

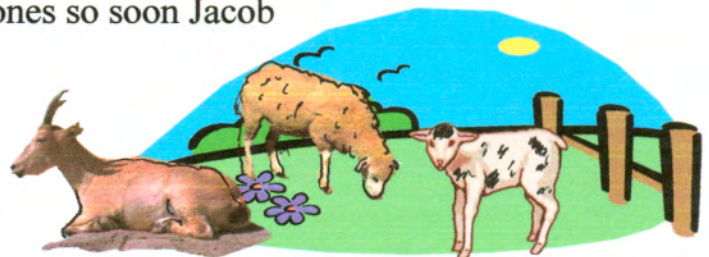
# BIBLE LESSON # 15

Genesis 30 - 31

When you think about a rich person do you think they have lots of gold and silver and money and jewelry? In Bible times there were rich people like this, but there were also rich people who had lots of sheep and cattle and goats and camels. Laban was a rich man with lots of flocks and herds and Jacob had worked hard taking care of the animals for Laban. Do you remember why Jacob worked for Laban? It was for a bride, wasn't it? Jacob wanted to marry Rachel but he also got her sister Leah for a bride. Jacob had ten sons and he had lived for a long time with Laban. Now Jacob wanted to go home to Canaan where his father and mother's lived. However, when Jacob told Laban he planned on leaving, Laban thought of another way to keep Jacob working for him, for since Jacob had worked for him God had blessed Jacob. The Bible tells us that everything Jacob did was blessed by God, for Jacob loved God and tried to follow God's ways. Laban begged Jacob to stay awhile longer and asked what kind of wages would Jacob want.

Jacob didn't want silver and gold or jewelry; however, Jacob did want some sheep and cattle. If he had some flocks and herds of his own then when he returned to his home in Canaan, he would be able to set up his own farm. So Jacob said, "I'll work for you if I can have some of your sheep and goats." This pleased Laban as he didn't really want to pay money to Jacob anyway. Laban had several different kinds of sheep, goats, and cattle; some were all white, some had spots and speckles and some were black and brown. Jacob said he would take the speckled and brown animals and Laban could keep all the others. Laban thought this was a good plan as he would have the most and best of the animals.

Jacob was very clever though, and when it was time for the animals to come to the watering troughs Jacob made some poles to put up for fences. If it was time for the animals to mate he would put the poles up so the speckled ones would be all together in one corral and the brown ones would be together in another corral and Laban's sheep and cattle would be by themselves. When the sheep had little baby lambs, Jacob would keep the strongest ones separate to put with other strong ones so soon Jacob had a large group of healthy sheep and cattle.



Jacob did something funny with the poles he cut for the fences. He would cut spots or stripes in the fence poles. Why do you think he did that? We don't know for sure, but probably he did that so his sons, who helped him herd the sheep and goats, would know in which fences to put the different colored animals. If spotted goats were ready to mate, they would be put inside the fence with spots carved on it. Laban couldn't figure out why Jacob was doing so good, so Laban would change the rules and would tell Jacob he wanted the spotted goats now and Jacob could have the black ones instead. Then the black ones would increase and Laban would tell Jacob that he could have the white ones while Laban would take the black. Ten times Laban changed Jacob's wages; Laban was greedy and wanted the best of the flocks and herds, but God was with Jacob and Jacob was the one that got the best.

Being a herdsman was not an easy job. Jacob would be away from his family much of the time, the nights could be bitterly cold and the days were long and hot. Jacob had to keep wild animals from attacking the flocks and he had to take care of Laban's animals as well as his own. One day when Jacob returned from the field Rachel ran out to meet him. Leah and the maids all had children and by now Jacob had ten sons and one daughter, but poor Rachel didn't have any children. However, that day Rachel was bouncing with delight, "Guess what, Jacob, I've got WONDERFUL news! We are to have a baby! God has heard my prayers and now I'll have a son too! Jacob was delighted for he loved Rachel very much. When their baby boy was born Jacob named him "Joseph" and Joseph was a very special son for Jacob and Rachel.

When springtime came Jacob needed to move his flocks and herds because it was time to shear the sheep. Jacob brought his sheep to the long shearing sheds where Laban and his sons were directing the sheep shearing (this means cutting the wool off the sheep).

When Laban's sons saw how much fatter and stronger Jacob's sheep were and how many sheep Jacob had, they became angry. They muttered between themselves, "Jacob has made himself rich off our father, he has taken all the best herds and flocks of our father!"

Laban used to be happy with Jacob's work but now he was also frowning at Jacob and seemed to be agreeing with his sons.



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When Jacob saw how Laban and his sons were turning against him, he knew it was time to leave. That night God spoke to Jacob in a dream and told Jacob he must return to his own land. Jacob had come from the land of Canaan (this land is called Israel today) and he had been away, living with Laban for 20 years now. The next morning Jacob told Rachel and Leah what God had said to him in the dream. He was afraid they might want to stay with their father but both Rachel and Leah knew how greedy and unfair Laban had been. Rachel and Leah told Jacob how Laban had treated them more like servants than daughters. He had spent all the money that should have been theirs and had tricked them at their weddings without even considering their feelings. They told Jacob they were ready to leave right away, so Jacob had them pack up their belongings while he got the flocks and herds rounded up and loaded up some camels for them to ride on.

As Rachel and Leah and their maids were packing, Rachel thought of something. Laban had a small statue called a "Teraphim" hidden in his room. Rachel knew where this little idol was and she wanted to take it with them. Why do you think she wanted the Teraphim idol? In those days the owner of lands and properties used these Teraphim's to show they owned the lands. Today owners of property have a written piece of paper with important signatures on them to show they own the land...but in the laws of Laban's time, the little idol proved that the land belonged to Laban. Now Rachel did a bad thing but she thought it was for a good reason. Rachel stole the Teraphim from her father's room and hid it in the camel's saddle. Rachel thought how unfair Laban had been to Jacob and how unfair to her and Leah. She thought some of Laban's land really should go to them and if she had the Teraphim she could claim Laban's land and give it to Jacob. Sometimes we might do something wrong, thinking it's okay because we have a good reason to do it. This is what Rachel did, but is this okay with God? No, even though we might deserve an allowance for doing a hard job, it wouldn't be right for us to steal the money from our mom's purse would it? Even though dad punished us unfairly, does that give us a right to take something that belongs to him and sell it to a neighbor? No way!



Your memory verse for this lesson is:

**"A MAN'S WAYS SEEM INNOCENT TO HIM, BUT MOTIVES ARE WEIGHED BY THE LORD" Prov.16:2** - God sees what our reasons are and knows if we've done wrong.

When you have learned this verse, have mom or dad put check mark here \_\_\_\_\_

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All of Jacob's children were quickly gathered to help the family. Reuben, Simeon and Levi, Jacob's three oldest boys were out helping their father with the sheep and cattle, while Judah, Dan, Naphtali and Gad were old enough to help the servants fold the tents and gather up cooking pots and tools. Asher was complaining for he had to stay and keep a watchful eye on the younger children while little Isaachar and Zebulun put leashes on the dogs and put the kitten in a basket for safe traveling. Dinah was helping fold clothes for her mother's to pack. Baby Joseph was letting everyone know he thought very little of all the hustle and bustle. He sat on the ground holding his favorite toy and crying at the top of his lungs.

It didn't take long to get it all together and by late afternoon the group set out for Jacob's home. It would be a long, slow journey with all the animals and the children to care for.

Meanwhile Laban was in the middle of the sheep shearing when a servant came rushing up. "Jacob and your daughters have left, they gathered up all their possessions and took off," the servant announced. Laban could hardly believe it, he hurriedly got on his donkey and rode to his home. When Laban got home he looked around to see what Jacob and his daughters had taken, all Laban's possessions seemed to be there until Laban looked in his room, then he saw that the Teraphim were gone! Laban was very angry, and he rode back to the sheep shearing sheds to gather his sons and servants. They loaded up the donkeys and camels and set out to capture Jacob and his family. Laban should have known Jacob wouldn't steal his Teraphim idol. Jacob had always treated Laban fairly and honestly, but Laban had a greedy, suspicious mind and he was very angry! Laban and his men swiftly rode after Jacob's family and after seven days they saw the smoke of Jacob's campfires in the distance. Their camels and donkeys were tired, so Laban's group stopped for the night, determined to catch up with Jacob in the morning.

However, that night Laban had a frightening dream. God appeared in the dream and told Laban he must be very careful to treat Jacob well. Laban was not to attack Jacob or stop him from going to his own land. When Laban woke in the morning, he knew that God was watching over Jacob, so he and his group of men slowly approached Jacob's camp showing friendship instead of attacking them.

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Laban walked up to Jacob and said, "Why did you sneak away? Why didn't you tell me you were leaving so I could have sent you away with music and songs. Why didn't you let me kiss my daughters goodbye? It was in my power to hurt you, but God warned me against it." Then Laban asked the question most important to him..."Why have you stolen my household idols?" Jacob had no idea that Rachel had stolen the Teraphim, so he told Laban, "I haven't stolen anything, search my tents, if any one of my family has stolen your idols, they shall die."

That must have really frightened Rachel, what should she do, she wondered. She quickly acted like she wasn't feeling good and she sat down on the camel's saddle inside her tent. Laban and his men went through all the different tents and when they came to Rachel's tent, she told her father, "please excuse me for not getting up, but I'm not feeling well, father." Laban didn't realize Rachel was sitting on the saddle that had the idol in it. He searched all the rest of the tents but found nothing.

Now Jacob was the one to be angry, "What have you found that belonged to you?" he demanded. "These twenty years I've been with you, taking care of your sheep and cattle. I've never eaten any of your animals for my food and the ones that were killed by wild beasts I took the loss. I've labored in heat and cold, and you've changed my wages ten times. If God hadn't been with me you would have sent me away empty handed."

Laban didn't know what to answer, so he asked Jacob to make an agreement with him. "Let's set up a pillar of stones here," Laban suggested. "I'll promise I won't go past this pillar to harm you and you promise you won't come past the pillar to harm me." This seemed good to Jacob and they made a covenant there. A covenant is an agreement between two people.

The next morning Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren goodbye and he went back to his home. Rachel thought she had gotten away with her trickery, but unfortunately when we do wrong, sooner or later we find out that God has seen the wrong and the one who did wrong will be punished.



We'll learn more about this in our next lesson.

## Question Page

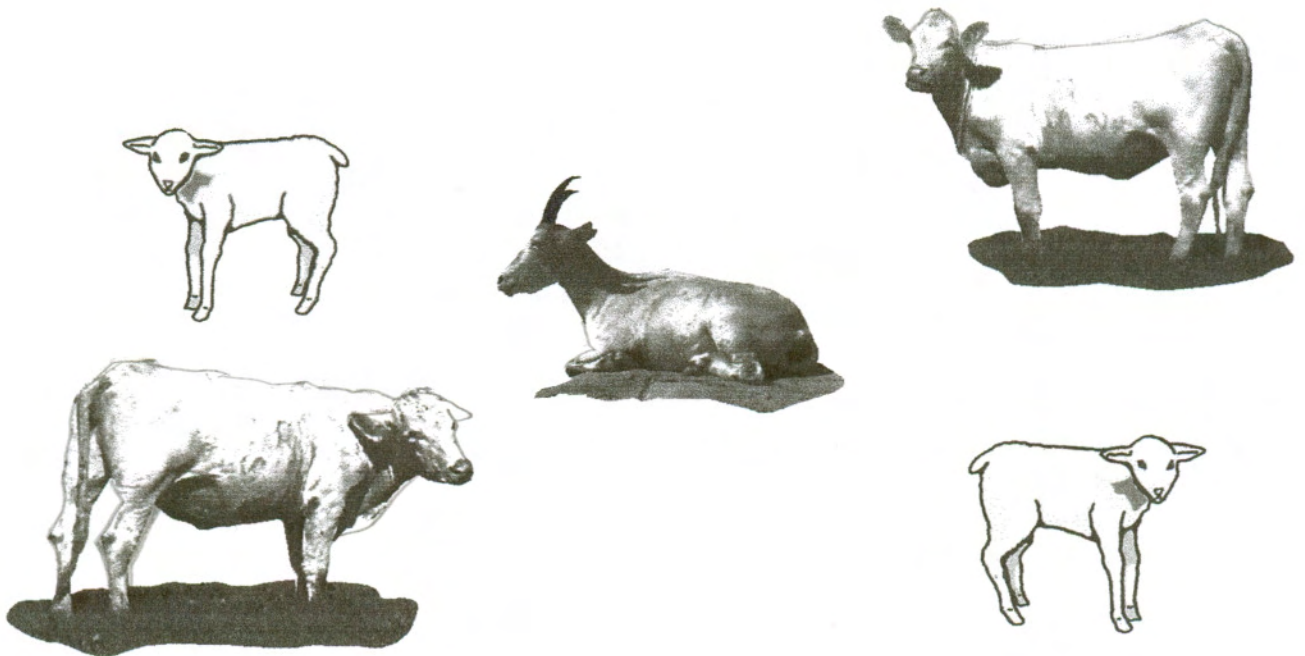
Answer the following by putting T or F in the blanks to show if the statement is True or False

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob wanted Laban to give him silver and gold for his wages.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Laban wanted Jacob to leave for Canaan, but Jacob wouldn't go.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Laban changed Jacob's wages ten times.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Even though Jacob was skillful in raising cattle and sheep, he prospered because God was with him and cared for him.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ If we have a very good reason to disobey a command, it will be okay with God.

Answer the questions below:

1. How many years did Jacob work for Laban? (a) 7 years (b) 10 years (c) 20 years
2. Why did Jacob suddenly decide to leave Laban's country and travel to Canaan?
3. What did Rachel and Leah want to do when Jacob told them what God said in his dream?  
Did they want to stay with their father or leave with Jacob?
4. What is a Teraphim?
5. Why did Rachel steal her father's Teraphim?
6. Can we disobey God's commandments if we feel it's the right thing to do?
7. What did Jacob say would happen to the one who stole the Teraphim?
8. How did Rachel hide the idol from her father?
9. What is a covenant?                      What was the covenant Jacob and Laban made?

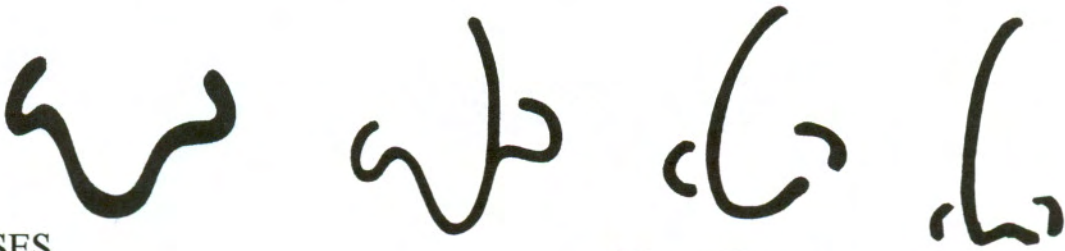
Draw draw spots or speckles on one of the animals, color one of them black and one brown. Then give them some grass and a tree in their pasture, draw Jacob watching over them and draw a lion hiding behind the tree, (let's hope he doesn't get a lamb)!



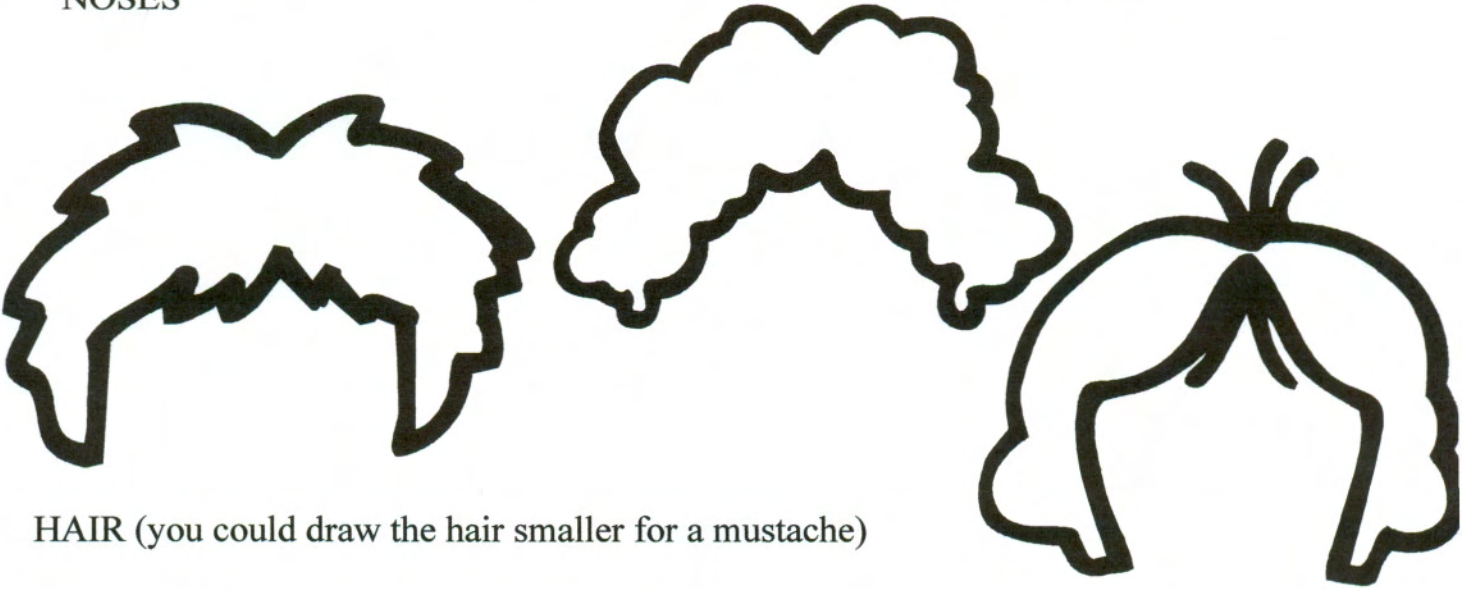




Use the features below to make a funny face for Laban. Either copy the lines onto the face on the other page, or cut these out and paste them onto the face.



NOSES



HAIR (you could draw the hair smaller for a mustache)



EYES



MOUTHS



## INSECTS and REPTILES

There are many insects and reptiles mentioned in the Bible. Some of their scrambled names are found below. See how many names can you unscramble before looking up the Bible references.

1. S N T A  
Prov.6:6-8

6. T A N S E R P  
Numb.21:6

2. E B S E  
Judg.14:5-9

7. Z A R D I L  
Lev.11:30

3. S C U L T O  
Exod.10:4

8. R E V I P  
Acts 28:3

4. E C K R I C T  
Lev.11:22

9. S O R T I O E T  
Lev.11: 29

5. E L E P R I L T R C A  
Joel 1:4

10. P O I S O N R C  
Deut.8:15

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## FOODS in the BIBLE

Can you unscramble the letters to discover some Bible foods?

1. N S I S A I R  
2 Sam.16:1

6. R E S U M B C U C  
Num.11:5

2. L A E V  
Gen.18:7-8

7. G S E G  
Luke 11:12

3. N S O N I O  
Numb.11:5

8. T E R U T B  
2 Sam.17:29

4. S E K E L  
Num.11:5

9. E S P A G R  
Deut.23:24

5. H E C E S E  
2 Sam.17:19

10. N S O L E M  
Num.11:5