



LEVEL 4
4·2
LESSON 2

Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



Abraham

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Ten generations after the Flood, a baby was born in a place called Chaldea: His name was Abram.

The people in Chaldea didn't worship the true God. They worshiped false gods: gods of the sun, moon, stars and planets. The Chaldean priests claimed the dead Nimrod was the sun god and the dead Semiramis was the planet Venus.

Abram grew up to be a scientist and astronomer. He knew that the sun, moon, planets and stars were not gods. Astronomers could predict their movements in the sky using the laws of mathematics. Abram knew that the real God had to be the Creator who made the sun, moon, planets and stars and who caused them to move through the heavens.

Abram taught science, showing people that the movements of the sun, moon, planets and stars actually proved that they were not gods but that there was one great Creator God. He was the God who created the mathematical laws that controlled these heavenly bodies. Because these physical laws existed, Abram said, there must be a Lawgiver who created them.

When Abram was 75 years old, God

appeared to him in the city of Haran. All the nations on Earth had turned away from God's way of life, so God decided to start a new nation with Abram. He told Abram to leave Chaldea and move his family to another country. But He did not tell Abram where to go or explain the reason why. God simply told Abram that he would be blessed if he obeyed.

Imagine giving up your friends, your things, your comfort and your favorite places, all because God told you to move. What would your attitude be? What is your attitude when your parents ask you to do something much simpler?

The Bible records that Abram did not argue, complain or even delay. "So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him ..." (Genesis 12:4).

GOD CALLS ABRAM

Abram left the city of Haran with his wife, Sarai. He took along with him hundreds of servants, herds of cattle, goats and sheep, as well as his nephew Lot, Lot's family and possessions. After a long journey, God led Abram's household into the wilderness of Canaan. Canaan was

a good land with rich soil and favorable weather that could produce fruits and vegetables and provide feed for animals.

But when Abram arrived in Canaan, it was suffering from a famine. Because there was no rain, fruits and vegetables could not grow and it was hard to find anything to eat. Abram decided to move to Egypt until the famine passed.

Egypt was ruled by a king called pharaoh. Abram worried that the pharaoh would see his beautiful wife, Sarai, and kill him to take her as his own.

Abram should have trusted God to protect him, but he did not have enough faith to fully trust God yet. He was afraid of the pharaoh and decided to lie about Sarai. When Abram arrived in Egypt, he told the

pharaoh that Sarai was not his wife but his sister. When the ruler heard Sarai wasn't Abram's wife, he tried to make her his own wife. But God protected Sarai by sending a plague on the pharaoh's household.

When the pharaoh found out this plague had come because he tried to marry another man's wife, he was angry with Abram for lying to him. He sent Abram, Sarai and their household back to Canaan. Once they were back in Canaan, Abram built an altar and asked God to forgive him of his sins and to help make his faith stronger.

Sometime later, God appeared to Abram and told him that all the land he could see in all directions would belong to him and his descendants forever. God promised



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God first spoke to Abram in the city of Haran.

that Abram would have more descendants than there are dust particles on Earth. But Abram did not have any children, and he was already 85 years old. Sarai was about 75, far past the age when women stop having babies. It did not seem like God's promise was possible. Abram needed a lot more faith in God to perform this miracle.

To help strengthen Abram's faith, God later changed his name to Abraham, meaning *father of a multitude*. God also changed Sarai's name to Sarah, meaning *princess*.

SODOM AND GOMORRAH

Soon after God changed Abram's name, three visitors came to his tent. Two of these visitors were actually angels taking

on the appearance of men. The third visitor was the God Being who would later become Jesus Christ!

These visitors told Abraham again that Sarah would give birth to a son, despite her old age. They also warned Abraham about God's plan for Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom and Gomorrah were two nearby cities that were filled with wicked and violent people, just like the people who lived before the Flood. The three visitors told Abraham that God would destroy these cities with fire.

The two angels who visited Abraham then traveled onward to Sodom to find Lot. Lot had been living there for several years. He welcomed the two visitors



Abraham offers food to his visitors.

into his home. They warned him and his family to get out of the city, telling them, “Do not stop, and do not look back.”

After Lot’s family fled, fire from the sky rained down on Sodom and Gomorrah. But Lot’s wife disobeyed the angel’s instructions and looked back. She had come to love Sodom. When she looked back, God punished her for loving sin by turning her into a pillar of salt.

Lot and his two daughters escaped the destruction of Sodom because they obeyed God’s warning.

PROMISED SON

After the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, God kept His promise to

Abraham and Sarah. Twenty-four years after God’s initial promise, Sarah miraculously gave birth to a son! Abraham named his new son Isaac. As Isaac grew, Abraham taught him to believe and obey God.

But God was not done testing Abraham. He told Abraham, “Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and get you into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering ...” (Genesis 22:2).

Abraham had waited and waited for his son. God had given him Isaac and Abraham loved him dearly—but now God had commanded Abraham to kill him! But Abraham trusted God. God had promised that Abraham would be the father of



Lot’s wife became a pillar of salt when she looked back at Sodom and Gomorrah.

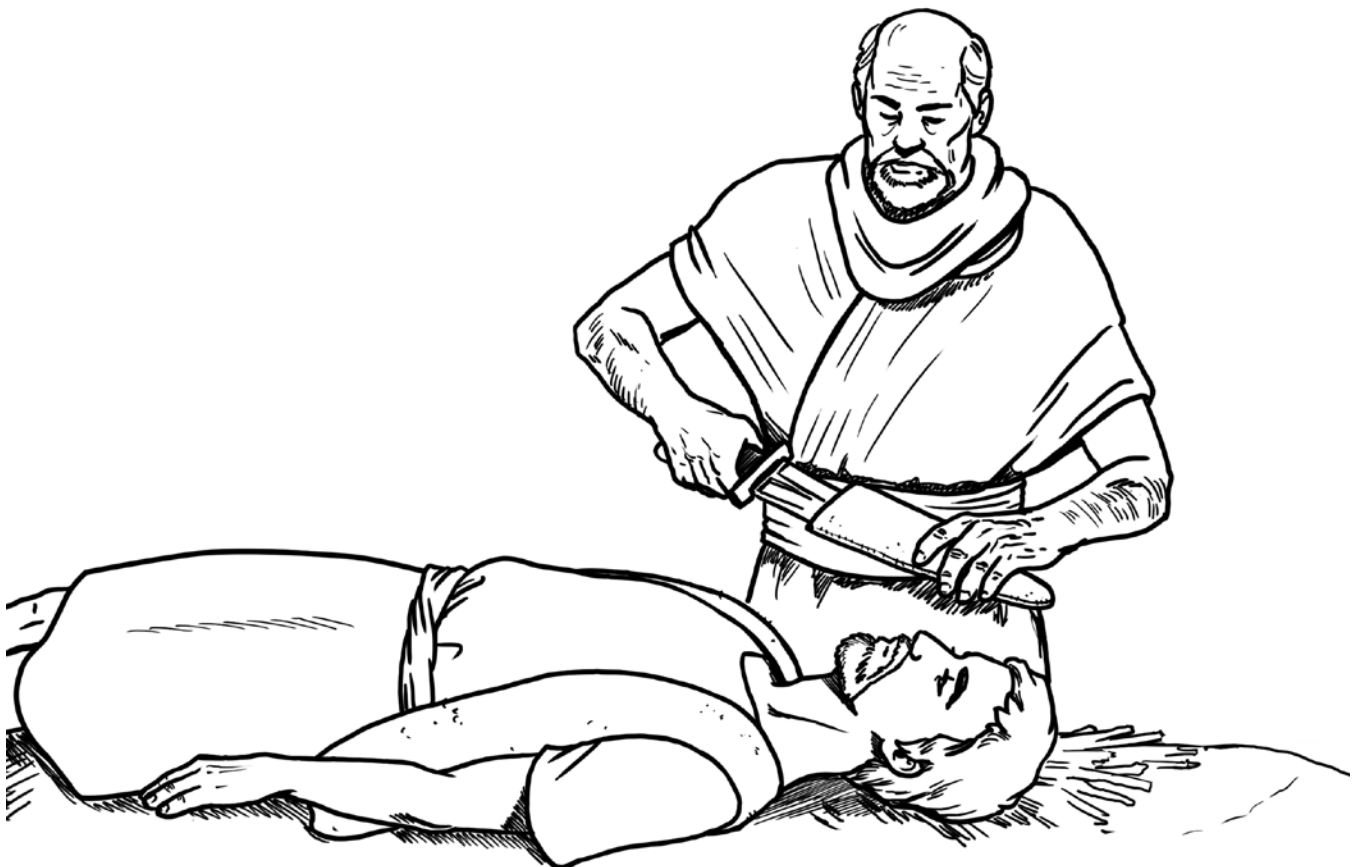
many nations and that this promise would come through Isaac. Abraham knew that even if he killed Isaac, God would keep His promise—so He would have to bring Isaac back to life somehow.

Even though this was the hardest decision Abraham ever made, he chose to obey God. Abraham and Isaac left for Mount Moriah. At Moriah, Abraham and Isaac built an altar out of stones. Abraham bound Isaac and laid him down on top of the altar. With tears in his eyes, Abraham drew back his knife to kill his son as quickly and as painlessly as possible. But before Abraham could plunge the knife into his son, a voice cried out, “STOP!”

The voice came from an angel who was delivering a message from God’s throne:

Stop Abraham. God experienced this ordeal with Abraham in a unique way. He knew that thousands of years later, He would sacrifice the Word, His own Son whom He loves. God saw Abraham’s heart, and He saw that even though it was an agonizing experience, he would sacrifice even his own child if God commanded him to. Years later, that is exactly what God the Father would do for all mankind.

When Abraham had picked up his knife, God knew this faithful man would never keep anything back from Him. He stopped Abraham so that he would not have to experience the anguish of watching his son die. When you realize the anguish Abraham willingly went through to obey God, you realize why Abraham is



Abraham was fully prepared to sacrifice Isaac, knowing God would still fulfill His promise.

called the *father of the faithful*. You also see a symbol of the agony God the Father went through for every human being—including you!

ISAAC AND REBEKAH

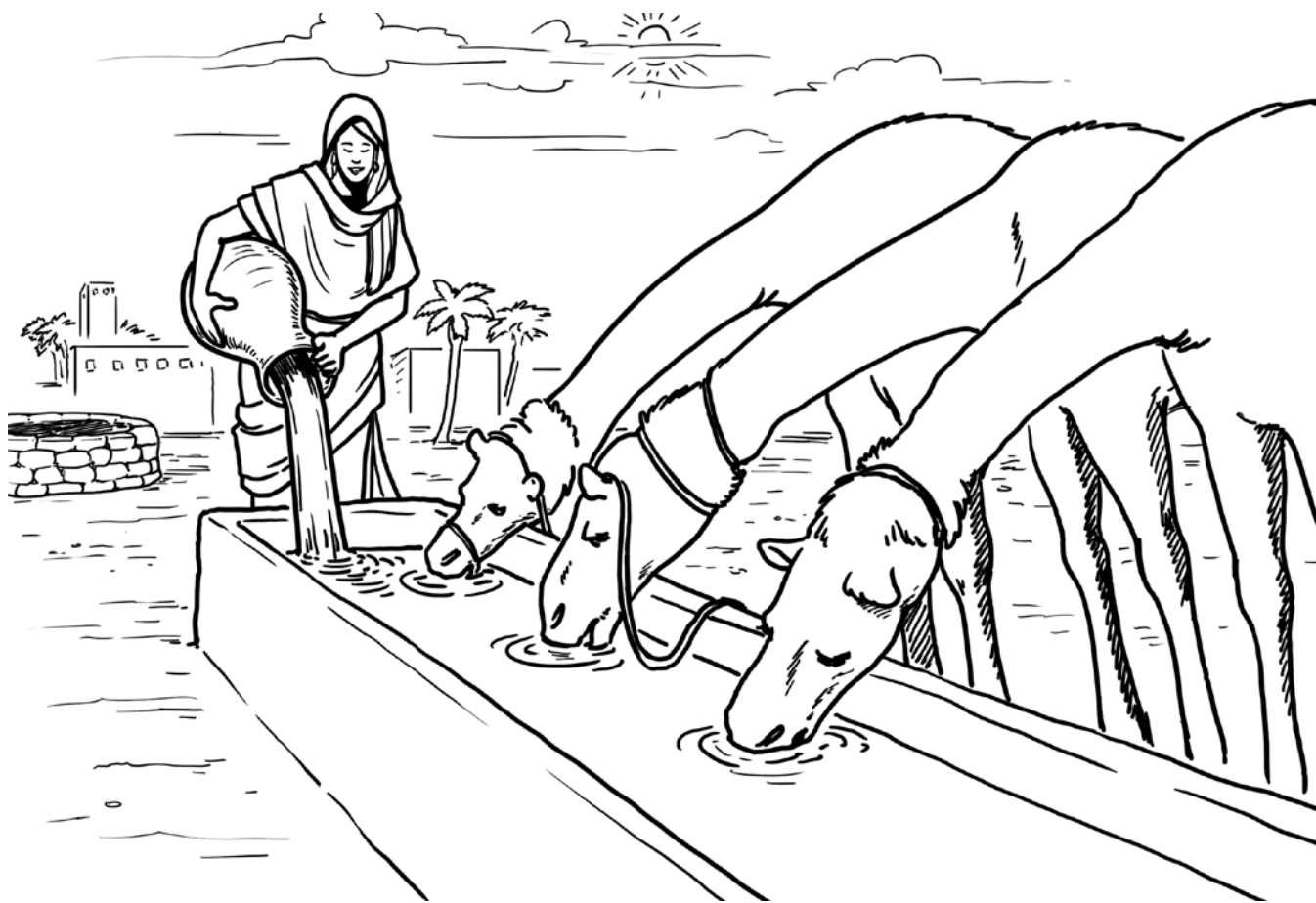
After this trial, Abraham and Isaac returned home. Later on, it was time to find Isaac a wife. In Abraham's time, it was a father's responsibility to find a spouse for his child. Abraham sent his chief servant back to Chaldea to find a wife for Isaac from among his relatives.

Outside the city of Nahor, Abraham's servant stopped his caravan near a well. The servant wanted God to pick Isaac's wife, so

he prayed that the right woman would offer to draw water for him and all his camels. Only a very kind and serving person would willingly offer to work so hard to hoist up such a large amount of water for a stranger's pack of thirsty camels.

Soon after the servant's prayer, a young woman arrived at the well and offered to draw water for all his camels. The servant knew that God had answered his prayer! He gave the young woman a gift of gold jewelry and told her about Abraham and Isaac. It turned out that the woman's name was Rebekah and that she was a second cousin to Isaac!

When Rebekah told her father what



Rebekah draws water for the camels of Abraham's servant.

had happened, he invited the servant to his home. Both Rebekah and her father believed that it was God's will that she marry Isaac. So the servant returned to Abraham's land with a God-fearing young woman who was eager to serve. Isaac loved Rebekah, and they were married soon after her arrival in Canaan.

JACOB AND ESAU

Many years passed, yet Rebekah was not able to have children. For two decades God tested Isaac and Rebekah's faith. But they continued to believe that God

would keep His promise to give Abraham grandchildren.

When God healed Rebekah, she became pregnant with twins. God told Rebekah in a dream that her twin sons would become two nations: One nation would be stronger than the other, and the firstborn would serve the younger.

The first son was Esau, and the second was Jacob. The twins grew up to be quite different. Esau loved hunting and exploring the woods. Jacob became a shepherd.

Isaac and Rebekah made a major mistake in raising Esau and Jacob: They



Esau sells his birthright for a bowl of soup.

had favorites. Isaac's favorite was Esau. Rebekah's favorite was Jacob. This would lead to huge problems during and after their lifetimes. God does not want parents to have a favorite but to love all of their children equally.

One day, Esau returned home from a hunting trip. He had been gone a long time and was very hungry. He saw Jacob making a pot of lentil soup and asked for a bowl. Jacob said he would only share the soup if Esau sold his birthright to him. The birthright was the promise God had given to Abraham, which had passed down to Isaac and would pass down to Esau and his descendants. It was an incredible blessing and honor to have the birthright that would affect the lives of millions of people—and ultimately the whole world!

But Esau didn't value it. He said, "Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" (Genesis 25:32).

Esau wasn't really about to die; he was just very hungry. Esau took that amazing birthright for granted and treated it casually. He gave up God's promise to Abraham for *a bowl of soup*.

In the same way, it is easy for a young person to give up God's blessings of happiness, health, safety, fun, family and a bright future in exchange for the attention of a girl he likes, or the chance to play a basketball game, or the approval of his friends. The girl, the game and the friends seem so *real*. God's blessings

seem so *far away*. But remember: *That is exactly how Esau thought*.

Jacob was not done with his scheming. He wanted something else from Esau: his blessing.

Many years later, Isaac was old and believed he would soon die. He asked Esau to go hunting and bring him back a last taste of venison; then he would give Esau a blessing. Rebekah overheard their conversation. She wanted Jacob to receive the blessing instead. Rebekah devised a plan for Jacob to disguise himself as Esau.

Rebekah cooked the meat of two goats to taste like venison, then covered Jacob's arms with the goatskins so he would feel hairy like Esau. Jacob then took the goat meat to Isaac, pretending he was Esau. Since Isaac was almost blind, he thought Jacob was Esau after he felt the goat hair on his arms. Isaac then bestowed the blessing on Jacob. This wasn't how God planned to give Jacob the birthright and the blessing. But He allowed this to happen to show that Jacob's deceitful attitude was wrong and to show that Esau's ungrateful attitude was even more wrong.

JACOB WORKS FOR LABAN

Isaac learned of Rebekah and Jacob's deceit, but he realized it was God's will for Jacob to receive the blessing. He probably knew that God would punish Jacob for his deceitfulness and help him overcome his sins so that he could receive this mighty blessing.

When Esau found out what Jacob had done, he threatened to kill Jacob, his own twin brother. To stay alive, Jacob had to leave his home and his parents. Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob to Chaldea to live with Rebekah's relatives.

Jacob was in such a hurry to escape Esau that he didn't bother to set up a tent at night. He piled some stones and laid something soft on them to use for a pillow as he slept in the open. When he fell asleep, he dreamed: He saw a long stairway leading up to the throne room of God. Angels traveled up and down it. Jacob heard God speaking to him, promising the same blessings He had promised to Abraham. God said, "I am with you, and will keep you in all the places where you go." When Jacob woke, the pile of stones he had slept upon had fused into a single stone. Jacob set this stone up as a pillar, poured oil upon it, and promised to obey God (Genesis 28:10-22).

When Jacob eventually arrived in Haran, he went to live with his uncle Laban (his mother's brother). He offered to work for Laban as a shepherd.

Jacob had been deceitful toward Esau and toward his father, but now he tried to work hard and live righteously. Laban asked if there was anything he could do to pay Jacob. Jacob loved Laban's daughter Rachel, so he asked to marry her. Laban saw a way to make Jacob work for him longer: He told Jacob he could marry Rachel if he worked for seven years. Jacob agreed. He worked

day after day for Laban, but the time seemed to pass quickly because he loved Rachel so much.

When the time came for the wedding, Laban deceitfully disguised his older daughter, Leah, with Rachel's wedding dress. After the wedding night, Jacob got the shock of his life when he realized he had married the wrong woman!

Laban had tricked Jacob with a disguise. This was similar to how Jacob had tricked his father with a disguise. Jacob was furious. Laban claimed that the older daughter should always get married first. Either way, Jacob now obviously had to provide for Leah. Laban told Jacob he could marry Rachel too, but only if he promised to work another seven years. It is wrong for a man to have two wives, but Jacob agreed to marry both sisters and to work the extra years.

JACOB WRESTLES WITH THE WORD

After working for Laban 20 years, Jacob acquired many cattle, sheep and goats. When he finally took his family and his herds back to Canaan, he was a very wealthy man.

As he came closer to Canaan, Jacob grew worried that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his blessing all those years ago. 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.

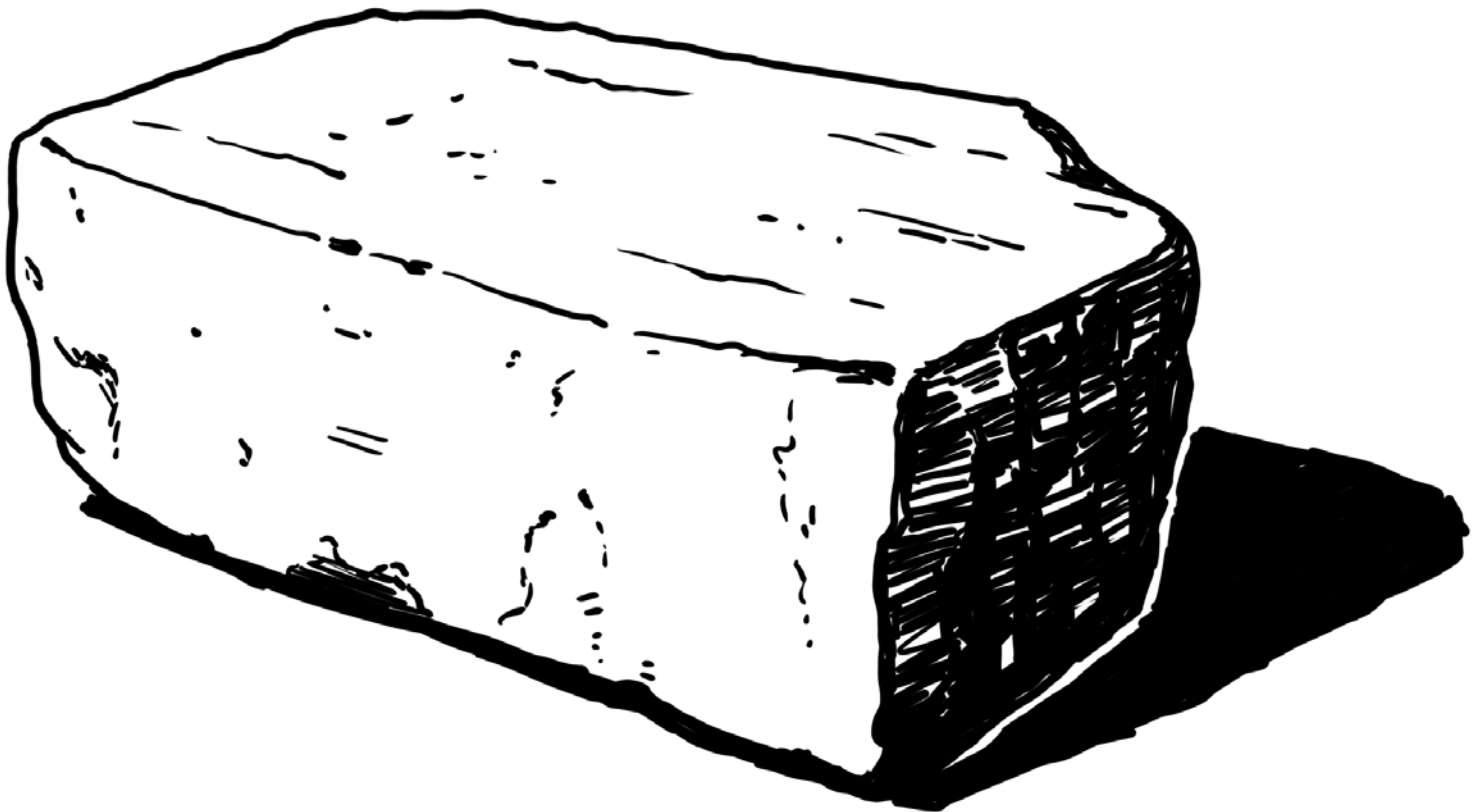
One night, while Jacob was walking alone, someone came out of nowhere and

began to wrestle with him. Jacob did not know it, but this was actually the Word. Jacob wrestled with the Word all night. Hour after hour, Jacob refused to give up! At one point, his hip was pulled out of joint. But Jacob still would not give up, even though he was experiencing excruciating pain as he tried to defeat someone who was extremely strong. Jacob had been taught never to quit. As morning approached, the Word told Jacob to let Him go, but Jacob refused to quit. By now he realized there was

something special about this Person 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. He changed Jacob's name to *Israel*, which means *prevailer*.

The next morning, Israel came face to face with Esau. He bowed in humility to Esau, but his brother rushed forward and hugged him. God had answered Israel's prayer, and Israel was peacefully reunited with his brother.



The stones Jacob had lain on became one stone; this stone became known as Jacob's pillar stone.

BIBLE MEMORY Books of the New Testament

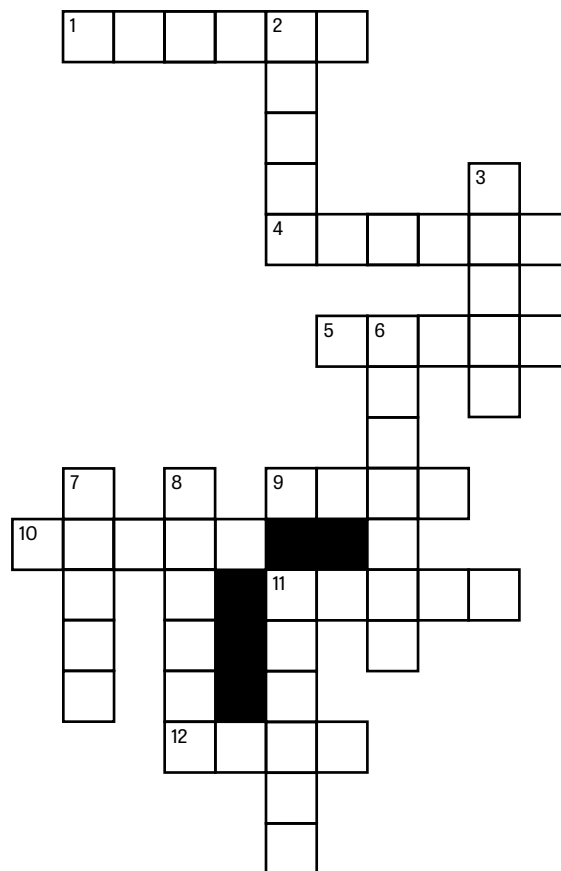
Matthew	2 Corinthians	1 Timothy	2 Peter
Mark	Galatians	2 Timothy	1 John
Luke	Ephesians	Titus	2 John
John	Philippians	Philemon	3 John
Acts	Colossians	Hebrews	Jude
Romans	1 Thessalonians	James	Revelation
1 Corinthians	2 Thessalonians	1 Peter	

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EDITOR IN CHIEF
Gerald Flurry

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Names and Places



ACROSS

1. Promised Land
4. Where Abraham was to sacrifice Isaac
5. Abram's wife
9. He sold his birthright
10. Father of Rachel and Leah
11. Son of Abraham
12. First wife of Jacob

DOWN

2. Abraham's name before God changed it
3. Princess
6. Father of a multitude
7. Where God first spoke to Abram
8. Second wife of Jacob
11. Nation descended from Abraham