



LEVEL 3
3-5
LESSON 5

Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



The Twelve Tribes of Israel

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Jacob had tricked his father into giving him Esau's blessing. Esau was so wrathful that he wanted to kill Jacob, so Jacob fled to the city of Haran. There, he saw shepherds at a well. "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" he asked. "We know him well," one of them answered. He pointed to a young woman who was walking toward the well with a flock of sheep. "Here comes his daughter Rachel."

Jacob greeted Rachel with a kiss and told her that he was her Aunt Rebekah's son. She excitedly ran and told her father. When Laban heard the news, he ran to meet Jacob and invited him to his home. Jacob lived with his Uncle Laban and his family for a month and worked to help raise their sheep.

The more Jacob got to know Rachel, the more he liked her. When Laban asked Jacob how he would like to be paid for all his hard work, Jacob offered to work seven years for Laban if he agreed he could marry Rachel. Laban granted the request, but he came up with an idea to trick

Jacob into working much longer than seven years. Laban, unlike his giving, serving sister Rebekah, had a selfish attitude.

JACOB'S WEDDING

Jacob worked hard, day after day, for seven years. Yet the time seemed to pass quickly, because he loved Rachel so much. When the time came for the wedding, however, Laban disguised his older daughter, Leah, as Rachel. A veil covered Leah's face, so Jacob did not know that it was Leah until after the wedding. He got the shock of his life when he realized he had married the wrong woman!

Laban had used a disguise to trick Jacob, just like Jacob had used a disguise to trick his father, Isaac, into giving him Esau's blessing.

"I served you for Rachel" Jacob said angrily. "Why have you tricked me?"

Laban said, "In our country, the elder daughter must marry before the younger. But I will let you marry Rachel in a week, if you work for me another seven years."

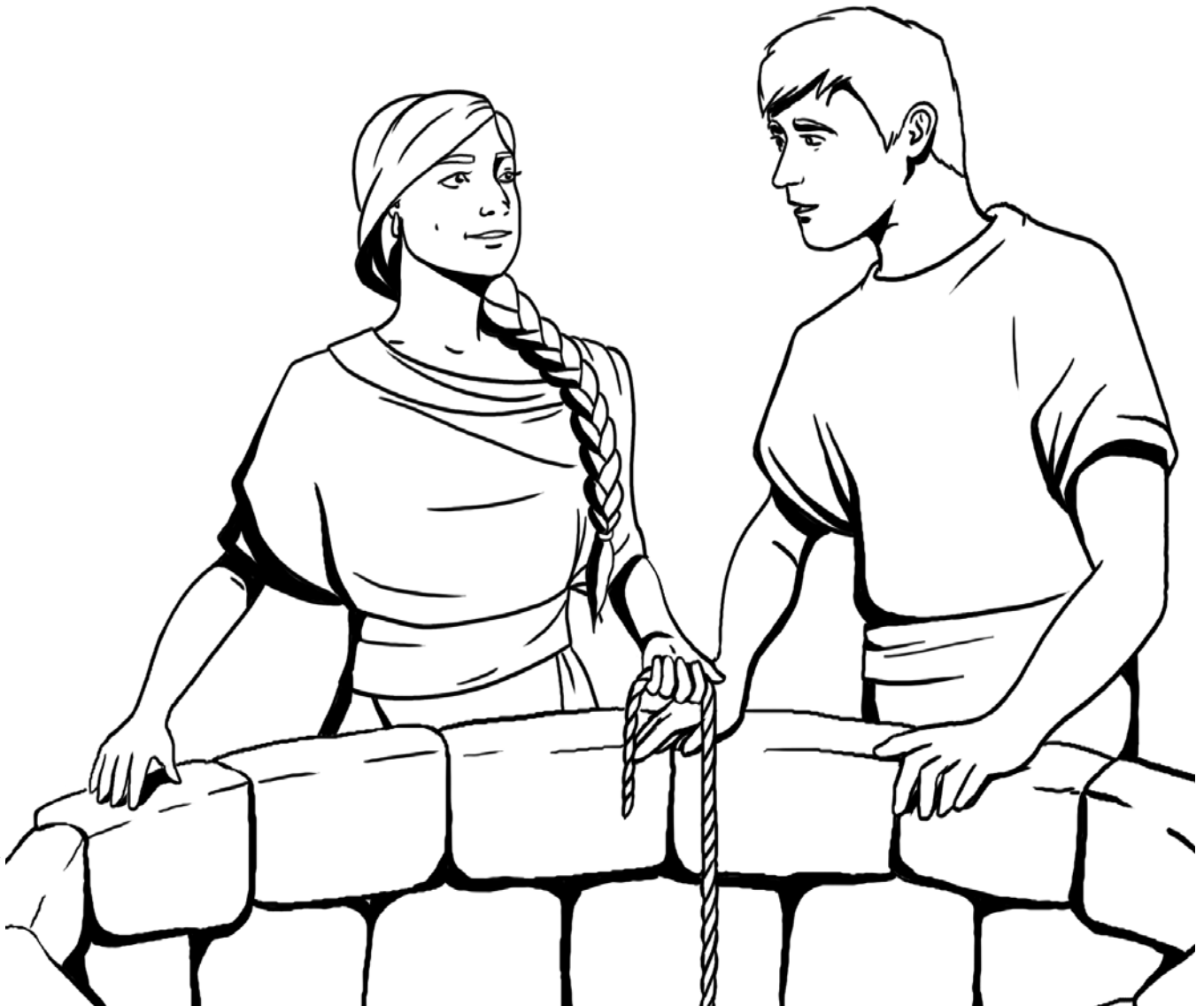
Jacob was afraid Laban would not let him marry Rachel if he did not agree to keep Leah, so he agreed to marry both sisters and to work the extra time.

At the end of the week, Laban let Jacob marry Rachel. This made Jacob very happy. But problems soon developed. Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah, which made Leah very sad. When God saw how sad Leah was, He blessed her with a son, whom she named Reuben. Rachel

could not have children, and she became sad and jealous of her sister. Jealousy caused a lot of strife in Jacob's family.

GOD BLESSES JACOB

After deceiving his father and brother when he was younger, Jacob grew and learned to be honest. So, even though his Uncle Laban had tricked him, he kept his word and worked for him another seven years. During these years, Laban became very rich



Jacob loves Rachel.



Jacob works for Laban seven years so he can marry Rachel.



Jacob doesn't realize he has married Leah until after the wedding.

because of Jacob's hard work. When the seven years were finished, Jacob wanted to move back to Canaan, where his father and mother lived. Laban did not want Jacob to go, so he made another deal with him. The two agreed that if Jacob continued working for him, Laban would let him keep all the cattle, sheep and goats that were born with spots or speckles. Laban could keep all the pretty ones.

Laban thought the deal was great. He could pay Jacob with a few speckled animals and keep all the rest. But he still tried to trick Jacob. He had his other workmen take away most of the speckled animals and hide them. This meant that Jacob had to wait for more speckled animals to be born.

But Jacob knew a lot about being a shepherd. He took the strongest

of Laban's animals and bred them with his own speckled animals. Soon most of the baby animals born were speckled and healthy. Jacob's herds of speckled animals grew large, while Laban's herds became small.

Laban grew angry when he saw how Jacob's herds grew faster than his own. He tried to change the terms of the deal 10 times! But God punished Laban for his dishonesty. When Laban said Jacob could only keep the speckled animals, all the animals had speckled babies. Then when Laban said Jacob could only keep the ringed animals, all the animals had ringed babies. This is one reason you should always treat people fairly. God is sure to punish if you are unfair, but He will bless if you are fair.





Jacob and his family



Jacob leaves Midian.

Another lesson from Jacob's life is to work hard. God blesses you if you follow His laws, work hard and treat people fairly. You might have to be patient, but God will always bless you when we you do the right thing.

JACOB DEPARTS

God also blessed Jacob with 11 sons and at least one daughter during the years he worked for Laban. But only one of these sons was from Jacob's favorite wife, Rachel. After many years of being unable to have children, God healed Rachel and she had a son named Joseph. He was Jacob's favorite son.

Some time after Joseph was born, God spoke to Jacob and told

him to go back home to Canaan. So Jacob spoke to Rachel and Leah, and told them that their father Laban was angry with him. He gathered together his family and his herds and secretly left Haran. He was gone for three days before Laban found out.

Laban angrily told his men to saddle their fastest camels and pursue Jacob and his family. After seven days, they caught up with them.

"Why have you snuck away with my daughters?" Laban demanded of Jacob. He and his men could have hurt Jacob, but God had intervened, warning him not to.

Jacob and Laban piled up stones for a pillar and made an agreement that neither one would pass this pile



Jacob and Esau reunite.

to harm the other. Then they shared a meal together and went their separate ways.

JACOB WRESTLES WITH THE WORD

As he got closer to Canaan, Jacob grew worried that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his birthright and blessing. So he sent many gifts ahead of him for Esau. More importantly, Jacob prayed and asked God to spare him and his family from his brother's anger.

That night, while Jacob was alone, the God Being who would become Jesus Christ appeared and wrestled with Jacob. Jacob did not know it, but this person was the Word. Jacob

wrestled with the Word all night and refused to give up. At one point, his hip was pulled out of joint. But Jacob had been taught never to quit. As morning approached, the Word told Jacob to let Him go, but Jacob refused to quit. He realized there was something special about this Being who was opposing him. Jacob told Him that he would not let Him go until He gave him a blessing! The Word blessed Jacob and gave him a new name: *Israel*, which means *prevailer*.

The next morning, Israel came face to face with Esau. He bowed in humility to Esau, fearing that he might be angry, but his brother rushed forward and hugged him.



Joseph is the first son born to Jacob and Rachel.



God had answered Israel's prayer. Israel was peacefully reunited with his brother.

THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL

After Israel's family arrived in Canaan, Rachel died giving birth to Israel's 12th son. Rachel wanted to name him Benoni, meaning *son of my sorrow*. But Israel called him Benjamin, meaning *son of my right hand*.

The 12 sons of Israel eventually became the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

List the 12 sons of Jacob in order using **Genesis 49**:

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

The nations that descended from these sons have massive blessings greater than other nations. Why? Because God kept the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

BIBLE MEMORY **Twelve Tribes of Israel**

Reuben	Dan
Simeon	Naphtali
Levi	Gad
Judah	Asher
Issachar	Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh)
Zebulun	Benjamin

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Draw the Scene

Follow the instructions in the squares below to draw pictures of some of the things you learned about in this lesson.

Draw a picture of Jacob working for Laban.

Draw a picture of the stone monument
Jacob and Laban made.

Draw a picture of Jacob returning home with his
large family.

Draw a picture of Israel with his 12 sons.