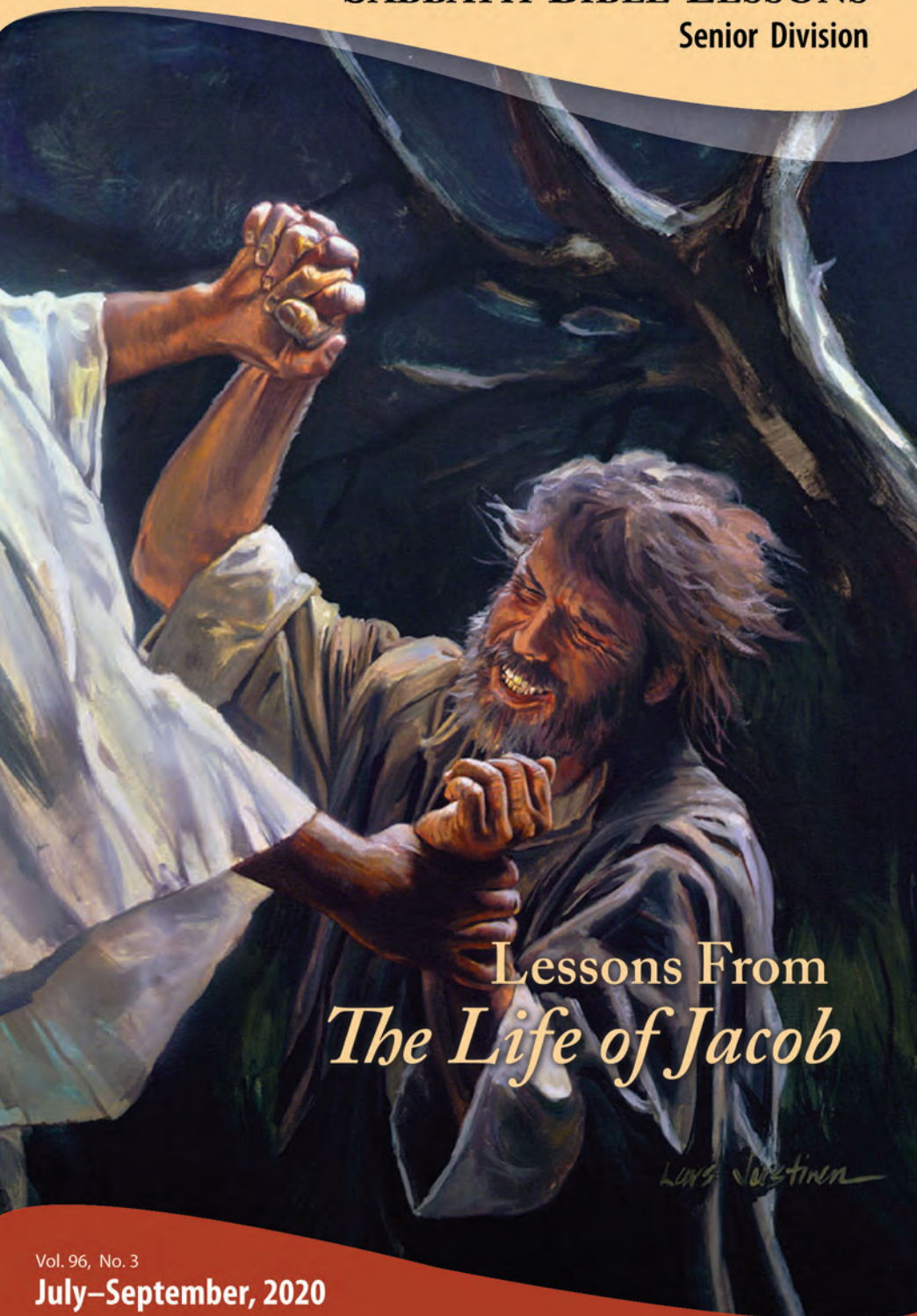


SABBATH BIBLE LESSONS
Senior Division



Lessons From
The Life of Jacob

Lars Jørgensen

Vol. 96, No. 3

July–September, 2020

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Sabbath Bible Lessons, a daily study program, is based solely on the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy without additional comments. The quotations are as brief as possible to provide concise, direct thoughts. Brackets [] are supplied in some cases to ensure clarity, proper context, and smooth readability. Further study in the source materials is strongly recommended.

Illustrations: Good Salt on the front cover; Map Resources on pp. 4, 25, 72.

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Foreword

Perhaps the greatest lesson we can learn from the life of Jacob is the tremendous power of prayer. The experiences of this patriarch reveal the frailty of humanity—and the measureless compassion of the crucified and risen Saviour. Jacob's history is highly relevant today.

“When tribulation comes upon us, how many of us are like Jacob! We think it the hand of an enemy; and in the darkness we wrestle blindly until our strength is spent, and we find no comfort or deliverance. To Jacob the divine touch at break of day revealed the One with whom he had been contending—the Angel of the covenant; and weeping and helpless, he fell upon the breast of Infinite Love, to receive the blessing for which his soul longed. We also need to learn that trials mean benefit, and not to despise the chastening of the Lord nor faint when we are rebuked of Him.”—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 11.

“Satan leads many to believe that God will overlook their unfaithfulness in the minor affairs of life; but the Lord shows in His dealing with Jacob that He can in no wise sanction or tolerate evil. All who endeavor to excuse or conceal their sins, and permit them to remain upon the books of heaven, unconfessed and unforgiven, will be overcome by Satan. The more exalted their profession, and the more honorable the position which they hold, the more grievous is their course in the sight of God, and the more certain the triumph of the great adversary.

“Yet Jacob's history is an assurance that God will not cast off those who have been betrayed into sin, but who have returned unto Him with true repentance. It was by self-surrender and confiding faith that Jacob gained what he had failed to gain by conflict in his own strength. God thus taught His servant that divine power and grace alone could give him the blessing he craved. Thus it will be with those who live in the last days. As dangers surround them, and despair seizes upon the soul, they must depend solely upon the merits of the atonement. We can do nothing of ourselves. In all our helpless unworthiness we must trust in the merits of the crucified and risen Saviour. None will ever perish while they do this. The long, black catalogue of our delinquencies is before the eye of the Infinite. The register is complete; none of our offenses are forgotten. But He who listened to the cries of His servants of old, will hear the prayer of faith and pardon our transgressions. He has promised, and He will fulfill His word.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 202, 203.

“When we have offered our petition once, we must not then abandon it, but say, as did Jacob when he wrestled all night with the angel, ‘I will not let thee go, except thou bless me,’ and like him we shall prevail.”—*The Signs of the Times*, May 15, 1884.

The General Conference Sabbath School Department

First Sabbath Offering for the Central American Northern Mission project

Central America is a mountainous region with humid coastal lowlands and is home to 7% of the earth's biodiversity. The area is known for tropical rainforests and commercial plantations that export products such as bananas, melons, sugarcane, rice, coffee, and vegetables.

It was by God's grace that the work of the SDA Reform Movement entered the northern part of Central America—reaching Guatemala (currently with a population of nearly 17 million) in the 1960s and El Salvador (now with over 6.3 million) in 1970. Both of these countries have Spanish as their main language and the official religion is Roman Catholicism. Belize, with a population of nearly 375,000 (where the main religion is also Catholicism, and most of the people speak English) was reached in 1992.

These three countries were held as General Conference Mission Fields until 1997, when the Central American Union was formed—integrating also Panamá, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Honduras. During the Central American Delegation session in October 2015, the decision followed to decentralize the work in the area, giving way to the organization of the Honduran Union and two Mission Fields: The Central American Northern Mission including Guatemala, El Salvador and Belize; and the Central American Southern Mission, including Costa Rica, Panamá and Nicaragua.

In the Central American Northern Mission, we have been very blessed with the donation of a piece of land of 1,016.98 square meters, in which we wish to develop quite an ambitious project—the building of our headquarters and administrative facilities, a missionary school and an assembly hall with the help of our heavenly Father and to His glory.

Therefore, we are appealing to all our dear brethren around the world to support us generously when the First Sabbath Offering is gathered for the Central American Northern Mission, that this building project can come to fruition. We thank all of you for your valuable support, praying that God may bestow His wonderful blessings upon every giver.

Your brethren of the Central American Northern Mission



Early Life

“With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments” (Psalm 119:10).

“[God] will reveal Himself to every soul who will come to Him in all humility and seek Him with the whole heart.”—*Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 531.

Suggested Reading: *Education*, pp. 253–261.

Sunday

June 28

1. ISAAC AND REBEKAH

a. What reveals the earnest faith of the aging patriarch Abraham for his posterity after his wife’s death? Genesis 24:1–4, 7.

b. How did Abraham’s servant explain God’s leading in the choice of Rebekah to become the wife of Isaac? Genesis 24:42–51, 58.

c. What can we learn from the happiness of this union? Genesis 24:63–67.

“Isaac had been trained in the fear of God to a life of obedience. And when he was forty years old, he submitted to have his God-fearing, experienced father’s servant choose for him. He believed that God would direct in regard to his obtaining a wife.

“Children now from fifteen to twenty, generally consider themselves competent to make their own choice, without the consent of their parents. And they would look with astonishment, if it should be proposed to them to move in the fear of God and make the matter a subject of prayer! Isaac’s case is left on record, as an example for children to imitate in after generations, especially those who profess to fear God.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 112.

2. STRUGGLES

- a. What trial did the new couple face—and, based on the record of Isaac's age, for how long? Genesis 25:20, 21 (first part), 26 (last part).
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- b. How was Isaac's faith rewarded? Genesis 25:21.
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- c. What tumultuous experience did Rebekah undergo after she conceived—and what did she do about it? Genesis 25:22.
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- d. Why was Rebekah having such an experience—and what was she made to understand? Genesis 25:23, 24.
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“God knows the end from the beginning. He knew, before the birth of Jacob and Esau, just what characters they would both develop. He knew that Esau would not have a heart to obey Him. He answered the troubled prayer of Rebekah, and informed her that she would have two children, and the elder should serve the younger. He presented the future history of her two sons before her, that they would be two nations, the one greater than the other, and the elder should serve the younger.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 105, 106.

- e. Describe the first of the twins. Genesis 25:25, 27 (first half). How does a restless spirit such as his tend toward discontentment? Proverbs 27:20.
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“Esau grew up loving self-gratification and centering all his interest in the present.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 177.

“Happiness is not found in selfish gratification; it follows only in the wake of duty.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 206.

3. CONTRASTING PERSONALITIES

a. What did the younger twin do at birth? Genesis 25:26 (first half).

b. Describe the character of the younger twin. Genesis 25:27 (last part).

“Jacob, thoughtful, diligent, and care-taking, ever thinking more of the future than the present, was content to dwell at home, occupied in the care of the flocks and the tillage of the soil.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 177.

c. How did the parents relate to their two sons? Genesis 25:28.

“Impatient of restraint, [Esau] delighted in the wild freedom of the chase, and early chose the life of a hunter. Yet he was the father’s favorite. The quiet, peace-loving shepherd was attracted by the daring and vigor of this elder son, who fearlessly ranged over mountain and desert, returning home with game for his father and with exciting accounts of his adventurous life. . . . [Jacob’s] patient perseverance, thrift, and foresight were valued by the mother. His affections were deep and strong, and his gentle, unremitting attentions added far more to her happiness than did the boisterous and occasional kindnesses of Esau. To Rebekah, Jacob was the dearer son.

“The promises made to Abraham and confirmed to his son were held by Isaac and Rebekah as the great object of their desires and hopes. With these promises Esau and Jacob were familiar.”—*Ibid.*

d. Why was the order of birth so important in ancient times? Exodus 13:12.

“With the spiritual was connected the temporal birthright, which would give . . . the headship of the family and possession of a double portion of his father’s wealth.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 180, 181.

4. A QUESTION OF ATTITUDE

- a. **Aside from the parents' view of Jacob, how did God regard him—and why? Psalm 47:4; Matthew 5:6.**
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- b. **Describe the depth of experience revealed in a true longing for God. Job 23:11, 12; Psalm 119:10.**
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“Let your heart break for the longing it has for God, for the living God. . . . With the persevering faith of Jacob, with the unyielding persistence of Elijah, claim for yourself all that God has promised.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 149.

- c. **What timeless principle in Jacob's attitude reveals why, in terms of spirituality and character, he was more suited to the birthright than was his irreligious brother? Romans 13:14.**
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“[Esau and Jacob] were taught to regard the birthright as a matter of great importance, for it included not only an inheritance of worldly wealth but spiritual pre-eminence. He who received it was to be the priest of his family, and in the line of his posterity the Redeemer of the world would come. On the other hand, there were obligations resting upon the possessor of the birthright. He who should inherit its blessings must devote his life to the service of God. Like Abraham, he must be obedient to the divine requirements. In marriage, in his family relations, in public life, he must consult the will of God. . . .

“Esau, as the eldest, was the one entitled to the birthright. But Esau had no love for devotion, no inclination to a religious life. The requirements that accompanied the spiritual birthright were an unwelcome and even hateful restraint to him. The law of God, which was the condition of the divine covenant with Abraham, was regarded by Esau as a yoke of bondage. Bent on self-indulgence, he desired nothing so much as liberty to do as he pleased. To him power and riches, feasting and reveling, were happiness. He gloried in the unrestrained freedom of his wild, roving life.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 177, 178.

5. LONGING FOR THE INFINITE ONE

- a. Where was the focus of Jacob's thoughts? 2 Corinthians 4:18.
-

"Jacob had learned from his mother of the divine intimation that the birthright should fall to him, and he was filled with an unspeakable desire for the privileges which it would confer. It was not the possession of his father's wealth that he craved; the spiritual birthright was the object of his longing. To commune with God as did righteous Abraham, to offer the sacrifice of atonement for his family, to be the progenitor of the chosen people and of the promised Messiah, and to inherit the immortal possessions embraced in the blessings of the covenant—here were the privileges and honors that kindled his most ardent desires. His mind was ever reaching forward to the future, and seeking to grasp its unseen blessings.

"With secret longing he listened to all that his father told concerning the spiritual birthright; he carefully treasured what he had learned from his mother. Day and night the subject occupied his thoughts, until it became the absorbing interest of his life."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 178.

- b. Why should Jacob's priority in life inspire us today? Psalms 42:1; 119:11.
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"An intensity such as never before was seen is taking possession of the world. In amusement, in moneymaking, in the contest for power, in the very struggle for existence, there is a terrible force that engrosses body and mind and soul. In the midst of this maddening rush, God is speaking. He bids us come apart and commune with Him."—*Education*, p. 260.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What can we learn from the patriarchs with regard to choosing a spouse?
2. Explain the spiritual insight given to Rebekah concerning her two sons.
3. What contrast existed between the personality of Jacob and of Esau?
4. Of which aspect of the birthright was Jacob deeply desirous?
5. Amid the intense level of distraction today, what must we consider?

Buying the Birthright

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

“It is our duty to bring our appetites and our habits of life into conformity to natural law.”—*The Sanctified Life*, p. 29.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 37–50.

Sunday

July 5

1. CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT NEEDED

- a. What do we need to realize when we have a strong desire for something—even if it’s not something we might think of as wrong? Proverbs 19:21.

“Day and night the subject [of the birthright] occupied [Jacob’s] thoughts, until it became the absorbing interest of his life. But while he thus esteemed eternal above temporal blessings, Jacob had not an experimental knowledge of the God whom he revered. His heart had not been renewed by divine grace. He believed that the promise concerning himself could not be fulfilled so long as Esau retained the rights of the firstborn, and he constantly studied to devise some way whereby he might secure the blessing which his brother held so lightly, but which was so precious to himself.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 178, 179.

- b. What should Jacob have done at this stage of his life—and what should we always remember as well? Psalm 37:5–7.

“It sometimes seems hard to wait patiently till God’s time comes to vindicate the right. But I have been shown that if we become impatient we lose a rich reward.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 327.

2. TOTALLY ENTICED

- a. How did Jacob take advantage of Esau's weakness? Genesis 25:29–31.
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“When Esau, coming home one day faint and weary from the chase, asked for the food that Jacob was preparing, the latter, with whom one thought was ever uppermost, seized upon his advantage.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 179.

“Jacob improved the opportunity to turn Esau's necessity to his own advantage, and proposed to feed him with pottage, if he would renounce all claim to his birthright.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 114.

- b. Although Jacob's idea was clever, why was his sly plot against his tempted brother not an ideal plan in the sight of God? Proverbs 3:29.
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“[God's word] teaches us to put ourselves in the place of those with whom we are dealing, to look not only on our own things, but also on the things of others. He who would take advantage of another's misfortunes in order to benefit himself, or who seeks to profit himself through another's weakness or incompetence, is a transgressor both of the principles and of the precepts of the word of God.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 187.

- c. What did Esau decide to do—and why? Genesis 25:32, 33.
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“[Esau] had so long gratified self that he did not feel the necessity of turning from the tempting, coveted dish.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 38.

“He thought upon it, making no special effort to restrain his appetite, until the power of appetite bore down every other consideration and controlled him, and he imagined that he would suffer great inconvenience, and even death, if he could not have that particular dish. The more he thought upon it, the more his desire strengthened, until his birthright, which was sacred, lost its value and its sacredness. He thought, if I now sell it, I can easily buy it back. He bartered it away for a favorite dish, flattering himself that he could dispose of it at will and buy it back at pleasure.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39.

3. A VERY COSTLY MORSEL

- a. What warning should we heed from Esau's hasty decision when Jacob offered him food in exchange for his birthright? Genesis 25:34.
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“For a dish of red pottage [Esau] parted with his birthright, and confirmed the transaction by an oath. A short time at most would have secured him food in his father's tents, but to satisfy the desire of the moment he carelessly bartered the glorious heritage that God Himself had promised to his fathers. His whole interest was in the present. He was ready to sacrifice the heavenly to the earthly, to exchange a future good for a momentary indulgence.

“ ‘Thus Esau despised his birthright’ [Genesis 25:34]. In disposing of it he felt a sense of relief. Now his way was unobstructed; he could do as he liked. For this wild pleasure, miscalled freedom, how many are still selling their birthright to an inheritance pure and undefiled, eternal in the heavens!”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 179.

- b. What must we understand about God's warning regarding the legacy of Esau? Malachi 1:2, 3; Romans 9:13, 14.
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“There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. God has set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. . . .

“Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The *provisions* of redemption are free to all; the *results* of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 207, 208.

4. GOVERNING OUR APPETITE

- a. **God has given us an appetite in order to appreciate nourishment, yet what else do we need to realize about it? 1 Corinthians 6:19.**
-

“Every part of the man is to be guarded; we are to beware lest that which is taken into the stomach shall banish from the mind high and holy thoughts.

“May I not do as I please with myself? ask some, as if we were seeking to deprive them of a great good, when we present before them the necessity of eating intelligently, and conforming all their habits to the laws God has established.

“Our very bodies are not our own, to treat as we please, to cripple by habits that lead to decay, making it impossible to render to God perfect service. Our lives and all our faculties belong to Him.”—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 138.

- b. **Explain how the mind of the Christian stays healthy. Romans 8:1–6.**
-

“Anything that lessens physical strength enfeebles the mind and makes it less capable of discriminating between right and wrong. We become less capable of choosing the good and have less strength of will to do that which we know to be right.

“The misuse of our physical powers shortens the period of time in which our lives can be used for the glory of God. And it unfits us to accomplish the work God has given us to do. By allowing ourselves to form wrong habits, by keeping late hours, by gratifying appetite at the expense of health, we lay the foundation for feebleness. By neglecting physical exercise, by overworking mind or body, we unbalance the nervous system. Those who thus shorten their lives and unfit themselves for service by disregarding nature’s laws are guilty of robbery toward God. And they are robbing their fellow men also. The opportunity of blessing others, the very work for which God sent them into the world, has by their own course of action been cut short. . . . The Lord holds us guilty when by our injurious habits we thus deprive the world of good.

“Transgression of physical law is transgression of the moral law; for God is as truly the author of physical laws as He is the author of the moral law.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 346, 347.

5. VICTORY THROUGH CHRIST

- a. Although Jacob had presented to Esau a tempting dish, why was Esau nonetheless responsible for his own choice? James 1:14, 15.
-
- b. What are the keys to victory over the clamors of untamed appetite? Galatians 2:20; 5:16, 24, 25; 1 Corinthians 15:57.
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“Feeling the terrible power of temptation, the drawing of desire that leads to indulgence, many a man cries in despair, ‘I cannot resist evil.’ Tell him that he can, that he must resist. He may have been overcome again and again, but it need not be always thus. He is weak in moral power, controlled by the habits of a life of sin. His promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. The knowledge of his broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens his confidence in his own sincerity and causes him to feel that God cannot accept him or work with his efforts. But he need not despair.

“Those who put their trust in Christ are not to be enslaved by any hereditary or cultivated habit or tendency. Instead of being held in bondage to the lower nature, they are to rule every appetite and passion. God has not left us to battle with evil in our own finite strength. Whatever may be our inherited or cultivated tendencies to wrong, we can overcome through the power that He is ready to impart.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 174–176.

“For every soul struggling to rise from a life of sin to a life of purity, the great element of power abides in the only ‘name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.’ Acts 4:12.”—*Ibid.*, p. 179.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In what sense did Jacob’s plot to ensnare Esau reveal a lack of faith?
2. Name some ways by which the enemy tempts us the way he did to Esau.
3. How are many today essentially making the same mistake as Esau did?
4. Why must we who are preparing for eternity seriously control our appetite?
5. How can all who struggle over appetite realize there is hope?

Seizing the Birthright

“In your patience possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19).

“Patience, faith, and love for duty are the lessons we must learn.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 70.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 179–182, 208.

Sunday

July 12

1. A STEP THAT REVEALS THE HEART

- a. Much to his parents' sorrow, what action of Esau further revealed his continued lack of interest in the things of God? Genesis 26:34, 35.

“Ever subject to mere outward and earthly attractions, Esau took two wives of the daughters of Heth. They were worshipers of false gods, and their idolatry was a bitter grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Esau had violated one of the conditions of the covenant, which forbade intermarriage between the chosen people and the heathen.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 179.

- b. How are God's people today likewise warned against marrying unbelievers? 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.

“To connect with an unbeliever is to place yourself on Satan's ground. You grieve the Spirit of God and forfeit His protection. Can you afford to have such terrible odds against you in fighting the battle for everlasting life?”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 441.

“The man who yields to impulse and his own unconsecrated passions and selects an unbeliever for his wife, yielding up the claims of God, promising to give up the Sabbath if she will marry him, takes a step that will bring unhappiness into his family. He sells his birthright for a mess of pottage.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 10, p. 192.

2. STUBBORN PLOTTING

- a. After Isaac became old and his eyes were dim, what plan did he have with regard to Esau? Genesis 27:1–4.
-

“Isaac was still unshaken in his determination to bestow upon [Esau] the birthright. The reasoning of Rebekah, Jacob’s strong desire for the blessing, and Esau’s indifference to its obligations had no effect to change the father’s purpose.

“Years passed on, until Isaac, old and blind, and expecting soon to die, determined no longer to delay the bestowal of the blessing upon his elder son. But knowing the opposition of Rebekah and Jacob, he decided to perform the solemn ceremony in secret. In accordance with the custom of making a feast upon such occasions, the patriarch bade Esau, ‘Go out to the field, and take me some venison; and make me savory meat, . . . that my soul may bless thee before I die’ [Genesis 27:4.]”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 179.

- b. What plan of Rebekah was to counteract that of Isaac? Genesis 27:5–10.
-

“Rebekah divined [Isaac’s] purpose. She was confident that it was contrary to what God had revealed as His will. Isaac was in danger of incurring the divine displeasure and of debarring his younger son from the position to which God had called him. She had in vain tried the effect of reasoning with Isaac, and she determined to resort to stratagem.

“No sooner had Esau departed on his errand than Rebekah set about the accomplishment of her purpose. She told Jacob what had taken place, urging the necessity of immediate action to prevent the bestowal of the blessing, finally and irrevocably, upon Esau. And she assured her son that if he would follow her directions, he might obtain it as God had promised.”—*Ibid.*, p. 180.

- c. How did Jacob respond to his mother’s idea? Genesis 27:11, 12.
-

“Jacob did not readily consent to the plan that [Rebekah] proposed. The thought of deceiving his father caused him great distress. He felt that such a sin would bring a curse rather than a blessing.”—*Ibid.*

3. A CURSED BLESSING

- a. Despite Jacob's reluctance, what did his mother insist regarding her plan for him to get the birthright? Genesis 27:13, 14.
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"[Jacob's] scruples were overborne, and he proceeded to carry out his mother's suggestions."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 180.

- b. Describe how the scheme was carried out. Genesis 27:15–19.
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"It was not [Jacob's] intention to utter a direct falsehood, but once in the presence of his father he seemed to have gone too far to retreat."—*Ibid.*

- c. What was the result? Genesis 27:20–29.
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-

"[Jacob] obtained by fraud the coveted blessing."—*Ibid.*

- d. What happened when the real Esau arrived? Genesis 27:30–33.
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"No sooner had Jacob left his father's tent than Esau entered. Though he had sold his birthright, and confirmed the transfer by a solemn oath, he was now determined to secure its blessings, regardless of his brother's claim. With the spiritual was connected the temporal birthright, which would give him the headship of the family and possession of a double portion of his father's wealth. These were blessings that he could value."—*Ibid.*, pp. 180, 181.

- e. What would be Esau's future and how did he react? Genesis 27:34–40.
-
-

4. SEEING A HIGHER PERSPECTIVE

- a. Although all had assumed that Isaac's death was fast approaching, how can we see that many years would pass before he actually died? Compare Genesis 25:26; 35:28. What should we all learn from this?
-

"Jacob and Rebekah succeeded in their purpose, but they gained only trouble and sorrow by their deception. God had declared that Jacob should receive the birthright, and His word would have been fulfilled in His own time had they waited in faith for Him to work for them. But like many who now profess to be children of God, they were unwilling to leave the matter in His hands."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 180.

- b. What does God say about deceit, even when we're tempted to think it is for a worthwhile, justifiable purpose? Psalm 101:7; Proverbs 20:17.
-

- c. What should we glean from Rebekah and Jacob's mistake? Luke 21:19.
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"Instead of trusting in God, the disposer of events, [Rebekah] manifested her lack of faith by persuading Jacob to deceive his father. Jacob's course in this was not approbated by God. Rebekah and Jacob should have waited for God to bring about His own purposes, in His own way, and in His own time, instead of trying to bring about the foretold events by the aid of deception. If Esau had received the blessing of his father, which was bestowed upon the firstborn, his prosperity could have come from God alone; and he would have blessed him with prosperity; or brought upon him adversity, according to his course of action. If he should love and reverence God, like righteous Abel, he would be accepted, and blessed of God. If like the wicked Cain he had no respect for God, nor for His commandments, but followed his own corrupt course, he would not receive a blessing from God, but would be rejected of God as was Cain. If Jacob's course should be righteous; if he should love and fear God, he would be blessed of God, and the prospering hand of God would be with him, even if he did not obtain the blessings and privileges generally bestowed upon the firstborn."—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 115.

5. ESCAPING THE WOE OF ESAU

- a. How are we warned to escape the woe of Esau? Hebrews 12:14–17.
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“The circumstances of Esau’s selling his birthright represents the unrighteous, who consider that the redemption purchased for them by Christ of little value, and sacrifice their heirship to Heaven for perishable treasures. Many are controlled by their appetite, and rather than to deny an unhealthy appetite, will sacrifice high and valuable considerations. If one must be yielded, the gratification of a depraved appetite, or the high and heavenly blessings which God promises only to the self-denying and God-fearing, the clamors of appetite, as in the case of Esau, will generally prevail, and for self-gratification, God and Heaven will be virtually despised. . . .

“Especially will the corrupt passions control the mind of those who value heaven of so little worth. Health will be sacrificed, the mental faculties enfeebled, and heaven will be sold for these pleasures, as Esau sold his birthright. Esau was a reckless person. He made a solemn oath that Jacob should have his birthright. This case is left on record as a warning to others. As Esau learned that Jacob had obtained the blessing which would have belonged to him, had he not rashly sold it, he was greatly distressed. He repented of his rash act, when it was too late to remedy the matter. Thus will it be with sinners in the day of God, who have bartered away their heirship to heaven for selfish gratifications, and hurtful lusts. They will then find no place for repentance, although they may seek it, like Esau, carefully and with tears.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 116, 117.

- b. What, then, should be our solemn pledge? 2 Corinthians 7:1.
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PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why does God expressly forbid marrying an unbeliever?
2. In what sense did Rebekah reveal strong spirituality yet weak faith—and in what areas of my life might I be in danger of doing the same?
3. What first step of Jacob snagged him in an impossible snare?
4. Why is the saying “The end justifies the means,” wrong in God’s sight?
5. Why is appetite such a decisive factor in Christian victory?

Bethel

“And [Jacob] was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:17).

“If any of us are finally saved, it will be by clinging to Jesus as to the rounds of a ladder.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 539.

Suggested Reading: *Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 464–469, 471.

Sunday

July 19

1. RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE

a. What did Esau determine to do after realizing that he had lost the birthright to his brother? Genesis 27:41.

b. To protect her younger son from Esau’s rage, what was Rebekah compelled to advise Jacob to do—and how did the length of time end up being different than what she expected? Genesis 27:42–45.

“Rebekah repented in bitterness for the wrong counsel which she gave to Jacob, for it was the means of separating him from her forever. He was compelled to flee for his life from the wrath of Esau, and his mother never saw his face again.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 115, 116.

c. How was Isaac eventually to mature in understanding about the birthright?

“Isaac lived many years after he gave Jacob the blessing, and was convinced, by the course of Esau and Jacob, that the blessing rightly belonged to Jacob.”—*Ibid.*, p. 116.

2. SOBRIETY AND SOLITUDE

- a. Reluctantly sending Jacob forth as heir to the birthright, what wise, spiritual appeal did his parents make? Genesis 27:46; 28:1–5.
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“Threatened with death by the wrath of Esau, Jacob went out from his father’s home a fugitive; but he carried with him the father’s blessing; Isaac had renewed to him the covenant promise, and had bidden him, as its inheritor, to seek a wife of his mother’s family in Mesopotamia.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 183.

- b. Why is this type of appeal strongly needed also today? Matthew 24:37, 38.
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“What of the marriage relation today? Is it not perverted and defiled, made even as it was in Noah’s day?”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 7, p. 56.

“Satan will use every device in leading young men to form marriage connections which will defeat the purpose of God. He will seek to lower the standard of spirituality and holiness, so that the church will not be a living, working church, and its members be fitting themselves to work in the cause of God.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 12, p. 283.

- c. Describe the type of experience Jacob suffered when compelled to journey far from the security of home. Genesis 28:10; Psalm 102:6–8.
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“It was with a deeply troubled heart that Jacob set out on his lonely journey. With only his staff in his hand he must travel hundreds of miles through a country inhabited by wild, roving tribes. In his remorse and timidity he sought to avoid men, lest he should be traced by his angry brother. He feared that he had lost forever the blessing that God had purposed to give him; and Satan was at hand to press temptations upon him.

“The evening of the second day found him far away from his father’s tents. He felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by his own wrong course. The darkness of despair pressed upon his soul, and he hardly dared to pray.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 183.

3. DESPERATION, THEN HOPE

- a. How was Jacob's night? Genesis 28:11.
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"[Jacob] was so utterly lonely that he felt the need of protection from God as he had never felt it before. With weeping and deep humiliation he confessed his sin, and entreated for some evidence that he was not utterly forsaken. Still his burdened heart found no relief. He had lost all confidence in himself, and he feared that the God of his fathers had cast him off."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 183.

- b. When our future appears dark and dismal, why can we be encouraged by the God of Jacob? Psalm 20:1–3; Isaiah 57:15.
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"God did not forsake Jacob. His mercy was still extended to His erring, distrustful servant."—*Ibid.*

"At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer."—*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 669, 670.

- c. What happened as Jacob slept—and for what purpose? Genesis 28:12.
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"Jacob's experience as a wanderer from his home, when he was shown the mystic ladder, on which descended and ascended the angels of heaven, was designed to teach a great truth in regard to the plan of salvation. The purposes of God were opened to the discouraged man, who felt himself cut off from God and man. In marvelous love, Christ presented before him in a dream the way of life. The truth was unfolded before him in the emblem, and its significance is as great in our day as it was in his."—*The Review and Herald*, November 11, 1890.

4. ASSURANCE TO THE MEEK

- a. What gracious promises did the God of heaven shower upon His repentant child? Genesis 28:13–15.
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“The brightness from the throne of God beamed down upon this ladder and reflected a light of inexpressible glory upon the earth. This ladder represented Christ, who had opened the communication between earth and heaven.

“In Christ’s humiliation He descended to the very depths of human woe in sympathy and pity for fallen man, which was represented to Jacob by one end of the ladder resting upon the earth, while the top of the ladder, reaching unto heaven, represents the divine power of Christ grasping the Infinite and thus linking earth to heaven and finite man to the infinite God. Through Christ the communication is opened between God and man. Angels may pass to and fro from heaven to earth with messages of love to fallen man, and to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation. It is through Christ alone that the heavenly messengers minister to men.”—*Confrontation*, p. 46.

- b. What made the dream so significant? Psalm 37:11; Philippians 2:5–7.
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“Let earth be glad, let the inhabitants of the world rejoice, that Christ has bridged the gulf which sin had made, and has bound earth and heaven together. A highway has been cast up for the ransomed of the Lord. The weary and heavy laden may come unto Him, and find rest to their souls. The pilgrim may journey toward the mansions that He has gone to prepare for those who love Him.

“In assuming humanity, Christ planted the ladder firmly upon the earth. The ladder reaches unto the highest heaven, and God’s glory shines from its summit and illuminates its whole length, while the angels pass to and fro with messages from God to man, with petition and praise from man to God. Through the divine nature, Christ was one with the Father; and by assuming humanity, He identified Himself with man. . . . [Philippians 2:6, 7 quoted.] In the vision of Jacob was represented the union of the human and the divine in Christ.

“As the angels pass to and fro on the ladder, God is represented as looking down with favor upon the children of men because of the merit of His Son.”—*The Review and Herald*, November 11, 1890.

5. JACOB'S SOLEMN VOW

- a. How can Jacob's vow at Bethel be an inspiration to us? Genesis 28:16–22.
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"Jacob was not here seeking to make terms with God. The Lord had already promised him prosperity, and this vow was the outflow of a heart filled with gratitude for the assurance of God's love and mercy."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 187.

"Jacob made his vow while refreshed by the dews of grace and invigorated by the presence and assurance of God. After the divine glory had passed away, he had temptations, like men in our time, but he was faithful to his vow and would not harbor thoughts as to the possibility of being released from the pledge which he had made. He might have reasoned much as men do now, that this revelation was only a dream, that he was unduly excited when he made his vow, and that therefore it need not be kept; but he did not. . . .

"Jacob gave the tenth of all that he had, and then reckoned the use of the tenth, and gave the Lord the benefit of that which he had used for his own interest during the time he was in a heathen land and could not pay his vow. This was a large amount, but he did not hesitate; that which he had vowed to God he did not regard as his, but as the Lord's."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, pp. 466, 467.

"How small the estimate; how vain the endeavor to measure with mathematical rules, time, money, and love, against a love so immeasurable and a gift of such inconceivable worth. Tithes for Christ! Oh, meager pittance, shameful recompense for that which cost so much! From the cross of Calvary, Christ calls for an unreserved consecration. All that we have, all that we are, should be devoted to God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 188.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How can I avoid the bitter experience suffered by Rebekah?
2. When suffering from loneliness as did Jacob, what must we remember?
3. What is my Heavenly Father revealing to me through Jacob's dream?
4. What happens as the angels ascend and descend the ladder?
5. How can I be more deeply touched by Jacob's vow to God?

First Sabbath Offering for a headquarters in Almaty, Kazakhstan

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a nation of 18 million people in the center of Eurasia, the smaller part belonging to Europe, and the larger to Asia. Kazakhstan is the world's 9th largest country by territory, bordering Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and the Caspian Sea. The national language is Kazak and the main religion is Islam, professed by 70% of the population, followed by 26% Christian (mostly Orthodox), with the remaining 4% being Jewish, Buddhist, or atheist. The capital is Astana—but the largest city of 1.7 million is Almaty, formerly known as Alma-Ata or Verniy.



The message of reformation in Kazakhstan started in the 1920's, yet faced serious difficulties behind the "iron curtain," and the brethren had almost no connection with the General Conference. After the collapse of the U.S.S.R., most left for Russia and Germany.

Now it is time to revive God's work in this part of the vineyard. Despite the vast challenges, the work never stopped here. Besides the isolated members, most of our believers, together with the worker, are located in Almaty, where for years we have rented various facilities for worship services. Recently, the government passed laws forbidding religious denominations from renting facilities for worship, thereby forcing our group into a hard situation. So, the Russian Union and East European Union have purchased a parcel of land for building a house of worship to be the headquarters for this area.

Almaty is at a crossroads, located along the famous Silk Road from China to Europe. Besides the fact that the Chinese are now investing many billions to revive that highway, the strategic site of Almaty makes it a tourist center as well. "We must not hide the truth in the corners of the earth. It must be made known; . . . Christ in His labors took His position by the lakeside and in the great thoroughfares of travel where He could meet people from all parts of the world."—*Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 35.

Dear brethren, we are on the threshold of eternity. Very soon Christ will come to take His people to a better land. The time is fast approaching when we will not need our material goods and are urged, "Get your means where you can handle it for the benefit of the cause of God. Send your treasures before you into heaven."—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 465.

Your brothers and sisters from Kazakhstan

Enduring Love

“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her” (Genesis 29:20).

“While pure love will take God into all its plans and will be in perfect harmony with the Spirit of God, passion will be headstrong, rash, unreasonable, defiant of all restraint, and will make the object of its choice an idol. In all the department of one who possesses true love, the grace of God will be shown.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, p. 213.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 99–113.

Sunday

July 26

1. ARRIVING IN HARAN

- a. **In obedience to his father’s directions, where did Jacob go—and what made his arrival bittersweet? Genesis 29:1–4 (compare Genesis 24:10, 34, 35).**
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“With a new and abiding faith in the divine promises, and assured of the presence and guardianship of heavenly angels, Jacob pursued his journey to ‘the land of the children of the East.’ Genesis 29:1, margin. But how different his arrival from that of Abraham’s messenger nearly a hundred years before! The servant had come with a train of attendants riding upon camels, and with rich gifts of gold and silver; the son was a lonely, footsore traveler, with no possession save his staff.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 188.

- b. **What then made Jacob able to feel more hopeful as he approached the place of his mother’s relatives? Genesis 29:5, 6.**
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2. NO LONGER TO BE IN SOLITUDE

- a. **What reveals that Jacob immediately took interest in the well-being of the family—and was refreshed and comforted in turn? Genesis 29:9–14.**
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“Like Abraham’s servant, Jacob tarried beside a well, and it was here that he met Rachel, Laban’s younger daughter. It was Jacob now who rendered service, rolling the stone from the well and watering the flocks. On making known his kinship, he was welcomed to the home of Laban. Though he came portionless and unattended, a few weeks showed the worth of his diligence and skill, and he was urged to tarry.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 188.

- b. **What arrangement was made for Jacob’s employment? Genesis 29:15–19.**
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“It was customary anciently for the bridegroom to pay a sum of money according to his circumstances, to the father of his wife. If he had no money, or anything of value, his labor was accepted for a stated length of time before he could obtain the daughter as his wife. This custom was considered a safeguard to the marriage contract. Fathers did not consider it safe to trust the happiness of their daughters to men who had not made sufficient provisions to take care of a family. If they had not ability to manage business, to acquire cattle or lands, they were afraid that their lives would be worthless. But that the truly worthy should not become discouraged, a provision was made to test the worth of those who had nothing of value to pay for a wife. They were permitted to labor for the father whose daughter they loved. Their labors were engaged for a certain length of time, regulated by the value of the dowry required for their daughter. In doing this, marriages were not hasty, and there was opportunity to test the depth of the affections of the suitor. If he was faithful in his services, and was otherwise considered worthy, the daughter was given him as his wife. And generally all the dowry the father had received was given to his daughter at her marriage.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 119, 120.

- c. **How was the character of the prospective couple thus developed spiritually? Hebrews 10:36.**
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3. THE MARRIAGE OF JACOB

- a. What are we to learn in our day from the depth of genuine love that Jacob demonstrated for Rachel? Genesis 29:20.
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“It was arranged that [Jacob] should render Laban seven years’ service for the hand of Rachel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 188.

“What a contrast to the course now pursued by parents and children! There are many unhappy marriages because of so much haste. Two unite their interest at the marriage altar, by most solemn vows before God, without previously weighing the matter, and devoting time to sober reflection and earnest prayer. Many move from impulse. They have no thorough acquaintance with the dispositions of each other. They do not realize that the happiness of their whole life is at stake. If they move wrong in this matter, and their marriage life proves unhappy, it cannot be taken back. If they find they are not calculated to make each other happy, they must endure it the best they can. In some instances the husband proves to be too indolent to provide for a family, and his wife and children suffer. If the ability of such had been proved, as was the custom anciently before marriage, much misery would have been saved.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 120.

- b. What happened to Jacob after his seven years of hard work to obtain the hand of Rachel in marriage? Genesis 29:21–26.
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“[Jacob] formed the marriage contract with Laban for his daughter Rachel whom he loved. After he had served seven years for Rachel, Laban deceived him and gave him Leah. When Jacob realized the deception that had been practiced upon him, and that Leah had acted her part in deceiving him, he could not love Leah. Laban wished to retain the faithful services of Jacob a greater length of time, therefore deceived him by giving him Leah, instead of Rachel. Jacob reproved Laban for thus trifling with his affections, in giving him Leah, whom he had not loved. Laban entreated Jacob not to put away Leah, for this was considered a great disgrace, not only to the wife, but to the whole family.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 117, 118.

4. TAMPERING WITH GOD'S PLAN

- a. **What solution did the crafty Laban have for Jacob's undying love for Rachel—yet how did this cause misery to all? Genesis 29:27–30.**
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“Jacob was placed in a most trying position, but he decided to still retain Leah, and also marry her sister. Leah was loved in a much less degree than Rachel. Laban was selfish in his dealings with Jacob. He only thought of advantaging himself by the faithful labors of Jacob. He would have left the artful Laban long before, but he was afraid of encountering Esau.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 118.

“Rachel was ever the one best loved; but his preference for her excited envy and jealousy, and his life was embittered by the rivalry between the sister-wives.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 189, 190.

- b. **Dealing with both Leah and Rachel, what was the biggest problem to cause chaos in Jacob's home life? Song of Solomon 8:6.**
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- c. **What happens whenever we try to invent various alternatives to God's original plan for marriage as a lifelong commitment between one man and one woman? Genesis 2:21–24; Ecclesiastes 7:29.**
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“The marriage relation is holy, but in this degenerate age it covers vileness of every description. It is abused, and has become a crime which now constitutes one of the signs of the last days, even as marriages, managed as they were previous to the Flood, were then a crime.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 252.

“If fiends had set themselves to work to discover a mode of most effectually destroying whatever is venerable, graceful, or permanent in domestic life, and of obtaining at the same time an assurance that the mischief which it was their object to create should be perpetuated from one generation to another, they could not have invented a more effectual plan than the degradation of marriage.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 270.

5. CLEANSING THE HEART

- a. What is the main, underlying legacy of fallen Lucifer that has poisoned our whole planet? 1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 10:12.
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“Envy, jealousy, and evil surmising is a hellish shadow by which Satan seeks to intercept your views of the character of Christ, so that by beholding the evil you may be fully changed into its likeness.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary* [E. G. White Comments], vol. 3, p. 1163.

- b. How can we overcome this horrible natural tendency to compete with others and be resentful of them? Galatians 5:25, 26.
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“There should be self-abasement, and a putting away of all jealousy, evil surmising, envy, hatred, malice, and unbelief. An entire transformation is needed. Some have lost sight of our pattern, the suffering Man of Calvary. In His service we need not expect ease, honor, and greatness in this life; for He, the Majesty of heaven, did not receive it. ‘He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.’ ‘He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed’ [Isaiah 53:3, 5]. With this example before us, will we choose to shun the cross, and to be swayed by circumstances? . . .

“Can we not stand in God, let our surroundings be ever so unpleasant and discouraging?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, pp. 516, 517.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Despite Jacob’s poverty, what reveals God’s care in providing for him?
2. Name some qualities we can learn from ancient customs for marriage.
3. How did Jacob learn through pain how evil it is to practice deception?
4. What can I do through my influence to uplift the sanctity of marriage?
5. How might envy, the most insidious legacy of Lucifer, be corrupting me?

The Evil of Covetousness

“Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness” (Psalm 119:36).

“What we need to learn is faithfulness in making the utmost use of the powers and opportunities we have, and contentment in the lot to which Heaven assigns us.”—*Education*, p. 117.

Suggested Reading: *The Adventist Home*, pp. 255–259.

Sunday

August 2

1. THE PLIGHT OF LEAH

- a. Although God sought to brighten the life of Leah, what words of hers nonetheless reveal the pain of rivalry in the home? Genesis 29:31–34.

“The selfish and grasping Laban, desiring to retain so valuable a helper, practiced a cruel deception in substituting Leah for Rachel. The fact that Leah herself was a party to the cheat, caused Jacob to feel that he could not love her.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 189.

- b. What can we learn from a moment when Leah expressed a deeper faith and trust—without an accompanying complaint implied? Genesis 29:35.

“Our conversation must be holy and without murmuring.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 7, 1889.

“Praise the Lord at all times. Look on the bright side of circumstances, not on the dark side. Be watchful and prayerful, and the Lord will bless and guide and strengthen you.”—*This Day With God*, p. 234.

2. FRUSTRATION AND FOLLY

- a. Rather than resting in her husband's preferential treatment, why did Rachel instead covet the blessings that God had bestowed upon her sister? Genesis 30:1; Proverbs 30:15, 16.
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- b. How was this an unpleasant source of trouble for Jacob? Genesis 30:2.
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- c. In order to compete with her rival, what plans did Rachel desperately initiate, causing the marriage relation to be further degraded? Genesis 30:3–8.
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- d. Complicating matters even more, how did Leah escalate the competition? Genesis 30:9–13.
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- e. What continued to plague the family's domestic life? Genesis 30:14–20.
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- f. Amid the chaos, how did God show mercy to Rachel? Genesis 30:22–24.
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- g. Yet overall, what was the root of all this contention—and how was everyone in the household inevitably affected? Proverbs 13:10; 27:4; James 3:16.
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“By contention over trivial matters, a bitter spirit is cultivated. Open disagreements and bickering bring inexpressible misery into the home, and drive asunder those who should be united in the bonds of love.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 453.

3. TIME TO MOVE AWAY

- a. After Jacob had rendered to Laban 20 years of diligent service, what conversation did the two of them finally have? Genesis 30:25–30.

- b. What was agreed upon regarding Jacob's wages? Genesis 30:31–34.

- c. Explain Jacob's next steps and how they were blessed. Genesis 30:35–43.

- d. How did the jealous, competitive nature of Laban's family show it was time for Jacob to move away from his father-in-law? Genesis 31:1–5.

- e. What did Jacob explain to his wives about the life he had lived as shepherd over Laban's flocks? Genesis 31:6, 7.

“For twenty years Jacob remained in Mesopotamia, laboring in the service of Laban, who, disregarding the ties of kinship, was bent upon securing to himself all the benefits of their connection. Fourteen years of toil he demanded for his two daughters; and during the remaining period, Jacob's wages were ten times changed. Yet Jacob's service was diligent and faithful.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 190.

- f. Why did the sisters readily agree to leave the atmosphere where they had grown up—and how are we likewise urged to eagerly escape a covetous environment? Genesis 31:14–16; Psalm 119:36.

4. CARING FOR THE FLOCK

a. Describe the life of the faithful shepherd. Luke 15:4.

“It was necessary for the shepherd to watch his flocks day and night. They were in danger from robbers, and also from wild beasts, which were numerous and bold, often committing great havoc in flocks that were not faithfully guarded. Jacob had many assistants in caring for the extensive flocks of Laban, but he himself was held responsible for them all. During some portions of the year it was necessary for him to be constantly with the flocks in person, to guard them in the dry season against perishing from thirst, and during the coldest months from becoming chilled with the heavy night frosts. Jacob was the chief shepherd; the servants in his employ were the undershepherds. If any of the sheep were missing, the chief shepherd suffered the loss; and he called the servants to whom he entrusted the care of the flock to a strict account if it was not found in a flourishing condition.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 190.

b. Why does Scripture speak much about shepherding? John 10:11–15; Ezekiel 34:16, 22.

“The shepherd’s life of diligence and care-taking, and his tender compassion for the helpless creatures entrusted to his charge, have been employed by the inspired writers to illustrate some of the most precious truths of the gospel. Christ, in His relation to His people, is compared to a shepherd. After the Fall He saw His sheep doomed to perish in the dark ways of sin. To save these wandering ones He left the honors and glories of His Father’s house. . . . His care for the flock is unwearied. He strengthens the weak, relieves the suffering, gathers the lambs in His arms, and carries them in His bosom. His sheep love Him. . . .

“Christ, the Chief Shepherd, has entrusted the care of His flock to His ministers as undershepherds; and He bids them have the same interest that He has manifested, and feel the sacred responsibility of the charge He has entrusted to them. He has solemnly commanded them to be faithful, to feed the flock, to strengthen the weak, to revive the fainting, and to shield them from devouring wolves.

“To save His sheep, Christ laid down His own life; and He points His shepherds to the love thus manifested, as their example.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 190, 191.

5. THE NEED TO TRUST GOD

- a. Why hadn't Jacob left the covetous Laban sooner—and what was the real deciding factor that finally caused him to move? Genesis 31:10–13.
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“Jacob would have left his crafty kinsman long before but for the fear of encountering Esau. Now he felt that he was in danger from the sons of Laban, who, looking upon his wealth as their own, might endeavor to secure it by violence. He was in great perplexity and distress, not knowing which way to turn. But mindful of the gracious Bethel promise, he carried his case to God, and sought direction from Him. In a dream his prayer was answered: ‘Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.’ ”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 193.

- b. In packing to leave, what revealed a serious spiritual flaw in the character of beloved Rachel—and how is this a warning for us? Genesis 31:17–19.
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“Modern Israel are in greater danger of forgetting God and being led into idolatry than were His ancient people. Many idols are worshiped, even by professed Sabbathkeepers. God especially charged His ancient people to guard against idolatry, for if they should be led away from serving the living God, His curse would rest upon them. . . .

“A blessing or a curse is now before the people of God—a blessing if they come out from the world and are separate, and walk in the path of humble obedience; and a curse if they unite with the idolatrous, who trample upon the high claims of heaven.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 609.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How are we too often like Rachel and Leah in our outlook on life?
2. What prenatal influences likely affected the sons of Jacob before birth?
3. Why was it a good idea for Jacob to move away from Laban?
4. How can I bear the qualities of a shepherd toward those around me?
5. How has God shown His care for me in hard times—just as with Jacob?

Leaving the Idolater Behind

“Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty” (Genesis 31:42).

“The Lord had pity upon Jacob, and as Laban was about to overtake him, gave him a dream not to speak good or bad to Jacob. That is, he should not force him to return, or urge him by flattering inducements.”—*The Story of Redemption*, p. 91.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 193–196.

Sunday

August 9

1. TRYING TO LEAVE LABAN

- a. In what manner did Jacob feel compelled to depart from Padan-aram—and what was Laban’s reaction? Genesis 31:20–23.

“The flocks and herds were speedily gathered and sent forward, and with his wives, children, and servants, Jacob crossed the Euphrates, urging his way toward Gilead, on the borders of Canaan. After three days Laban learned of their flight, and set forth in pursuit, overtaking the company on the seventh day of their journey. He was hot with anger, and bent on forcing them to return, which he doubted not he could do, since his band was much the stronger.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 193.

- b. What restrained Laban from harming Jacob—yet, as an idol worshiper, what was his emphasis when they met? Genesis 31:24–30.

“That [Laban] did not carry out his hostile purpose was due to the fact that God Himself had interposed for the protection of His servant. . . .

“Laban . . . had ever treated Jacob with craft and harshness; but with characteristic dissimulation he now reproached him for his secret departure.”—*Ibid.*

2. LEARNING TO SAFEGUARD THE FAMILY

- a. Why can we be emboldened by Jacob's hatred of idolatry—and warned by Rachel's hidden sin that must have surely been affecting the family? Genesis 31:31–35; Proverbs 15:3.
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“The very spirit of heathen idolatry is rife today, though under the influence of science and education it has assumed a more refined and attractive form. Every day adds sorrowful evidence that faith in the sure word of prophecy is fast decreasing, and that in its stead superstition and satanic witchery are captivating the minds of men. All who do not earnestly search the Scriptures and submit every desire and purpose of life to that unerring test, all who do not seek God in prayer for a knowledge of His will, will surely wander from the right path and fall under the deception of Satan.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 192.

“Do nothing before strangers that you would not do before your father and mother, or that you would be ashamed of before Christ and the holy angels. . . .

“Beware; for you can do nothing that is not open to the eyes of angels and of God. You cannot do an evil work and others not be affected by it. While your course of action reveals what kind of material is used in your own character building, it also has a powerful influence over others.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 398, 399.

- b. How did Jacob summarize his life with selfish Laban—and what was the only response Laban could provide? Genesis 31:36–42, 44, 48–50.
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“Laban could not deny the facts brought forward, and he now proposed to enter into a covenant of peace.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 193, 194.

“Laban understood the wrong of polygamy, although it was alone through his artifice that Jacob had taken two wives. He well knew that it was the jealousy of Leah and Rachel that led them to give their maids to Jacob, which confused the family relation, and increased the unhappiness of his daughters. And now as his daughters are journeying at a great distance from him, and their interest is to be entirely separate from his own, he would guard as far as possible their happiness. Laban would not have Jacob bring still greater unhappiness upon himself and upon Leah and Rachel, by taking other wives.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 126.

3. FACING THE NEXT STEP

- a. How did Jacob close his experience in Padan-aram? Genesis 31:51–55.
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“To confirm the treaty, the parties held a feast. The night was spent in friendly communing; and at the dawn of day, Laban and his company departed. With this separation ceased all trace of connection between the children of Abraham and the dwellers in Mesopotamia.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 194.

- b. What is encouraging about the welcome blessing that came to Jacob as he began the journey toward his homeland? Genesis 32:1, 2.
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“Though Jacob had left Padan-aram in obedience to the divine direction, it was not without many misgivings that he retraced the road which he had trodden as a fugitive twenty years before. His sin in the deception of his father was ever before him. He knew that his long exile was the direct result of that sin, and he pondered over these things day and night, the reproaches of an accusing conscience making his journey very sad. . . .

“As he drew nearer his journey’s end, the thought of Esau brought many a troubled foreboding. After the flight of Jacob, Esau had regarded himself as the sole heir of their father’s possessions. The news of Jacob’s return would excite the fear that he was coming to claim the inheritance. Esau was now able to do his brother great injury, if so disposed, and he might be moved to violence against him, not only by the desire for revenge, but in order to secure undisturbed possession of the wealth which he had so long looked upon as his own.

“Again the Lord granted Jacob a token of the divine care. As he traveled southward from Mount Gilead, two hosts of heavenly angels seemed to encompass him behind and before, advancing with his company, as if for their protection. Jacob remembered the vision at Bethel so long before, and his burdened heart grew lighter at this evidence that the divine messengers who had brought him hope and courage at his flight from Canaan were to be the guardians of his return. And he said, ‘This is God’s host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim’—‘two hosts, or, camps.’—*Ibid.*, p. 195.

4. CAUSE FOR CONCERN

- a. What wise precaution did Jacob take for his safety? Genesis 32:3–5.
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“Jacob felt that he had something to do to secure his own safety. He therefore dispatched messengers with a conciliatory greeting to his brother. He instructed them as to the exact words in which they were to address Esau. It had been foretold before the birth of the two brothers that the elder should serve the younger, and, lest the memory of this should be a cause of bitterness, Jacob told the servants they were sent to ‘my lord Esau;’ when brought before him, they were to refer to their master as ‘thy servant Jacob;’ and to remove the fear that he was returning, a destitute wanderer, to claim the paternal inheritance, Jacob was careful to state in his message, ‘I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight’ [Genesis 32:5].”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 195, 196.

“[Jacob] did not claim the precedence for himself, but courteously addressed his brother as a superior, hoping thus to appease the anger which his former course had excited.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1879.

- b. Despite Jacob’s tact, how did the messengers respond? Genesis 32:6.
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“The servants returned with the tidings that Esau was approaching with four hundred men, and no response was sent to the friendly message.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 196.

- c. Describe Jacob’s situation at this point. Genesis 32:7, 8.
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“[Jacob] could not go back, and he feared to advance. His company, unarmed and defenseless, were wholly unprepared for a hostile encounter. He accordingly divided them into two bands, so that if one should be attacked, the other might have an opportunity to escape.”—*Ibid.*

5. THE GUILTY IN NEED OF HOPE

- a. Like Job, what type of experience was Jacob now undergoing? Job 7:6, 20.
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“It was in a lonely, mountainous region, the haunt of wild beasts and the lurking place of robbers and murderers. Solitary and unprotected, Jacob bowed in deep distress upon the earth. It was midnight. All that made life dear to him were at a distance, exposed to danger and death. Bitterest of all was the thought that it was his own sin which had brought this peril upon the innocent.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 196, 197.

- b. Describe the natural condition of every one of us—and explain our only hope. Isaiah 1:5, 6, 18–20.
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“By nature we are alienated from God. The Holy Spirit describes our condition in such words as these: ‘Dead in trespasses and sins;’ ‘the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint;’ ‘no soundness in it.’ We are held fast in the snare of Satan, ‘taken captive by him at his will.’ Ephesians 2:1; Isaiah 1:5, 6; 2 Timothy 2:26. God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him.

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 43.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Regardless of his words, why was Laban angered by Jacob’s departure?
2. What evil habits had Rachel evidently learned from her father?
3. How did the Lord comfort Jacob in his stressful hour of departure?
4. What attitude change did Jacob realize he needed in approaching Esau?
5. When remorse accompanies problems, where only can we look for help?

Yearning for the Blessing

“And [Jacob] said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” (Genesis 32:26).

“Jacob, in the great crisis of his life, turned aside to pray. He was filled with one overmastering purpose—to seek for transformation of character.”—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 144.

Suggested Reading: *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 91–99.

Sunday

August 16

1. JACOB'S ONLY HOPE

- a. How did Jacob feel upon hearing that Esau was coming with 400 men—and in utter despair, what only could he do? Genesis 32:7 (first part), 9–12.

“The sinful course which Jacob had pursued in deceiving his father was ever before him. He knew that his long exile was the result of his own deviation from strict integrity, the law of right. He pondered over these things day and night, his conscience accusing him, and making his journey very sad. How he longed to again go over the ground where he had stumbled and brought the stain of sin upon his soul. Before his transgression he had a sense of God’s approval which made him brave under difficulties, and cheerful amid trouble and gloom. To this deep, abiding peace, he had long been a stranger. Yet he remembered with gratitude the favor which God had shown him, the vision of the shining ladder, and the promises of help and guidance. In solemn review of the mistakes and errors of his life, and the dealings of God with him, he humbly acknowledged his own unworthiness, the great mercy of God, and the prosperity which had crowned his labors.

“As the hills of his native land appeared before him in the distance, the heart of the patriarch was deeply stirred. He had proved his God, and found His promises un failing; he believed that God would be with him; yet as he drew near to Edom he had many fears of Esau.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1879.

2. IN SOLITUDE WITH THE SAVIOUR

- a. **What wise, tactful plan did Jacob decide to implement? Genesis 32:13–21.**
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“Jacob halted in his journey to mature plans for appeasing the wrath of his brother. He would not rush recklessly into danger, but sent large presents to Esau by the hands of his servants, with a message well calculated to make a favorable impression. He sent his wives and children, with all his substance forward on the journey, while he himself remained behind. He thought the sight of that helpless little company would touch the feelings of Esau, who, though bold and revengeful, was yet pitiful and tender toward the weak and unprotected. If his eye rested first upon Jacob, his rage might be excited, and they would all perish.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1879.

- b. **Explain Jacob’s priority at this moment. Genesis 32:22–24 (first part).**
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“Jacob wished to be alone with his God. It was midnight. All that made life dear to him was at a distance, exposed to danger and death. The bitterest drop in his cup of anguish was the thought that his own sin had brought this great peril upon his wives and children, who were innocent of the sin of which he was guilty. He had decided to spend the night in humiliation and prayer. God could soften the heart of his brother. God was his only refuge and strength. In a desolate place, infested by robbers and murderers, he bowed in deep distress upon the earth; his soul was rent with anguish, and with earnest cries mingled with tears he made his prayer before God.”—*Ibid.*

- c. **How was Jacob’s fervent prayer to be an example for generations to come? Psalm 46:1–3, 7.**
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“Jacob prevailed because he was persevering and determined. His experience testifies to the power of importunate prayer. It is now that we are to learn this lesson of prevailing prayer, of unyielding faith.”—*Colporteur Ministry*, p. 81.

3. THE NIGHT OF WRESTLING

- a. What suddenly happened as Jacob prayed—and why is it significant to us? Genesis 32:24–26.
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“Strong hands are suddenly laid upon [Jacob’s] shoulders. He immediately grapples his assailant, for he feels that this attack is a design upon his life; that he is in the hands of a robber or murderer. The contest is severe; neither utters a word; but Jacob puts forth all his strength, and does not relax his efforts for a moment. Thus the struggle continued, until near the break of day, when the stranger placed his finger upon Jacob’s thigh, and he was crippled instantly. The patriarch now discerns the character of his antagonist. He knows that he has been in bodily conflict with a heavenly messenger, and this is why his almost superhuman efforts did not gain for him the victory. He is now disabled and suffering keenest pain, but he will not loosen his hold. He falls, a conquered foe, all penitent and broken, upon the neck of the angel.

“In the inspired history of this event, the one who wrestled with Jacob is called a man; Hosea calls him the angel [Hosea 12:4]; while Jacob said, ‘I have seen God face to face.’ He is also said to have had power with God. It was the Majesty of Heaven, the Angel of the covenant, that came, in the form and appearance of a man, to Jacob. The divine messenger uses some force to release Himself from the grasp of Jacob; He pleads with him, ‘Let me go, for the day breaketh.’ But Jacob had been pleading the promises of God; he had been trusting His pledged word, which is as sure and unailing as His throne; and now, through humiliation, repentance, and self-surrender, this sinful, erring mortal, can make terms with Jesus Christ: ‘I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.’ What boldness is here manifested! What lofty faith, what perseverance and holy trust! Was this presumption and undue familiarity on the part of Jacob? Had it been of this character he would not have lived through the scene. His was not a self-exalted, boastful, presumptuous claim, but the assurance of one who realizes his weakness and unworthiness and the ability of God to fulfill His promise.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1879.

- b. How does Jesus bid us to persevere in prayer as Jacob did? Luke 18:1–8.
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4. THE MERCY OF THE ALMIGHTY

- a. Why would the mighty Angel of the covenant not prevail against a mere man? Job 23:6; Luke 11:13.
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“ ‘And when he saw that he prevailed not against him’ [Genesis 32:25]—the Majesty of Heaven prevailed not against a man of dust, a sinful mortal! The reason is, that man has fastened the trembling hand of faith upon the promise of God, and the divine, messenger cannot leave him who is hanging repentant, weeping, helpless upon His neck. His great heart of love cannot turn away from the suppliant without granting his request. Christ did not wish to leave him unblest when his soul was shrouded with despair.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1879.

“[Jacob] had fastened his trembling grasp upon the promises of God, and the heart of Infinite Love could not turn away the sinner’s plea.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 197.

- b. Explain the result of Jacob’s struggle and why his name was changed. Genesis 32:27–32.
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“The mistake which had led to Jacob’s sin in obtaining the birth-right by fraud was now open before him. He had not trusted God and His promises as he should have done. He had become impatient, and had sought by his own efforts to bring about that which God was abundantly able to perform in His own time and way.

“The angel inquired of Jacob, ‘What is thy name?’ And when Jacob answered, He said, ‘Thy name shall be called no more Jacob [the supplanter], but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed’ [Genesis 32:28]. Jacob received the blessing for which his soul had longed; his sin as a supplanter and deceiver was pardoned. The crisis in his life had passed. God shows, in His dealing with Jacob, that He will not sanction the least wrong in any of His children; neither will He cast off and leave to despair and destruction those who are deceived and tempted and betrayed into sin. Doubt, perplexity, and remorse had embittered Jacob’s life; but now all was changed, and how sweet was the rest and peace in God, in the assurance of His restored favor.”—*Historical Sketches*, pp. 131, 132.

5. THE OTHER ANGEL'S MISSION

- a. **What happened when Jacob and Esau met—and why? Genesis 33:1–4.**
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“While Jacob was wrestling with the angel on that eventful night, another angel, one of the host which the patriarch had seen guarding him in the way, was sent to move upon the heart of Esau in his sleeping hours. In his dream he saw his brother an exile from his father's house for twenty years through fear of his anger; he witnessed his sorrow to find his mother dead; and he beheld him encompassed with the hosts of God. Esau related this dream to his four hundred armed men, and charged them not to injure Jacob, for the God of his father was with him. . . .

“Supported by his staff the patriarch went forward to meet that band of warriors, bowing himself repeatedly to the ground as a token of respect, while his little retinue awaited the issue with the deepest anxiety. They saw the arms of Esau thrown about the neck of Jacob, pressing to his bosom him whom he had so long threatened with direst vengeance. Revenge is now changed to tender affection, and he who once thirsted for his brother's blood shed tears of joy, his heart melted with the softest endearments of love and tenderness. The soldiers in Esau's army saw the result of that night of weeping and of prayer; but they knew nothing of the conflict and the victory. They understood the feelings of the patriarch, the husband and father, for his family and his possessions; but they could not see the connection that he had with God, which had gained the heart of Esau from Him who has all hearts in His hand.”—*The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1879.

- b. **How did the encounter conclude? Genesis 33:10, 11, 15–17.**
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PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Like Jacob, what tokens of God's favor must I recall when in crisis?
2. Besides bringing gifts, how did Jacob prepare to meet his brother?
3. How can my prayer life become more like that of Jacob?
4. Explain the spiritual results of Jacob's night of wrestling.
5. What potential is there for angels to change the heart of someone I know?

The Time of Jacob's Trouble

“Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:7).

“Jacob-like, wrestle in prayer. Agonize. Jesus in the garden sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort. Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God; then watch, and just as long as you watch and pray, you can keep these evil besetments under, and the grace of God can and will appear in you.”—*Messages to Young People*, pp. 131, 132.

Suggested Reading: *The Great Controversy*, pp. 615–623, 629–631.

Sunday

August 23

1. PREPARING FOR OUR FINAL TEST

- a. How is Jacob's anguish similar to what God's people are soon to endure—and what event is associated with this? Jeremiah 30:5, 6; Revelation 22:11, 12.

“Jacob's experience during that night of wrestling and anguish represents the trial through which the people of God must pass just before Christ's second coming.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 201.

- b. What must we understand about the close of probation? Acts 1:7; John 9:4.

“God has not revealed to us the time when this message will close, or when probation will have an end. Those things that are revealed we shall accept for ourselves and for our children; but let us not seek to know that which has been kept secret in the councils of the Almighty. . . .

“Letters have come to me asking me if I have any special light as to the time when probation will close; and I answer that I have only this message to bear, that it is now time to work while the day lasts.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 191.

2. VIGILANCE NEEDED

- a. **Why must we who are entrusted with great light be very vigilant in preparing to meet our Lord in peace?** 1 Timothy 5:24; 1 Peter 4:17.
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“As the books of record are opened in the Judgment, the lives of all who have believed on Jesus come in review before God. Beginning with those who first lived upon the earth, our Advocate presents the cases of each successive generation, and closes with the living. Every name is mentioned, every case closely investigated. Names are accepted, names rejected.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

“The great light and privileges bestowed require returns of virtue and holiness corresponding with the light given them. Anything short of this, God will not accept.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 454.

- b. **Explain both the solemnity and hope connected with this reality.** Exodus 32:33; Ezekiel 18:24, 27–30.
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“When any have sins remaining upon the books of record, unrepented of and unforgiven, their names will be blotted out of the book of life, and the record of their good deeds will be erased from the book of God’s remembrance. . . .

“All who have truly repented of sin, and by faith claimed the blood of Christ as their atoning sacrifice, have had pardon entered against their names in the books of heaven; as they have become partakers of the righteousness of Christ, and their characters are found to be in harmony with the law of God, their sins will be blotted out, and they themselves will be accounted worthy of eternal life.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 483.

“Solemn are the scenes connected with the closing work of the atonement. Momentous are the interests involved therein. The judgment is now passing in the sanctuary above. For many years this work has been in progress. Soon—none know how soon—it will pass to the cases of the living. In the awful presence of God our lives are to come up in review. At this time above all others it behooves every soul to heed the Saviour’s admonition: ‘Watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.’ Mark 13:33. . . .

“When the work of the investigative judgment closes, the destiny of all will have been decided for life or death.”—*Ibid.*, p. 490.

3. THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION

- a. What warning should we heed from an actual—though also symbolic—experience that occurred in early Christianity? Matthew 24:15, 16.
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“The Saviour warned His followers: ‘When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains’ (Matthew 24:15, 16; Luke 21:20, 21). When the idolatrous standards of the Romans should be set up in the holy ground, which extended some furlongs outside the city walls, then the followers of Christ were to find safety in flight. When the warning sign should be seen, those who would escape must make no delay.”—*The Great Controversy*, p. 26.

“Not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. Christ had given His disciples warning, and all who believed His words watched for the promised sign.”—*Ibid.*, p. 30.

- b. How is the abomination of desolation paralleled in the end? Daniel 12:1.
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“As the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies was the signal for flight to the Judean Christians, so the assumption of power on the part of our nation [the United States] in the decree enforcing the papal sabbath will be a warning to us.”—*Maranatha*, p. 180.

“I saw that Jesus would not leave the most holy place until every case was decided either for salvation or destruction, and that the wrath of God could not come until Jesus had finished His work in the most holy place, laid off His priestly attire, and clothed Himself with the garments of vengeance. Then Jesus will step out from between the Father and man, and God will keep silence no longer, but pour out His wrath on those who have rejected His truth. I saw that the anger of the nations, the wrath of God, and the time to judge the dead were separate and distinct, one following the other, also that Michael had not stood up, and that the time of trouble, such as never was, had not yet commenced. The nations are now getting angry, but when our High Priest has finished His work in the sanctuary, He will stand up, put on the garments of vengeance, and then the seven last plagues will be poured out.”—*Early Writings*, p. 36.

4. FOCUSING OUR FAITH

- a. How is Jacob's time of trouble paralleled in the end? Jeremiah 30:7 (first part); Revelation 13:11–17.
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“When Christ shall cease His work as mediator in man's behalf, then this time of trouble will begin. Then the case of every soul will have been decided, and there will be no atoning blood to cleanse from sin. . . . As Jacob was threatened with death by his angry brother, so the people of God will be in peril from the wicked who are seeking to destroy them. And as the patriarch wrestled all night for deliverance from the hand of Esau, so the righteous will cry to God day and night for deliverance from the enemies that surround them.

“Satan had accused Jacob before the angels of God, claiming the right to destroy him because of his sin; he had moved upon Esau to march against him; and during the patriarch's long night of wrestling, Satan endeavored to force upon him a sense of his guilt, in order to discourage him, and break his hold upon God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 201.

- b. As Satan taunts us over our sins, what must we recall? Isaiah 1:18; 26:3, 4.
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“When in his distress Jacob laid hold of the Angel, and made supplication with tears, the heavenly Messenger, in order to try his faith, also reminded him of his sin, and endeavored to escape from him. But Jacob would not be turned away. He had learned that God is merciful, and he cast himself upon His mercy. He pointed back to his repentance for his sin, and pleaded for deliverance. As he reviewed his life, he was driven almost to despair; but he held fast the Angel, and with earnest, agonizing cries urged his petition until he prevailed.

“Such will be the experience of God's people in their final struggle with the powers of evil. God will test their faith, their perseverance, their confidence in His power to deliver them. Satan will endeavor to terrify them with the thought that their cases are hopeless; that their sins have been too great to receive pardon. They will have a deep sense of their shortcomings, and as they review their lives their hopes will sink. But remembering the greatness of God's mercy, and their own sincere repentance, they will plead His promises made through Christ to helpless, repenting sinners.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 201, 202.

5. THE INTENSITY OF JACOB

- a. What is the greatest concern in the time of Jacob's trouble—and the encouraging news about it? Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 30:7 (last part).
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“Had not Jacob previously repented of his sin in obtaining the birthright by fraud, God could not have heard his prayer and mercifully preserved his life. So in the time of trouble, if the people of God had unconfessed sins to appear before them while tortured with fear and anguish, they would be overwhelmed; despair would cut off their faith, and they could not have confidence to plead with God for deliverance. But while they have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they will have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins will have been blotted out by the atoning blood of Christ, and they cannot bring them to remembrance.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 202.

- b. Describe the fervor with which we are to seek God now. Matthew 11:12.
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“[Matthew 11:12 quoted.] The violence here meant is a holy earnestness, such as Jacob manifested. We need not try to work ourselves up into an intense feeling, but calmly, persistently, we are to press our petitions at the throne of grace. Our work is to humble our souls before God, confessing our sins, and in faith drawing nigh unto God.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 272.

“The righteous in their distress will have a deep sense of their unworthiness, and with many tears will acknowledge their utter unworthiness, and, like Jacob, will plead the promises of God through Christ, made to just such dependent, helpless, repenting sinners.”—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 1, pp. 121, 122.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why has God wisely chosen not to reveal the date probation ends?
2. How might I be in danger of being too lax about my spiritual condition?
3. What happens when Jesus closes His work as our Mediator?
4. What two opposite delusions are perilous regarding our confession of sin?
5. How can I more zealously cultivate real, Jacob-like intensity with God?

First Sabbath Offering for Education Department

The need of workers in the Lord's vineyard is clear. "With such an army of workers as our youth, rightly trained, might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen, and soon-coming Saviour might be carried to the whole world!"—*Education*, p. 271.



The work is there, and the church must invest to be sure that our children and youth would be "rightly trained" to fulfill the Lord's commission and "Go ye into all the world and teach all nations."

The Seventh Day Adventist Reform Movement is investing resources into the educational work in various places, formats and languages of instruction to meet this objective. From childhood education through to high education missionary schools, our young people are receiving a firm foundation in the "Present Truth" and in the best methods whereby this truth can be presented to other souls.

"True education is missionary training. Every son and daughter of God is called to be a missionary; we are called to the service of God and our fellow men; and to fit us for this service should be the object of our education."—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 395.

"It is to fortify the youth against the temptations of the enemy that we have established schools where they may be qualified for usefulness in this life and for the service of God throughout eternity."—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 495.

By God's grace the established schools have expanded to include satellite programs, seminar programs, and recently online education platforms to ensure that everyone can have access to the education. These online platforms from the campuses of our schools in Colombia and the United States of America make it possible for students to get a missionary education regardless of where they live.

Please show your support for the training of our youth by your generous contribution to this fund. Your generous gift will contribute to the development of this rewarding branch of God's work.

Thank you in advance and may God bless the gifts and givers.

General Conference Education Department

Reformation in the Home

“Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments” (Genesis 35:2).

“God would have parents act as rational beings and live in such a manner that each child may be properly educated.”—*The Adventist Home*, p. 163.

Suggested Reading: *Child Guidance*, pp. 555–559.

Sunday

August 30

1. NEW AREA—NEW CHALLENGES

- a. After Jacob’s meeting with Esau, how did God provide for his next move? Genesis 33:17–20.

“The patriarch’s prayer at Bethel, that God would bring him again in peace to his own land, had been granted.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 204.

- b. What should we consider observing Jacob’s neglect in family management as he settled in the new area? Genesis 34:1; Matthew 6:13 (first part).

“Fathers and mothers, do you realize the importance of the responsibility resting on you? Do you allow your children to associate with other children without being present to know what kind of education they are receiving? Do not allow them to be alone with other children. . . .

“Here is a trial and a choice for you, to run the risk of offending your neighbors by sending their children to their own home, or gratify them, and let them lodge with your children, and thus expose them to be instructed in that knowledge which would be a lifelong curse to them.”—*Child Guidance*, pp. 114, 115.

2. THE DEFILING OF DINAH

- a. When Jacob's daughter, Dinah, went out with an apparently harmless plan to see the daughters of the land, what happened—and how is this tragedy a warning for us today? Genesis 34:2; 1 Corinthians 15:33.

“He who seeks pleasure among those that fear not God is placing himself on Satan's ground and inviting his temptations.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 204.

“The world over . . . on every hand are the sights and sounds of evil. Everywhere are enticements to sensuality and dissipation.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 363.

“The cities have become as Sodom, and our children are daily exposed to many evils. Those who attend the public schools often associate with others more neglected than they, those who, aside from the time spent in the schoolroom, are left to obtain a street education. The hearts of the young are easily impressed; and unless their surroundings are of the right character, Satan will use these neglected children to influence those who are more carefully trained. Thus, before Sabbath-keeping parents know what is being done, the lessons of depravity are learned, and the souls of their little ones are corrupted.”—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 173.

“Sensuality has quenched the desire for holiness and withered spiritual prosperity.”—*Child Guidance*, p. 446.

- b. What is to steer us away from such snares? 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

“Those who have charge of God's property in the souls and bodies of the children formed in His image should erect barriers against the sensual indulgence of the age, which is ruining the physical and moral health of thousands. If many of the crimes of this time were traced to their true cause, it would be seen that they are chargeable to the ignorance of fathers and mothers who are indifferent on this subject.”—*Ibid.*, p. 115.

“There are those who will say, ‘Oh, you need not be so particular. A little harmless flirtation will do no injury.’ And the carnal heart urges on to temptation, and to the practical sanctioning of indulgences which end in sin. This is a low cast of morality, not meeting the high standard of the law of God.”—*Medical Ministry*, p. 143.

3. READY TO PLEDGE

- a. How did the heathen Shechem view his obligation to Dinah? Genesis 34:3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12. What emergency provision was God later to give the Hebrews for this type of situation? Deuteronomy 22:28, 29.
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- b. Though ignorant of God's standards for His people, Shechem's affection for Jacob's daughter appears to have been sincere—yet what peril was on the horizon with his father's proposal? Genesis 34:9, 10.
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“Regarding the relation that Israel should sustain to surrounding peoples, the Lord had declared through Moses: ‘Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; . . . for they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.’ ‘Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.’ Deuteronomy 7:2–4; 14:2.

“The result that would follow an entrance into covenant relation with surrounding nations was plainly foretold.”—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 568, 569.

- c. How does God's warning against intermarrying with unbelievers continue to echo down to us today? 2 Corinthians 6:14–18.
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“Unless you would have a home where the shadows are never lifted, do not unite yourself with one who is an enemy of God.”—*Messages to Young People*, p. 440.

“Christ's followers are required to come out from the world, and be separate, and touch not the unclean, and they have the promise of being the sons and daughters of the Most High, members of the royal family. But if the conditions are not complied with on their part, they will not, cannot, realize the fulfillment of the promise.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 441.

4. TREACHEROUS FRUIT

- a. How did Jacob's sons propose to solve the predicament—and what was the response? Genesis 34:7, 13–24.
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- b. Despite the amicable agreement made, what horrible act did two of Jacob's sons afterwards carry out—and how are we warned against the way they tried to justify their treachery? Genesis 34:25–29, 31; Matthew 5:13.
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“The tarry of Jacob and his sons at Shechem ended in violence and bloodshed. The one daughter of the household had been brought to shame and sorrow, two brothers were involved in the guilt of murder, a whole city had been given to ruin and slaughter, in retaliation for the lawless deed of one rash youth. . . .

“The treacherous cruelty of Simeon and Levi was not unprovoked; yet in their course toward the Shechemites they committed a grievous sin.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 204.

“A profession of godliness without the living principle is as utterly valueless as salt without its saving properties. An unprincipled professed Christian is a byword, a reproach to Christ, a dishonor to His name.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 443.

- c. What did Jacob realize about the serious flaws in his family management—and what ray of hope came to his heart? Genesis 34:30; 35:1.
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“Jacob felt that there was cause for deep humiliation. Cruelty and falsehood were manifest in the character of his sons. There were false gods in the camp, and idolatry had to some extent gained a foothold even in his household. Should the Lord deal with them according to their deserts, would He not leave them to the vengeance of the surrounding nations?

“While Jacob was thus bowed down with trouble, the Lord directed him to journey southward to Bethel. The thought of this place reminded the patriarch not only of his vision of the angels and of God's promises of mercy, but also of the vow which he had made there, that the Lord should be his God.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 205.

5. RESTORATION TO GOD’S WAYS

- a. Explain the vital step Jacob took in family reformation—and the amazing results. Genesis 35:2–5.
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“As [Jacob] reviewed the wonderful dealings of God with him, his own heart was softened, his children also were touched by a subduing power; he had taken the most effectual way to prepare them to join in the worship of God when they should arrive at Bethel.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 205.

“Jacob was humbled, and required his family to humble themselves, and to lay off all their ornaments, for he was to make an atonement for their sins, by offering a sacrifice unto God, that he might be entreated for them, and not leave them to be destroyed by other nations.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, p. 137.

- b. How can believers in every age be inspired by the type of fresh, new experience Jacob had at Bethel? Genesis 35:6, 7; Acts 19:18–20.
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“God accepted the efforts of Jacob to remove the wrong from his family, and appeared unto him, and blessed him, and renewed the promise made to him, because his fear was before Him.”—*Ibid.*

“Burn the magical books; burn every last one of them; burn everything—yes, consume it—that will suffer a connection between you and the powers of darkness. ‘Come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you’ [2 Corinthians 6:17]. This is what we should want to do. We want to bow in reverence to the God of heaven.”—*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 2, p. 68.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why do parents need to be highly vigilant over children and youth today?
2. How likely is a tragedy such as in Dinah’s case liable to happen today?
3. What was wrong with the way Simeon and Levi dealt with Shechem’s sin?
4. Why is it so important for me to set a right example before the world?
5. What kind of reformation might I need to carry out in my own family?

Fruit in the Family

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour” (John 12:26).

“Through the revelation of [God’s] grace, hearts that were once indifferent or estranged may be united.”—*God’s Amazing Grace*, p. 115.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 206–212.

Sunday

September 6

1. REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

- a. Despite Jacob’s intention to follow God, what situation had long existed in his home for many years—and why? Proverbs 26:21; 27:15.

“The sin of Jacob, and the train of events to which it led, had not failed to exert an influence for evil—an influence that revealed its bitter fruit in the character and life of his sons. As these sons arrived at manhood they developed serious faults. The results of polygamy were manifest in the household. This terrible evil tends to dry up the very springs of love, and its influence weakens the most sacred ties. The jealousy of the several mothers had embittered the family relation, the children had grown up contentious and impatient of control, and the father’s life was darkened with anxiety and grief.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 208, 209.

- b. Why can the way the Lord honored Jacob’s firm reformation in the family inspire us today? Genesis 35:9–15; John 12:26.

“Put away sin and then cling to the Mighty One who is able to wash away every stain of sin. Now this is a work of humility at this time, and we must confess our sins and get nearer to God so He can write ‘Pardon’ against our names.”—*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 9, p. 252.

2. JOURNEYING ONWARD

- a. How did the timing of Rachel's death show God's power to have made her an overcomer? Genesis 35:16–20 (compare Genesis 31:30, 32, 34; 35:4).
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- b. What warning should we today observe from a serious spiritual setback—how the sin of Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, caused him to lose the blessed privileges of the birthright? Genesis 35:21, 22; Proverbs 6:32, 33.
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“On the way to Ephrath another dark crime stained the family of Jacob, causing Reuben, the firstborn son, to be denied the privileges and honors of the birthright.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 206.

“I have no real ground of hope for those who have stood as shepherds to the flock, and have for years been borne with by the merciful God, following them with reproof, with warnings, with entreaties, but who have hid their evil ways, and continued in them, thus defying the laws of the God of heaven by practicing fornication. We may leave them to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling, after all has been done to reform them; but in no case entrust to them the guardianship of souls. False shepherds!”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 428.

- c. In contrast, as Jacob cherished God's will as his greatest priority, how was he blessed with both peace and prosperity? Genesis 35:27–29; 36:6, 7.
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“Jacob and Esau met at the deathbed of their father. Once the elder brother had looked forward to this event as an opportunity for revenge, but his feelings had since greatly changed. And Jacob, well content with the spiritual blessings of the birthright, resigned to the elder brother the inheritance of their father's wealth—the only inheritance that Esau sought or valued. They were no longer estranged by jealousy or hatred, yet they parted, Esau removing to Mount Seir. God, who is rich in blessing, had granted to Jacob worldly wealth, in addition to the higher good that he had sought. . . . This separation was in accordance with the divine purpose concerning Jacob. Since the brothers differed so greatly in regard to religious faith, it was better for them to dwell apart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 207.

3. THE CHOICE IS OURS

- a. **What admonitions should we re-emphasize in considering Esau's rejection of God's election of grace? Romans 9:13.**
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“Esau and Jacob had alike been instructed in the knowledge of God, and both were free to walk in His commandments and to receive His favor; but they had not both chosen to do this. . . .

“There was no arbitrary choice on the part of God by which Esau was shut out from the blessings of salvation. The gifts of His grace through Christ are free to all. There is no election but one's own by which any may perish. God has set forth in His word the conditions upon which every soul will be elected to eternal life—obedience to His commandments, through faith in Christ. God has elected a character in harmony with His law, and anyone who shall reach the standard of His requirement will have an entrance into the kingdom of glory. . . . [John 3:36; Matthew 7:21 quoted.] And in the Revelation He declares, ‘Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.’ Revelation 22:14. As regards man's final salvation, this is the only election brought to view in the word of God.

“Every soul is elected who will work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. He is elected who will put on the armor and fight the good fight of faith. He is elected who will watch unto prayer, who will search the Scriptures, and flee from temptation. He is elected who will have faith continually, and who will be obedient to every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. The *provisions* of redemption are free to all; the *results* of redemption will be enjoyed by those who have complied with the conditions.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 207, 208. [Emphasis in the original text.]

- b. **What should we, like Jacob, ever keep in mind? 2 Corinthians 4:18.**
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“Esau had despised the blessings of the covenant. He had valued temporal above spiritual good, and he had received that which he desired. It was by his own deliberate choice that he was separated from the people of God. Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith.”—*Ibid.*, p. 208.

4. AVOIDING PARENTAL PARTIALITY

- a. How did Jacob behave unwisely toward his son Joseph? Genesis 37:3, 4.
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“There was one [of Jacob’s sons] . . . of a widely different character—the elder son of Rachel, Joseph, whose rare personal beauty seemed but to reflect an inward beauty of mind and heart. Pure, active, and joyous, the lad gave evidence also of moral earnestness and firmness. He listened to his father’s instructions, and loved to obey God. . . . Jacob’s heart was bound up in this child of his old age. He ‘loved Joseph more than all his children.’

“But even this affection was to become a cause of trouble and sorrow. Jacob unwisely manifested his preference for Joseph, and this excited the jealousy of his other sons.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 209.

- b. How can our own attitude facilitate the quality of kindness of character in our growing children? 1 Timothy 5:21; James 3:17.
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“There is no favoritism with God, and no partiality, no hypocrisy should be introduced or maintained in our households, churches, or institutions.”—*The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1821.

- c. Joseph was faithful and obedient and also grew much through suffering. But what general words of caution are we all given against pampering or favoring some children over others? Isaiah 3:4, 5.
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“In your blind and foolish fondness you have both surrendered to your child. You have allowed her to hold the reins in her tiny fists, and she ruled you both before she was able to walk. What can be expected of the future in view of the past? . . . Your child will never see the kingdom of God with her present habits and disposition. And you, her parents, will be the ones who have closed the gates of heaven before her. How, then, will it stand in regard to your own salvation?”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 383.

5. THE RANCOR OF JEALOUSY

- a. How deeply did Jacob's sons fall into the snare of bitter jealousy against their younger brother Joseph? Genesis 37:13–18, 24, 28, 31, 32.
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“[Joseph's] brothers saw him approaching; but no thought of the long journey he had made to meet them, of his weariness and hunger, of his claims upon their hospitality and brotherly love, softened the bitterness of their hatred. The sight of the coat, the token of their father's love, filled them with frenzy. ‘Behold, this dreamer cometh,’ they cried in mockery. Envy and revenge, long secretly cherished, now controlled them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 210, 211.

- b. What does jealousy cause—and what is history's bitterest illustration of it? Proverbs 6:34, 35; Matthew 27:17–23.
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“The whole life and teachings of Christ were continual lessons of humility, benevolence, virtue, and self-denial. This was a continual reproof to the self-righteous, exacting spirit manifested by the Jews. Satan led them on until they seemed to possess a frenzy at the mere mention of the wonderful works of Christ, which were drawing the attention of the people from them. . . . His very goodness made Him a subject of their jealousy and hate, and in their blind rage they cried out, Crucify Him! crucify Him!”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 4A, p. 117.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How does the life of Jacob provide hope for every struggling family?
2. What impossible areas of my life can be changed by surrender to God?
3. Despite Jacob's faults, why should I emulate him rather than Esau?
4. Why do I need to be careful to avoid partiality, favoritism, and envy?
5. Why is it crucial to ask God to uproot from me every trace of jealousy?

The Result of Persevering Prayer

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him” (Psalm 103:13).

“No earthly parent could be as patient with the faults and mistakes of their children, as is God with those He seeks to save.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 35.

Suggested Reading: *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 224–240.

Sunday

September 13

1. A TIME OF MOURNING

- a. Describe the depth of Jacob’s sorrow when he thought Joseph was dead—and the impression made on his guilty sons. Genesis 37:33–35.

“[Jacob’s sons] had looked forward to this scene with dread, but they were not prepared for the heart-rending anguish, the utter abandonment of grief, which they were compelled to witness. [Genesis 37:33 quoted.] Vainly his sons and daughters attempted to comfort him. He ‘rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.’ Time seemed to bring no alleviation of his grief. ‘I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning,’ was his despairing cry. The young men, terrified at what they had done, yet dreading their father’s reproaches, still hid in their own hearts the knowledge of their guilt, which even to themselves seemed very great.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 212.

- b. What is grief designed to develop in us? James 1:3, 4.

“God permits us to be placed under circumstances that will test us, to increase our love and to perfect our trust in Him. . . . Trials will come, but they are an evidence that we are children of God.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 441 (1892).

2. GROWING IN GRACE

- a. **How had Jacob's character grown since his agonizing night in prayer for himself and his family at Bethel? Psalm 92:12–15.**
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“Jacob had chosen the inheritance of faith. He had endeavored to obtain it by craft, treachery, and falsehood; but God had permitted his sin to work out its correction. Yet through all the bitter experience of his later years, Jacob had never swerved from his purpose or renounced his choice. He had learned that in resorting to human skill and craft to secure the blessing, he had been warring against God. From that night of wrestling beside the Jabbok, Jacob had come forth a different man. Self-confidence had been uprooted. Henceforth the early cunning was no longer seen. In place of craft and deception, his life was marked by simplicity and truth. He had learned the lesson of simple reliance upon the Almighty Arm, and amid trial and affliction he bowed in humble submission to the will of God. The baser elements of character were consumed in the furnace fire, the true gold was refined, until the faith of Abraham and Isaac appeared undimmed in Jacob.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 208.

- b. **What legacy of Jacob does God intend for our families? Isaiah 8:16–18; Deuteronomy 29:29.**
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“The father is in one sense the priest of the household, laying upon the altar of God the morning and evening sacrifice, while the wife and children unite in prayer and praise. With such a household Jesus will tarry, and through His quickening influence the parents' joyful exclamations shall yet be heard amid more exalted scenes, saying: 'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me.' Saved, saved, eternally saved! freed from the corruption that is in the world through lust, and through the merits of Christ made heirs of immortality! I saw that but few fathers realize their responsibility. They have not learned to control themselves, and until this lesson is learned they will make poor work in governing their children. Perfect self-control will act as a charm upon the family. When this is attained, a great victory is gained. Then they can educate their children to self-control.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 547.

3. THE FRAIL FAMILY OF FAITH

- a. When Jacob's sons stood before the governor of Egypt (who, unbeknownst to them, was actually Joseph), what reveals the transformation in their attitude? Genesis 42:21.

"During the years since Joseph had been separated from his brothers, these sons of Jacob had changed in character. Envious, turbulent, deceptive, cruel, and revengeful they had been; but now, when tested by adversity, they were shown to be unselfish, true to one another, devoted to their father, and, themselves middle-aged men, subject to his authority."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 225.

"[Joseph] had seen in his brothers the fruits of true repentance."—*Ibid.*, p. 230.

- b. After so many years of trial in the lives of Jacob and his children, where was the persevering patriarch finally called to go? Genesis 45:9, 25–28.

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- c. How only did Jacob know for sure that this was a step he needed to take—and why did the Lord arrange it? Genesis 46:1–5; Psalm 103:13.

"The promise had been given to Abraham of a posterity numberless as the stars, but as yet the chosen people had increased but slowly. And the land of Canaan now offered no field for the development of such a nation as had been foretold. It was in the possession of powerful heathen tribes, that were not to be dispossessed until 'the fourth generation.' . . . Should they mingle with the Canaanites, they would be in danger of being seduced into idolatry. Egypt, however, offered the conditions necessary to the fulfillment of the divine purpose. A section of country well-watered and fertile was open to them there, affording every advantage for their speedy increase. And the antipathy they must encounter in Egypt on account of their occupation—for every shepherd was 'an abomination unto the Egyptians'—would enable them to remain a distinct and separate people and would thus serve to shut them out from participation in the idolatry of Egypt."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 232.

4. BLESSED MOMENTS

a. Describe the reunion of Jacob and Joseph. Genesis 46:28–30.

“Upon reaching Egypt the company proceeded directly to the land of Goshen. Thither came Joseph in his chariot of state, attended by a princely retinue. The splendor of his surroundings and the dignity of his position were alike forgotten; one thought alone filled his mind, one longing thrilled his heart. As he beheld the travelers approaching, the love whose yearnings had for so many long years been repressed, would no longer be controlled. He sprang from his chariot and hastened forward to bid his father welcome.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 233.

b. Relate the encounter between Jacob and the king. Genesis 47:7–10.

“The patriarch was a stranger in royal courts; but amid the sublime scenes of nature he had communed with a mightier Monarch; and now, in conscious superiority, he raised his hands and blessed Pharaoh.”—*Ibid.*

c. What was Jacob’s experience in Egypt like? Genesis 47:27, 28.

“In his first greeting to Joseph, Jacob had spoken as if, with this joyful ending to his long anxiety and sorrow, he was ready to die. But seventeen years were yet to be granted him in the peaceful retirement of Goshen. These years were in happy contrast to those that had preceded them. He saw in his sons evidence of true repentance; he saw his family surrounded by all the conditions needful for the development of a great nation; and his faith grasped the sure promise of their future establishment in Canaan. He himself was surrounded with every token of love and favor that the prime minister of Egypt could bestow; and happy in the society of his long-lost son, he passed down gently and peacefully to the grave.”—*Ibid.*

d. Despite Jacob’s pleasant time in Egypt, what earnest request revealed how strongly his aim was to trust in God’s promises? Genesis 47:29–31.

5. FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

- a. What demonstrates Jacob's prophetic discernment regarding the sons of Joseph? Hebrews 11:21; Genesis 48:8, 9, 17–19.
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- b. How was this prophecy soon to be fulfilled? Numbers 1:33–35; 2:21, 24; Deuteronomy 33:16, 17.
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- c. How is the experience of Jacob and his sons to motivate us today? Romans 12:1, 2.
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“The power of evil in [Jacob's] own nature was broken; his character was transformed. . . .

“Jacob, reviewing his life-history, recognized the sustaining power of God—‘the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil.’ Genesis 48:15, 16.

“The same experience is repeated in the history of Jacob's sons—sin working retribution, and repentance bearing fruit of righteousness unto life.

“God does not annul His laws. He does not work contrary to them. The work of sin He does not undo. But He transforms. Through His grace the curse works out blessing.”—*Education*, pp. 147, 148.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What might be the real purpose for the trial I am currently facing?
2. Describe God's plan for fathers of today.
3. Why was Egypt a suitable place for God's people—but only temporarily?
4. What should I learn from Jacob's perspective while briefly in Egypt?
5. How can wayward members of my family change as Jacob's did?

Hope for the Remnant of Israel

“The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee” (Psalm 20:1).

“Jacoblike, wrestle in prayer. Agonize.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 158.

Suggested Readings: *Testimonies*, vol. 1, pp. 158–160;
vol. 3, pp. 540–544.

Sunday

September 20

1. A CLOSING TESTIMONY

a. What final message did Jacob give to his sons? Genesis 49:1, 2.

“As [Jacob’s] children waited to receive his last blessing the Spirit of Inspiration rested upon him, and before him in prophetic vision the future of his descendants was unfolded. One after another the names of his sons were mentioned, the character of each was described, and the future history of the tribes was briefly foretold.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 235.

“[Jacob] had no resentful feeling toward his sorrowing children. But God by the spirit of prophecy elevated the mind of Jacob above his natural feelings. In his last hours angels were all around him, and the power of the grace of God shone upon him. His paternal feelings would have led him to only utter in his dying testimony expressions of love and tenderness. But under the influence of inspiration he uttered truth, although painful.”—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 172, 173.

b. How did Jacob’s final request reveal the way God’s powerful grace had amazingly touched the patriarch’s heart regarding his first wife whom he had once hated? Genesis 49:28–31.

2. THE REFINER'S FIRE

- a. Describe the end of Jacob's life and the deep impact it had on those around him—including the Egyptians. Genesis 49:33; 50:1–3. What inspiring legacy did he leave for us also?
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“Jacob had sinned, and had deeply suffered. Many years of toil, care, and sorrow had been his since the day when his great sin caused him to flee from his father's tents. A homeless fugitive, separated from his mother, whom he never saw again; laboring seven years for her whom he loved, only to be basely cheated; toiling twenty years in the service of a covetous and grasping kinsman; seeing his wealth increasing, and sons rising around him, but finding little joy in the contentious and divided household; distressed by his daughter's shame, by her brothers' revenge, by the death of Rachel, by the unnatural crime of Reuben, by Judah's sin, by the cruel deception and malice practiced toward Joseph—how long and dark is the catalogue of evils spread out to view! Again and again he had reaped the fruit of that first wrong deed. Over and over he saw repeated among his sons the sins of which he himself had been guilty. But bitter as had been the discipline, it had accomplished its work. The chastening, though grievous, had yielded ‘the peaceable fruit of righteousness.’ Hebrews 12:11.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 237, 238.

- b. How can our lives, like Jacob's, yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness? Hebrews 12:7–11; 1 Peter 4:12, 13.
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“It is God who has led you through strait places. He had a purpose in this, that tribulation might work in you patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. He permitted trials to come upon you, that, through them, you might experience the peaceable fruits of righteousness.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 416.

“All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out [God's] purposes of love toward us, ‘that we might be partakers of His holiness’ and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 742.

“All trials that are received as educators will produce joy.”—*Ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 365.

3. A CALL TO FRUITFULNESS

- a. **How powerful is God's commitment to the heritage of Jacob? Leviticus 26:42; Deuteronomy 32:9, 10.**
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"God surrounded Israel with every facility, gave them every privilege, that would make them an honor to His name and a blessing to surrounding nations. If they would walk in the ways of obedience, He promised to make them 'high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honor.' "—*Education*, p. 40.

"When we have men who, while they acknowledge their deficiencies, will plead with God in earnest faith as did Jacob, we shall see the same results."—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 402.

- b. **Describe the depth of God's love for His erring people—and what it should make us pause to consider? Jeremiah 31:18–20; Hosea 11:8, 9.**
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"In His great mercy God has not cut you down. He does not look coldly upon you. He does not turn away with indifference."—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 217.

- c. **Explain the privilege of Christ's followers. 2 Timothy 1:8–10; Psalm 20:1, 2.**
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"We must go through the furnace till the fires have consumed the dross and we are purified and reflect the divine image. Those who follow their inclinations and are governed by appearances are not good judges of what God is doing. They are filled with discontent. They see failure where there is indeed triumph, a great loss where there is gain; and, like Jacob, they are ready to exclaim, 'All these things are against me,' when the very things whereof they complain are all working together for their good.

"No cross, no crown. How can one be strong in the Lord without trials? To have strength we must have exercise. To have strong faith, we must be placed in circumstances where our faith will be exercised."—*Testimonies*, vol. 3, p. 67.

4. AVOIDING THE FATE OF THE LOST

- a. Explain how God uses His Word to prune us—and the serious consequences of refusing to submit to this process. Hebrews 4:12–14; Hosea 4:17.
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“God leads His people on, step by step. He brings them up to different points calculated to manifest what is in the heart. Some endure at one point, but fall off at the next. At every advanced point the heart is tested and tried a little closer. If the professed people of God find their hearts opposed to this straight work, it should convince them that they have a work to do to overcome, if they would not be spewed out of the mouth of the Lord. Said the angel: ‘God will bring His work closer and closer to test and prove every one of His people.’ Some are willing to receive one point; but when God brings them to another testing point, they shrink from it and stand back, because they find that it strikes directly at some cherished idol. Here they have opportunity to see what is in their hearts that shuts out Jesus. They prize something higher than the truth, and their hearts are not prepared to receive Jesus. Individuals are tested and proved a length of time to see if they will sacrifice their idols and heed the counsel of the True Witness. If any will not be purified through obeying the truth, and overcome their selfishness, their pride, and evil passions, the angels of God have the charge: ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone,’ and they pass on to their work, leaving these with their sinful traits unsubdued, to the control of evil angels. Those who come up to every point, and stand every test, and overcome, be the price what it may, have heeded the counsel of the True Witness, and they will receive the latter rain, and thus be fitted for translation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 187.

- b. What sin of the tribe of Jacob’s son, Dan, will prevent many from receiving the seal of God’s approval? Genesis 49:17; Psalm 15:1–3.
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“The backbiter is excluded from abiding in the tabernacle of God and dwelling in the holy hill of Zion. He that taketh up a reproach against his neighbor cannot receive the approval of God.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 615.

“Let us guard against speaking words that discourage. Let us resolve never to engage in evilspeaking and backbiting.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 291.

5. REDEMPTION FOR THE REMNANT

- a. What privileges and perils does spiritual Israel face today? Psalm 47:1–4; 46:11; Romans 13:11.

“Some in these churches are in constant danger because the cares of this life and worldly thoughts so occupy the mind that they do not think upon God or heaven and the needs of their own souls. They rouse from their stupor now and then, but fall back again in deeper slumber. Unless they shall fully rouse from their slumbers, God will remove the light and blessings He has given them. He will in His anger remove the candlestick out of its place. He has made these churches the depository of His law. If they reject sin, and by active, earnest piety show stability and submission to the precepts of God’s word, and are faithful in the discharge of religious duty, they will help to establish the candlestick in its place, and will have the evidence that the Lord of hosts is with them and the God of Jacob is their refuge.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 286.

- b. Why only is there hope for the remnant of Jacob? Romans 11:5; Isaiah 14:1; 41:14; 43:1.

“With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit’s power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy-seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob. Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 30.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How may God be hoping that I change my attitude as Jacob did to Leah?
2. The next time I face an unusual trial, what must I keep in mind?
3. What privileges has God bestowed upon me that I should better appreciate?
4. Name some subtle snares that the final remnant must overcome.
5. What is the most important quality of Jacob to grasp from these lessons?

First Sabbath Offerings



JULY 4

for the Central American
Northern Mission project

(see p. 4.)

AUGUST 1

for a headquarters in
Almaty, Kazakhstan

(see p. 25.)



SEPTEMBER 5

for the Education
Department

(see p. 51.)

