachel to be my wife,” said Jacob (Genesis 29:15-18).

Laban liked the idea. Seven years of labor from a strong, hard worker would be worth a large sum of money.

Are you seven years old? Didn't it seem to take a very long time to become seven? The passing of seven years seemed but a short time to Jacob. This was because he saw Rachel every day (Genesis 29:20).

## THE WEDDING

When the seven years of labor were over, it was time for the wedding. Laban planned a great wedding feast that would last seven days! Jacob was very happy.

During the wedding ceremony the bride wore a long, heavy veil that hid her face. Later, when the veil was removed, Jacob found he had not married Rachel! Laban

tricked him. Jacob married Laban's older daughter Leah instead!

Jacob was very angry. “Why have you tricked me?” he demanded of Laban. “You knew I wanted to marry Rachel!”

“I am sorry,” said Laban, “but we have a custom here that the older daughter must marry first” (Genesis 29:21-26).

“Why didn't you tell me that before?” Jacob demanded. Laban hadn't told Jacob earlier because he wanted Leah to get married first. Was Laban being honest?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Fill in the blank.)

Does Laban's trick remind you of anything Jacob had done? Think back. Look in the last lesson if you cannot remember. Jacob must have thought about the time when he tricked his brother Esau. Now *he* had been tricked!

Then Laban said, “I will still give you Rachel if you'll do two things.”

“What are they?” asked Jacob, wondering to himself if this was another trick.

“If you will treat Leah nicely, then you may marry Rachel at the end of the week,” said Laban.

“I am willing,” Jacob said after some thought, “but what else must I do?”

“You must work seven *more*

years for Rachel,” answered Laban (Genesis 29:27). How long would Jacob have to work altogether for Rachel?  $7 + 7$  or  $7 \times 2 =$  \_\_\_\_\_. (Fill in the blank.)


Is your answer 14 years? If so, you’re right. Jacob was willing to work 14 years because he loved Rachel very much!


At the end of the week Jacob married Rachel. Now he had \_\_\_\_\_ wives. (Fill in this and the following blanks.) They were \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Men


were allowed to have more than one wife in those days. But Jacob loved Rachel more (Genesis 29:28-30). This must have made \_\_\_\_\_ sad. See the next page of this lesson for a little poem that will help you remember this story.


### GOD BLESSES JACOB


During his fourteen years of work for Laban, Jacob’s family grew very large. But only one of his eleven sons was born to his favorite wife Rachel.


1 + 1 =      1 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_


2 + 2 =      2 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_


3 + 3 =      3 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_


4 + 4 =      4 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_


5 + 5 =      5 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_

6 + 6 =      6 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_

**7 + 7 =      7 x 2 =  = 14**

8 + 8 =      8 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_

9 + 9 =      9 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_

10 + 10 =      10 x 2 =  = \_\_\_\_

Fill in the correct numbers in the spaces provided at the right.

## JACOB'S LOVE FOR RACHEL

Jacob loved Rachel  
And to Laban said:  
"I'll work for seven years  
If Rachel I may wed."

"That's very fine," said Laban,  
"Very fine indeed.  
After seven years  
A wedding you will see."

The seven years were over  
The wedding day was here.  
But when the veil was lifted,  
Rachel was not near!

"Why have you tricked me, Laban?"  
Jacob sought to know.  
(Hadn't he done that earlier  
When Esau was so low?)

"If for seven years more  
For Rachel you will work,  
At week's end you may have her."  
Laban said he would not shirk.



During those years, Laban became very rich because of Jacob's diligent, hard work. Near the end of the fourteen years, Jacob told Laban he wanted to move back to Canaan where his elderly father Isaac lived (Genesis 30:25-26).

Laban was not happy to hear this. Do you know why? He knew

that God was blessing him because of Jacob.

"I will pay you whatever you want if you will keep working for me," said Laban.

"I don't want money," Jacob answered, "but I would like to have your animals which have spots or ring marks on their hides."

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Laban agreed very quickly. That surprised Jacob. The next day he found out why.

After Jacob asked for those animals, Laban had his sons and workmen take away most of the animals Jacob wanted. They hid the animals where Jacob wouldn't notice them. Again Laban was being very tricky (Genesis 30:27-35).

Jacob now had to wait for more animals with spots or ring marks to be born. This took time.

Recall that God had promised to bless Jacob, and He did. During the next six years that Jacob took care of the animals, large numbers were born with spots or ring marks. Jacob now had many flocks.

Laban's animals were not having as many young ones as they had before, so his flocks were not increasing as fast as Jacob's. This shows that if we are honest and do things right like Jacob did, God will bless us too.

## **JACOB DEPARTS**

Jacob still wanted to go back to Canaan. God also wanted him to return. But Laban was not pleased about Jacob's desire to leave.

Jacob waited until Laban was tending his sheep far away. Jacob then took down his own tents,

loaded his belongings, put his wives and sons on camels and secretly departed. He did not want Laban to prevent them from leaving. Jacob was very careful not to take anything that belonged to Laban. It was not possible to travel quickly because the herds of animals moved slowly (Genesis 31:1-21).

Have you ever seen a flock being herded along a path? The animals often try to scatter and go in different directions. It must have been very difficult for Jacob and his men to get the animals to go in the right direction.

Three days later Laban was told that Jacob and his family left. Laban became very angry. He then discovered that some of his images were missing. He was sure Jacob took them.

"Saddle our fastest camels! We will catch up with Jacob and take care of this matter!" Laban shouted.

After seven days of hard travel, Laban spotted Jacob's caravan in the distance. Laban and his men then camped for the night. While they slept, God spoke to Laban in a dream and told him not to harm Jacob (Genesis 31:22-24).

The next morning when Laban overtook Jacob's caravan, he asked Jacob, "Why did you secretly leave

without letting me know? I would have prepared a feast before you left and would like to have kissed my grandchildren goodbye. And why did you steal my images?"

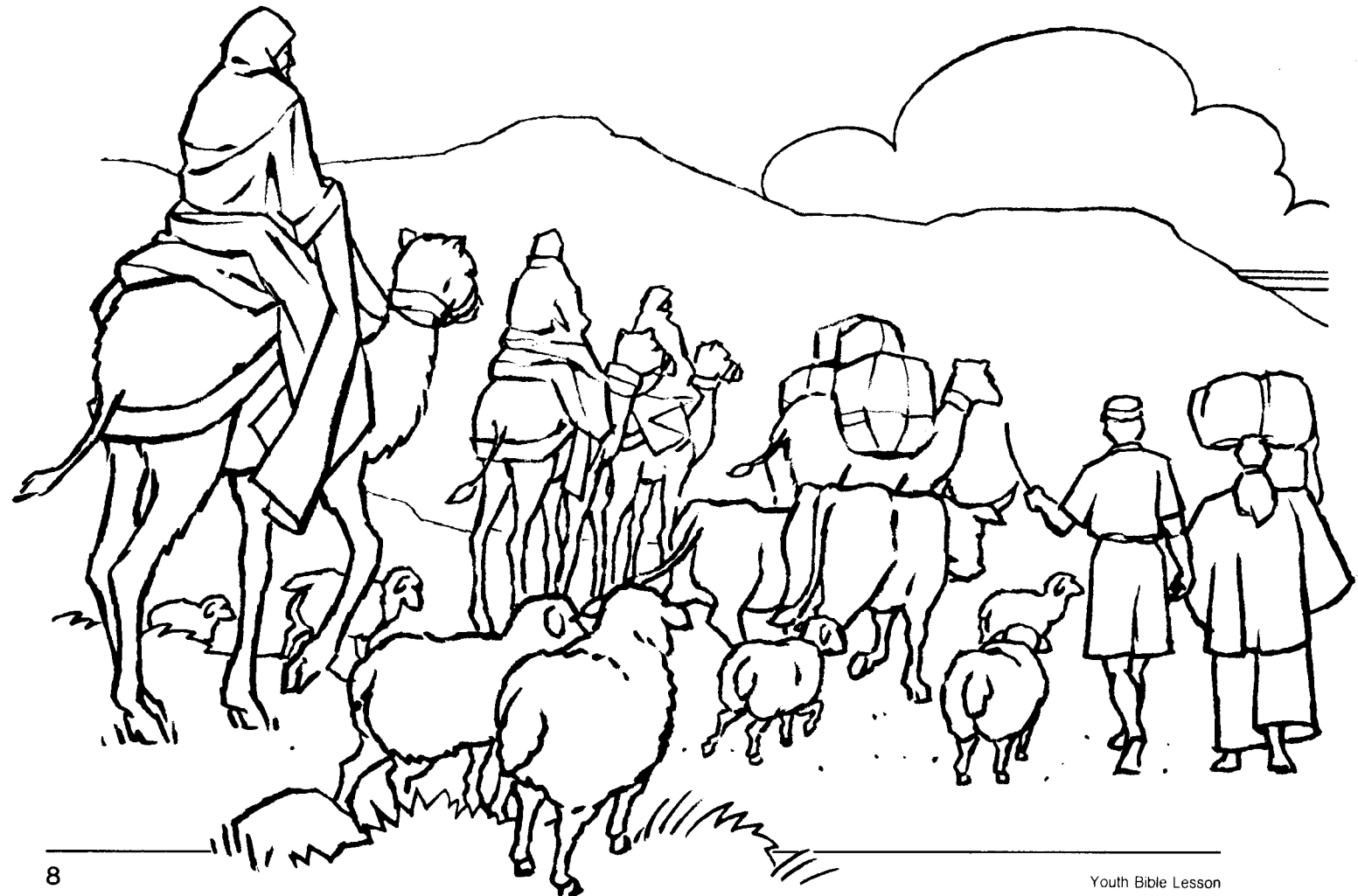
Jacob was very surprised to hear this. Do you remember how careful he was not to take anything belonging to Laban? But there was something he didn't know. He did not realize that Rachel had taken the images. Had Jacob known, he would not have permitted her to take them.

Laban began searching through all the tents. When he searched

Rachel's tent, he could not find the images because she hid them beneath the saddle on which she was sitting.

When Laban could not find the images, he suggested that both he and Jacob make an agreement. "Let's build a pillar here as a sign that I will not cross it to harm you and you will not cross it to harm me," said Laban. Jacob agreed.

After piling up stones for the pillar, the two shared a meal together. Early the next morning after saying goodbye to each other, Laban and his men left for home





while Jacob and his family packed up and continued their trip (Genesis 31:25-55).

## JACOB'S NAME CHANGED TO ISRAEL

Nearing the land of Canaan, Jacob worried about meeting Esau whom he had not seen for twenty years. Do you remember how angry Esau was then? He wanted to *kill* Jacob because of the trick he played on him!

Jacob was afraid that Esau might still be angry, so he sent messengers on ahead to find out.



Jacob told the messengers to tell Esau that his brother had much wealth and that he hoped they could meet as friends.

When the messengers returned, they told Jacob that Esau and four hundred of his men were on their way to meet him.

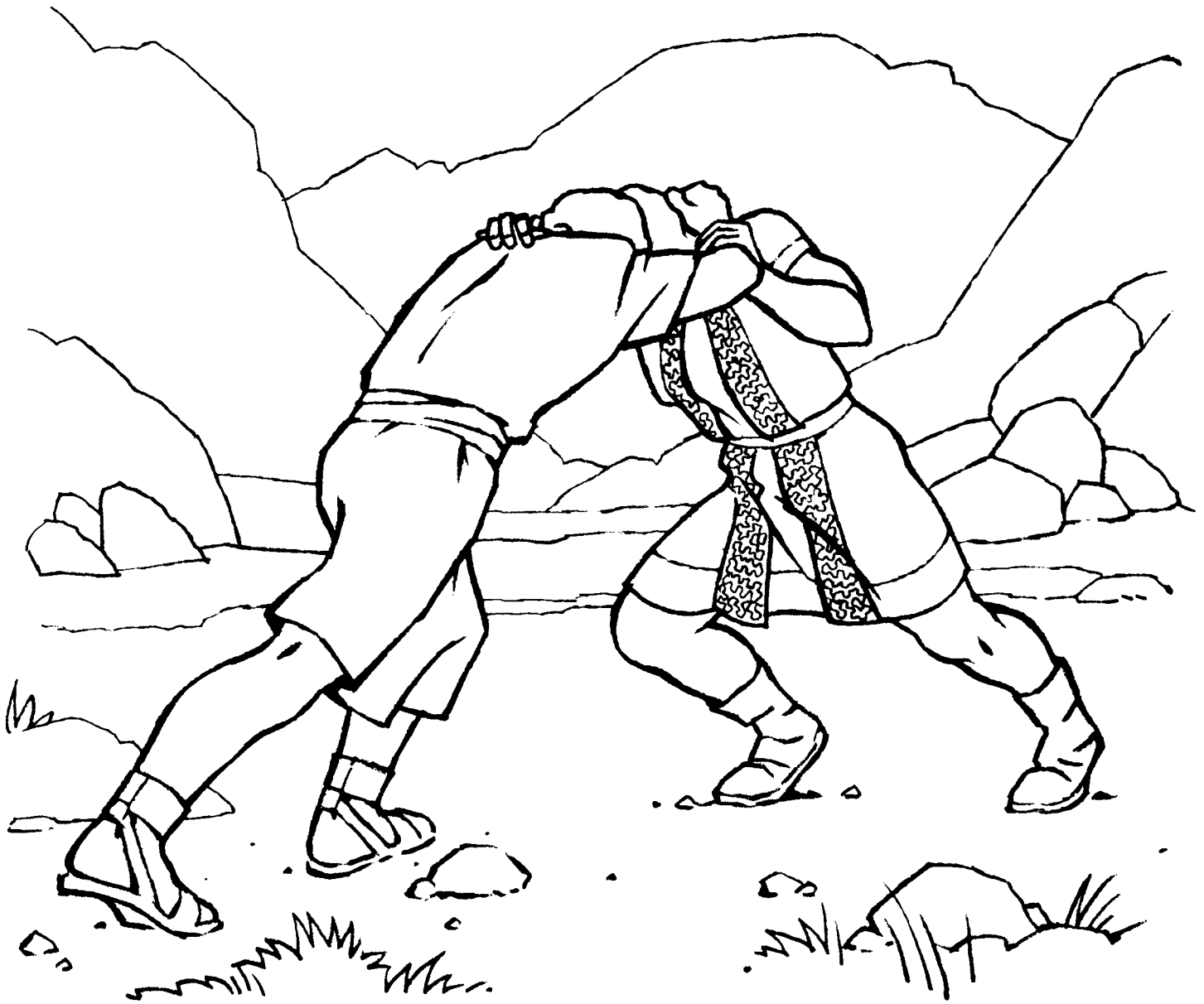
Jacob was shocked! He ordered his caravan and flocks to divide into two groups. Jacob did this because he thought that if one group were attacked by Esau's men, the other could escape.

Jacob then did the most important thing. He asked God to protect them from an attack. God always wants us to look to Him to help us. He will help us, but we must also do what we can to avoid harm.

Jacob thought that giving Esau a present might help. So he picked out five hundred and fifty of his best animals. He chose cattle, goats, sheep, burros and camels for Esau. These he sent out in groups. Each group was a separate gift. Jacob sent Esau these gifts hoping that Esau would be friendly to him (Genesis 32:3-21).

Before they met, both groups camped for the night. While his caravan was setting up camp, Jacob stayed a short distance behind to pray.

Suddenly someone seized Jacob



and a wrestling match began. This match went on throughout the night. It was not an easy struggle for Jacob, for he was not wrestling with a human being. Later we are told in the Bible that the Being Jacob wrestled with was the One who later became Jesus Christ!

The two struggled all night long.

But Jacob would not give in. He would not let go until God blessed him.

As God put an end to the match just before dawn, He changed Jacob's name to Israel. Israel means, "he who overcomes" or "proves to be a champion." Jacob, now called Israel, proved to be a

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champion with God. God was pleased with Jacob because he was not a quitter. We, like Jacob, should not be quitters either. We should always try to finish the jobs we start.

In the morning Jacob had a very sore hip. This reminded him of the struggle he just went through to receive God's blessing (Genesis 32:24-32).

### JACOB MEETS ESAU

Looking up, Jacob saw a cloud of dust rising across the desert. Esau was coming!

Jacob put Rachel and their son Joseph behind the others in the caravan. This was because they were his favorite wife and son and he did not want them to get hurt.

Then he went forward to meet Esau. As he came closer to his brother, Jacob bowed seven times. This was the custom when one wanted to show respect.

Esau came closer and closer, and then rushed toward Jacob and hugged him! They were happy to be together again. God answered Jacob's prayer.

After Esau met Jacob's family and accepted Jacob's gifts, each went their separate way (Genesis 33:1-17).

After Jacob arrived in Canaan,

his twelfth son was born. Jacob named him Benjamin. Unhappily Rachel, his mother, died at the time. Jacob was very sad because she was the wife he especially loved (Genesis 35:16-19).

From what we have just learned, Jacob (now called \_\_\_\_\_) had \_\_\_ sons. (Fill in the blanks.) Can you name them? If you need help, ask your parents to find their names in the Bible and then write them on the lines below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_

The families of each of these twelve sons would later be called the *Twelve Tribes of Israel*. This is because the families of each of Jacob's sons grew larger and larger over many years. And since Jacob's name was changed to *Israel*, the families of his twelve sons are called the tribes of *Israel*. Today these "tribes" have become large *nations!*

**BIBLE MEMORY**

Twelve Tribes  
of Israel

Reuben

Simeon

Levi

Judah

Zebulun

Issachar

Dan

Gad

Asher

Naphtali

Joseph (Ephraim, Manasseh)

Benjamin

## WORD MEANINGS

In the blank next to each word in the left-hand column, write the number of the drawing or written meaning which describes the word. The first one is done for you as an example.

trudged 10

custom \_\_\_\_\_

daughter \_\_\_\_\_

diligent \_\_\_\_\_

champion \_\_\_\_\_

quitter \_\_\_\_\_

reminded \_\_\_\_\_

accepted \_\_\_\_\_

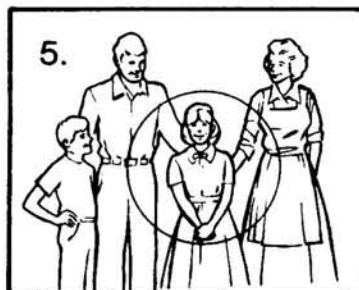
sought \_\_\_\_\_

shirk \_\_\_\_\_

1. tried to find out (looked for)

3. caused to remember  
(told again)

4. way of doing things



9. not doing what you say you will



2.

6. hard working

7. one who doesn't  
finish doing something

8. one who does his best

10. walked

Find these ten words in the lesson. Write out on a separate piece of paper the sentences in which they are used.