

# References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

**APRIL 13-19**

## **TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | GENESIS 31**

### **“Jacob and Laban Make a Covenant of Peace”**

**(Genesis 31:44-46)** Now come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and it will serve as a witness between us.” <sup>45</sup> So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. <sup>46</sup> Then Jacob said to his brothers: “Pick up stones!” And they took stones and made a pile. After that they ate there on the pile of stones.

#### ***it-1* 883 ¶1**

##### **Galeed**

Peaceably settling the points over which they had disputed, Jacob and Laban concluded a covenant with each other. In this connection, Jacob set up a stone pillar and directed his “brothers” to make a heap of stones, perhaps in the form of a table, upon which the covenant meal was eaten. Thereupon, Laban called the place after this heap, giving it the Aramaic (Syrian) name “Jegar-sahadutha,” but which Jacob called “Galeed,” the Hebrew equivalent. Laban said: “This heap [Heb., *gal*] is a witness [Heb., *’edh*] between me and you today.” (Ge 31:44-48) The heap of stones (and the stone pillar) served as a witness to all passersby. It was as verse 49 says, “The Watchtower [Heb., *mits-pah’*],” testifying that Jacob and Laban had agreed to preserve the peace between and within their respective families. (Ge 31:50-53) On later occasions stones were used in a similar fashion as silent witnesses.—Jos 4:4-7; 24:25-27.

**(Genesis 31:47-50)** And La’ban began calling it Je’gar-sa-ha-du’tha, but Jacob called it Gal’e-ed. <sup>48</sup> La’ban then said: “This pile of stones is a witness between me and you to-

day.” That is why he named it Gal’e-ed, <sup>49</sup> and the Watchtower, for he said: “Let Jehovah keep watch between you and me when we are out of each other’s sight. <sup>50</sup> If you mistreat my daughters and if you start taking wives in addition to my daughters, though there is no man with us, remember that God will be a witness between you and me.”

#### ***it-2* 1172**

##### **Watchtower**

A pile of stones was set up by Jacob and called “Galeed” (meaning “Witness Heap”) and “The Watchtower.” Laban then said: “Let Jehovah keep watch between me and you when we are situated unseen the one from the other.” (Ge 31:45-49) This pile of stones would testify to the fact that Jehovah was watching to see that Jacob and Laban carried out their covenant of peace.

**(Genesis 31:51-53)** La’ban went on to say to Jacob: “Here is this pile of stones, and here is the pillar that I have erected between you and me. <sup>52</sup> This pile of stones is a witness, and the pillar is something that bears witness, that I will not pass beyond this pile of stones to bring harm to you and you will not pass beyond this pile of stones and this pillar to bring harm to me. <sup>53</sup> Let the God of Abraham and the God of Na’hor, the God of their father, judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the One whom his father Isaac fears.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Genesis 31:19)** Now La’ban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel stole the teraphim statues that belonged to her father.

#### ***it-2* 1087-1088**

##### **Teraphim**

The findings of archaeologists in Mesopotamia and adjacent areas indicate that the possession

of the teraphim images had a bearing on who would receive the family inheritance. According to one tablet found at Nuzi, the possession of the household gods could under certain circumstances entitle a son-in-law to appear in court and claim the estate of his deceased father-in-law. (*Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, edited by J. Pritchard, 1974, pp. 219, 220, and fn 51) Perhaps Rachel, with this in mind, reasoned that she was justified in taking the teraphim because of her father's deceptive dealings with her husband Jacob. (Compare Ge 31:14-16.) The importance of the teraphim with respect to inheritance rights would also explain why Laban was so anxious to recover them, even to the point of taking his brothers with him and pursuing Jacob for a distance of seven days' journey. (Ge 31:19-30) Of course, what Rachel had done was completely unknown to Jacob (Ge 31:32), and there is no indication that he ever attempted to use the teraphim to gain the inheritance from Laban's sons. Jacob had nothing to do with idols. At the latest, the teraphim would have been disposed of when Jacob hid all the foreign gods turned over to him by his household under the big tree that was close to Shechem.—Ge 35:1-4.

**(Genesis 31:41, 42)** This makes 20 years for me in your house. I have served you 14 years for your two daughters and 6 years for your flock, and you kept changing my wages ten times. <sup>42</sup> If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the One whom Isaac fears, had not been on my side, you would now have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, and that is why he reproved you last night."

**(1 Peter 2:18)** Let servants be in subjection to their masters with all due fear, not only to the good and reasonable but also to those hard to please.

w13 3/15 21 ¶8

## Jehovah—Our Place of Dwelling

<sup>8</sup> When Jacob reached Haran, his uncle Laban extended a warm welcome to him and later gave him Leah and Rachel as wives. In time, though, Laban tried to exploit Jacob, changing his wages ten times! (Gen. 31:41, 42) Yet, Jacob endured these injustices, confident that Jehovah would continue to care for him—and He did! Indeed, by the time God told Jacob to return to Canaan, the patriarch possessed "great flocks and maidservants and menservants and camels and asses." (Gen. 30:43) Deeply appreciative, Jacob prayed: "I am unworthy of all the loving-kindnesses and of all the faithfulness that you have exercised toward your servant, for with but my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps."—Gen. 32:10.

## Bible Reading

**(Genesis 31:1-18)** In time he heard what the sons of La'ban were saying: "Jacob has taken everything that belonged to our father, and from what belonged to our father, he has amassed all this wealth." <sup>2</sup> When Jacob would look at the face of La'ban, he saw that his attitude toward him was not what it used to be. <sup>3</sup> Finally Jehovah said to Jacob: "Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will continue with you." <sup>4</sup> Then Jacob sent a message to Rachel and Le'ah to come out to the field to his flock, <sup>5</sup> and he said to them: "I have seen that your father's attitude toward me has changed, but the God of my father has been with me. <sup>6</sup> You yourselves certainly know that I have served your father with all my power. <sup>7</sup> And your father has tried to cheat me and has changed my wages ten times; but God has not allowed him to do me harm. <sup>8</sup> If on the one hand he would say, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' then the whole flock produced speckled ones; but if

on the other hand he would say, ‘The striped ones will be your wages,’ then the whole flock produced striped ones. <sup>9</sup> So God kept taking your father’s livestock away from him and giving it to me. <sup>10</sup> Once when the flock got into heat, I raised my eyes and saw in a dream that the he-goats mating with the flock were striped, speckled, and spotty. <sup>11</sup> Then the angel of the true God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob!’ to which I said, ‘Here I am.’ <sup>12</sup> And he continued, ‘Raise your eyes, please, and see that all the he-goats mating with the flock are striped, speckled, and spotty, for I have seen all that La’ban is doing to you. <sup>13</sup> I am the true God of Beth’el, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now get up, go out of this land, and return to the land of your birth.’” <sup>14</sup> At this Rachel and Le’ah answered him: “Is there any share left for us to inherit in our father’s house? <sup>15</sup> Does he not consider us as foreigners, since he has sold us and has been using up the money given for us? <sup>16</sup> All the riches that God has taken away from our father are ours and our children’s. So, then, do everything that God has told you to do.” <sup>17</sup> Then Jacob got up and lifted his children and his wives on the camels, <sup>18</sup> and he began driving all his herd and all the goods that he had accumulated, the livestock in his possession that he had accumulated in Pad’dan-a’ram, to go to Isaac his father in the land of Ca’naan.

## APRIL 20-26

### TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | GENESIS 32-33

#### “Are You Wrestling for a Blessing?”

**(Genesis 32:24)** Finally Jacob was left by himself. Then a man began to wrestle with him until the dawn broke.

w03 8/15 25 ¶3

#### Are You Earnestly Seeking Jehovah?

The Scriptures abound with examples of those who put forth concerted efforts in seeking Jehovah. One such person was Jacob, who strenuously grappled with God’s materialized angel till dawn. As a result, Jacob was given the name Israel (Contender with God) because he “contended,” or “persisted,” “exerted [himself],” “persevered,” with God. The angel blessed him for his earnest endeavor.—Genesis 32:24-30, footnote.

**(Genesis 32:25, 26)** When he saw that he had not prevailed over him, he touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was dislocated during his wrestling with him. <sup>26</sup> After that he said: “Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.” To this he said: “I am not going to let you go until you bless me.”

#### it-2 190

#### Lame, Lameness

**Jacob’s Lameness.** When Jacob was about 97 years old, he had the experience of grappling all night with a materialized angel of God. He prevailed in detaining the angel until the angel gave him a blessing. During the contest, the angel touched the socket of Jacob’s thigh joint, throwing it out of place. The result was that Jacob walked with a limp. (Ge 32:24-32; Ho 12:2-4) Jacob thereafter had a reminder that, although he had “contended with God [God’s angel] and with men so that [he] at last prevailed,” as the angel said, he did not in reality defeat a powerful angel of God. It was only by God’s purpose and permission that Jacob was allowed to contend with the angel, so as to provide proof of Jacob’s great appreciation of the need of God’s blessing.

**(Genesis 32:27, 28)** So he said to him: “What is your name?” to which he said: “Jacob.” <sup>28</sup> Then he said: “Your name will no longer be Jacob but Israel, for you have contended with

God and with men and you have at last prevailed.”

## **it-1 1228**

### **Israel**

**1.** The name God gave to Jacob when he was about 97 years old. It was during the night that Jacob crossed the torrent valley of Jabbok on his way to meet his brother Esau that he began struggling with what turned out to be an angel. Because of Jacob’s perseverance in the struggle, his name was changed to Israel as a token of God’s blessing. In commemoration of these events, Jacob named the place Peniel or Penueel. (Ge 32:22-31; see JACOB No. 1.) Later, at Bethel the change in name was confirmed by God, and from then on to the end of his life Jacob was frequently called Israel. (Ge 35:10, 15; 50:2; 1Ch 1:34) Many of the more than 2,500 occurrences of the name Israel, however, are in reference to Jacob’s descendants as a nation. —Ex 5:1, 2.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Genesis 32:11)** Save me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother E’sau, for I am afraid of him that he may come and attack me, as well as the mothers and their children.

**(Genesis 32:13-15)** And he spent the night there. Then he took some of his possessions as a gift for E’sau his brother: <sup>14</sup> 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 female sheep, 20 rams, <sup>15</sup> 30 camels nursing their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 full-grown male donkeys.

## **w10 6/15 22 ¶10-11**

### **Gracious Speech Promotes Good Relations**

<sup>10</sup> Gracious speech and good communication help to establish and sustain peaceful relationships. In fact, doing what we can to improve our relationships with others can improve our communication with them. Reaching out to others

with sincere, kind acts—finding opportunities to help, giving a gift from the heart, extending hospitality—can contribute to open communication. It can even “heap fiery coals” on a person and may bring out good qualities, making it easier to talk things out.—Rom. 12:20, 21.

<sup>11</sup> The patriarch Jacob understood this. His twin brother, Esau, was so angry with him that Jacob fled for fear Esau would kill him. After many years, Jacob returned. Esau came out to meet him, along with 400 men. Jacob prayed for Jehovah’s help. Then he sent ahead to Esau a large gift of livestock. The gift achieved its purpose. When they met, Esau’s heart had softened, and he ran and embraced Jacob. —Gen. 27:41-44; 32:6, 11, 13-15; 33:4, 10.

**(Genesis 33:20)** There he set up an altar and called it God, the God of Israel.

## **it-1 980**

### **God the God of Israel**

As a result of his encounter at Peniel with the angel of Jehovah, Jacob was given the name Israel, and after a peaceable meeting with his brother Esau, he dwelt at Succoth and then Shechem. Here he acquired a tract of land from the sons of Hamor and pitched his tent upon it. (Ge 32:24-30; 33:1-4, 17-19) “After that he set up there an altar and called it God the God of Israel,” or “God Is the God of Israel.” (Ge 33:20) In identifying himself by his newly given name Israel with the name of the altar, Jacob indicated his acceptance and appreciation of that name and of God’s guiding him safely back into the Promised Land. The expression occurs only once in the Scriptures.

### **Bible Reading**

**(Genesis 32:1-21)** Jacob then went on his way, and the angels of God met up with him.

<sup>2</sup> As soon as he saw them, Jacob said: “This is the camp of God!” So he named that place Ma-ha-na’im. <sup>3</sup> Then Jacob sent messengers

ahead of him to his brother E'sau in the land of Se'ir, the territory of E'dom, <sup>4</sup> and he commanded them: "This is what you will say to my lord, to E'sau, 'This is what your servant Jacob says: "I have resided with La'ban for a long time until now. <sup>5</sup> And I have acquired bulls, donkeys, sheep, and male and female servants, and I send this message to inform my lord, in order to find favor in your eyes.''" <sup>6</sup> In time the messengers returned to Jacob, saying: "We met your brother E'sau, and he is now on his way to meet you, and there are 400 men with him." <sup>7</sup> And Jacob became very frightened and anxious. So he divided the people who were with him, as well as the flocks, the cattle, and the camels, into two camps. <sup>8</sup> He said: "If E'sau attacks the one camp, then the other camp will be able to escape." <sup>9</sup> After that Jacob said: "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, you who are saying to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives, and I will deal well with you,' <sup>10</sup> I am unworthy of all the loyal love and of all the faithfulness that you have shown toward your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps. <sup>11</sup> Save me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother E'sau, for I am afraid of him that he may come and attack me, as well as the mothers and their children. <sup>12</sup> And you have said: 'I will certainly deal well with you, and I will make your offspring like the grains of sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'" <sup>13</sup> And he spent the night there. Then he took some of his possessions as a gift for E'sau his brother: <sup>14</sup> 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 female sheep, 20 rams, <sup>15</sup> 30 camels nursing their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 full-grown male donkeys. <sup>16</sup> He handed them over to his servants, one drove after another, and he said

to his servants: "Cross over ahead of me, and you are to set a space between one drove and the next." <sup>17</sup> He also commanded the first one: "In case E'sau my brother should meet you and ask, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these ahead of you belong?' <sup>18</sup> then you should say, 'To your servant Jacob. It is a gift sent to my lord, to E'sau, and look! he himself is also behind us.'" <sup>19</sup> And he commanded also the second, the third, and all those following the droves: "According to this word, you are to speak to E'sau when you meet him. <sup>20</sup> And you should also say, 'Here is your servant Jacob behind us.'" For he said to himself: 'If I appease him by sending a gift ahead of me, then afterward when I see him, he may give me a kindly reception.' <sup>21</sup> So the gift crossed over ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

## APRIL 27–MAY 3

### TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 34-35

#### "The Tragic Results of Bad Association"

**(Genesis 34:1)** Now Di'nah, Jacob's daughter by Le'ah, used to go out to spend time with the young women of the land.

w97 2/1 30 ¶4

#### Shechem—The City in the Valley

How would the young men of the city view this young virgin who regularly visited their city—apparently unaccompanied? A chieftain's son "got to see her and then took her and lay down with her and violated her." Why did Dinah court danger by associating with the immoral Canaanites? Was it because she felt she needed the company of girls her own age? Was she as headstrong and independent as some of her brothers? Read the Genesis account, and try to comprehend the distress and shame that Jacob

and Leah must have felt because of the tragic consequences of their daughter's visits to Shechem.—Genesis 34:1-31; 49:5-7; see also *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1985, page 31.

**(Genesis 34:2)** When She'chem, the son of Ha'mor the Hi'vite, a chieftain of the land, saw her, he took her and lay down with her and violated her.

**Ivs 124 ¶14**

**“Flee From Sexual Immorality!”**

<sup>14</sup> Shechem did what seemed natural and acceptable to him. Because he was attracted to Dinah, he “took her” and “violated her.” **(Read Genesis 34:1-4.)** This crime started a series of events that resulted in tragedy for Dinah and her whole family.—Genesis 34:7, 25-31; Galatians 6:7, 8.

**(Genesis 34:7)** But the sons of Jacob heard about it and returned from the field right away. They were offended and very angry because he had disgraced Israel by lying down with Jacob's daughter, something that should not be done.

**(Genesis 34:25)** However, on the third day, when they were still in pain, two sons of Jacob, Sim'e-on and Le'vi, Di'nah's brothers, each took his sword and went into the unsuspecting city and killed every male.

**w09 9/1 21 ¶1-2**

**When You Are Offended**

Oftentimes, those seeking retaliation do so in an effort to ease the emotional pain of an offense. For example, the Bible tells us that when the sons of the Hebrew patriarch Jacob learned that the Canaanite Shechem had violated their sister Dinah, they “became hurt in their feelings and they grew very angry.” (Genesis 34:1-7) To avenge the wrong done to their sister, two of Jacob's sons plotted against Shechem and his household. Using a ruse, Simeon and Levi en-

tered the Canaanite city and killed every male, including Shechem.—Genesis 34:13-27.

Did all that bloodshed settle the matter? When Jacob learned of his sons' actions, he rebuked them, saying: “You have brought ostracism upon me in making me a stench to the inhabitants of the land, . . . and they will certainly gather together against me and assault me and I must be annihilated, I and my house.” (Genesis 34:30) Yes, instead of settling matters, their vengeful actions had the opposite effect; Jacob's family now had to be wary of counterattacks by angry neighbors. Likely to prevent such an outcome, God instructed Jacob to move his family out of the area to Bethel.—Genesis 35:1, 5.

**Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Genesis 35:8)** Later Deb'o-rah, Re-bek'ah's nurse, died and was buried at the foot of Beth'el under an oak. So he named it Al'lon-bac'uth.

**it-1 600 ¶14**

**Deborah**

**1.** Rebekah's nurse. When Rebekah left the household of her father Bethuel to move to Palestine and marry Isaac, Deborah accompanied her. (Ge 24:59) After years of service in Isaac's household, Deborah came to be in Jacob's household, perhaps after the death of Rebekah. Evidently some 125 years after Rebekah's marriage to Isaac, Deborah died and was buried under a big tree at Bethel. The name given to the tree (Allon-bacuth, meaning “Massive Tree of Weeping”) indicates how beloved she had become to Jacob and his family.—Ge 35:8.

**(Genesis 35:22-26)** Once while Israel was dwelling in that land, Reu'ben went and lay down with Bil'hah his father's concubine, and Israel heard about it. So there were 12 sons of Jacob. <sup>23</sup> The sons by Le'ah were Jacob's firstborn Reu'ben, then Sim'e-on, Le'vi, Ju-

dah, Is'sa-char, and Zeb'u-lun. <sup>24</sup> The sons by Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin. <sup>25</sup> And the sons by Bil'hah, Rachel's servant, were Dan and Naph'ta-li. <sup>26</sup> And the sons by Zil'pah, Le'ah's servant, were Gad and Ash'er. These are Jacob's sons, who were born to him in Pad'dan-a'ram.

## w17.12 14

### Questions From Readers

#### **In ancient Israel, was the line leading to the Messiah tied to the right of the firstborn?**

We have at times made comments to that effect. That seemed to agree with what we read at Hebrews 12:16. That verse says that Esau did *“not appreciate sacred things”* and *“gave up [to Jacob the] rights as firstborn* in exchange for one meal.” This appeared to suggest that when Jacob gained the “rights as firstborn,” he also came in line to be an ancestor to the Messiah.—Matt. 1:2, 16; Luke 3:23, 34.

However, a review of Bible accounts shows that a man did not need to be a firstborn son to be an ancestor of the Messiah. Consider some of the evidence:

Of the sons of Jacob (Israel), his firstborn by Leah was Reuben. Later, Jacob's first son by his favored wife, Rachel, was Joseph. When Reuben became guilty of misconduct, the right of firstborn passed to Joseph. (Gen. 29:31-35; 30:22-25; 35:22-26; 49:22-26; 1 Chron. 5:1, 2) Still, the Messianic line came down through neither Reuben nor Joseph. It was through Judah, Jacob's fourth son by Leah.—Gen. 49:10.

### **Bible Reading**

**(Genesis 34:1-19)** Now Di'nah, Jacob's daughter by Le'ah, used to go out to spend time with the young women of the land.

<sup>2</sup> When She'chem, the son of Ha'mor the Hi'vite, a chieftain of the land, saw her, he took her and lay down with her and violated her.

<sup>3</sup> And he became very attached to Di'nah, the

daughter of Jacob, and he fell in love with the young woman and spoke persuasively to her.

<sup>4</sup> Finally She'chem said to Ha'mor his father: “Get me this young woman to be my wife.”

<sup>5</sup> When Jacob heard that he had defiled Di'nah his daughter, his sons were with his herd in the field. So Jacob kept silent until they returned.

<sup>6</sup> Later Ha'mor, She'chem's father, went out to speak with Jacob. <sup>7</sup> But the sons of Jacob heard about it and returned from the field right away. They were offended and very angry because he had disgraced Israel by lying down with Jacob's daughter, something that should not be done. <sup>8</sup> Ha'mor spoke with them, saying: “My son She'chem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as his wife, <sup>9</sup> and form marriage alliances with us. Give us your daughters, and take our daughters for yourselves. <sup>10</sup> You may dwell with us, and the land will become available for you. Dwell and carry on trade in it and settle in it.”

<sup>11</sup> Then She'chem said to her father and to her brothers: “Let me find favor in your eyes, and I will give you whatever you ask me. <sup>12</sup> You can demand from me a very high bride price and gift. I am willing to give whatever you may say to me. Just give me the young woman as a wife.” <sup>13</sup> And Jacob's sons answered She'chem and Ha'mor his father deceitfully because he had defiled Di'nah their sister.

<sup>14</sup> They said to them: “We cannot possibly do such a thing, to give our sister to a man who is not circumcised, for that is a disgrace to us. <sup>15</sup> We can only consent on this condition: that you become like us and circumcise all your males. <sup>16</sup> Then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will dwell with you and become one people. <sup>17</sup> But if you do not listen to us and get circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go.” <sup>18</sup> Their words pleased Ha'mor and She'chem, Ha'mor's son. <sup>19</sup> The

young man did not delay in doing what they asked, because he found delight in Jacob's daughter, and he was the most honorable of the whole house of his father.