JACOB'S BARGAIN WITH LABAN
Old Testament Lesson #23

After the birth of Jacob's 11th son, Joseph, Jacob asked Laban's permission to return to his homeland. He had already served Laban for 14 years (seven years before his marriages to Leah and Rachel and seven afterward). Laban asked Jacob to please stay. Laban understood that God had blessed him because Jacob was working for him. He asked Jacob what wages would persuade him to stay.

Jacob replied that Laban did not have to pay him anything, but he would continue tending the flocks if Laban would agree to give Jacob any sheep or goat that was spotted, speckled or dark-colored. Laban would keep the solid-colored ones.

The same day Laban agreed to Jacob's terms, Laban went through the flock and removed all the males that were speckled or spotted or dark-colored. Without the speckled animals, it would be nearly impossible for speckled or spotted offspring to be conceived. Laban put these animals in the care of his sons and separated them from the rest of his flock by a distance of three days' journey.

Despite Laban's efforts, God was with Jacob and blessed him and caused speckled and spotted animals to be born. Jacob wisely managed Laban's flock, working so that only the strongest sheep and goats were bred to produce speckled or spotted offspring. He continued to separate the animals, the weak from the strong, with the weaker ones going to Laban and the stronger ones to himself.

In this manner, Jacob "grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks." He also acquired camels and donkeys and had many servants. Yet, Jacob never forgot that it was through the hand of God that these blessings and successes came (see Genesis 31:4-13).

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

• Jacob learned some valuable lessons through all the deceptions of Laban. He learned to trust in God and in the promises God had made. He did not complain or seek to get around what Laban did but rather trusted God and continued to work diligently at his job. This allowed God to bless him so that he became quite prosperous. It helped teach Jacob not to take matters into his own hands (as he and Rebekah had done in stealing the blessing from Esau) but to trust God's promises.

Jacob's Bargain With Laban

I. Jacob wanted to return to his homeland.
   A. He had served Laban for 14 years and asked to leave.
   B. Laban wanted to know what would cause Jacob to stay.

II. Laban agreed to keep the solid-colored animals himself and to give the others to Jacob.
   A. Laban broke the promise.
   B. Through Jacob's management and God's blessing, Jacob ended up with the strongest sheep and goats.

III. Jacob grew wealthy and never forgot God's hand in his success.
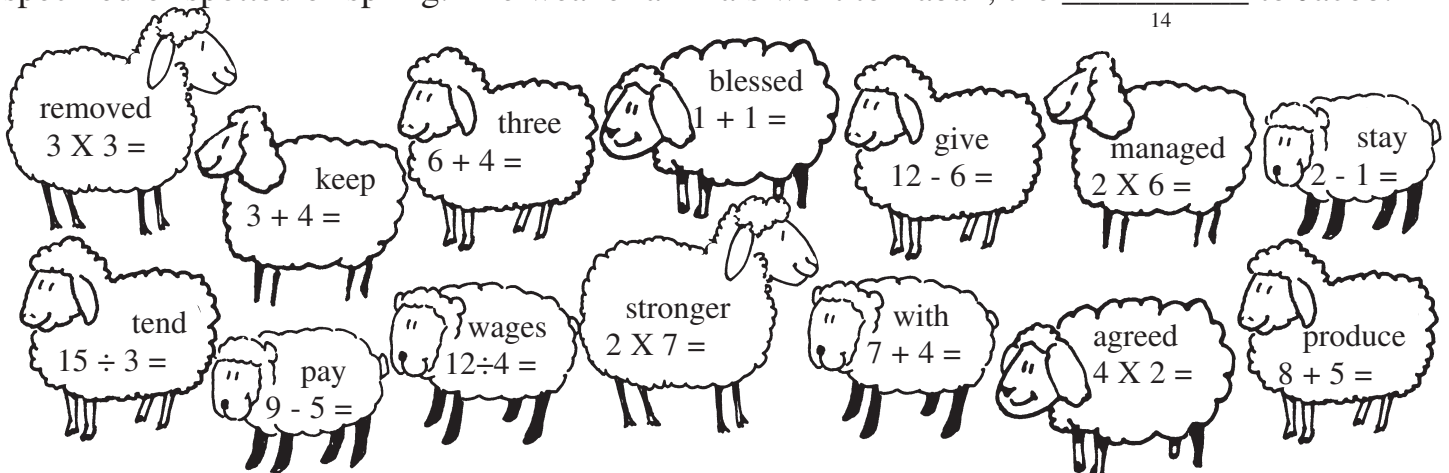
ANSWER KEY:

stay, blessed, wages, pay, tend, give, keep, agreed, removed, three, with, managed, produce, stronger

Through the hand of God

J acob had served Laban for 14 years. He asked Laban's permission to return to his homeland.

> Complete the story with the words from the flock below.
> Answer each math problem to find which words go on which lines.

Laban said, "Please _____." Laban knew God had _____ him because Jacob
1   2

was working for him. Laban asked Jacob what _____ would persuade him to stay.
3

Jacob said he did not have to _____ him anything, but he would continue to _____
4   5

the flocks if Laban would agree to _____ Jacob any sheep that was spotted, speckled or
6

dark-colored. Laban would _____ the solid-colored animals. That same day, after he
7

_____ to Jacob's terms, Laban went through the flock and _____ all the
8   9

spotted, speckled or dark-colored males. He put them under the care of his sons, _____
10

days' journey away. Despite Laban's effort, God was _____Jacob and blessed him.
11

Jacob wisely _____ the flock. He worked with the strongest animals to _____
12   13

speckled or spotted offspring. The weaker animals went to Laban, the _____ to Jacob.
14

removed
3 X 3 =

keep
3 + 4 =

three
6 + 4 =

blessed
1 + 1 =

give
12 - 6 =

managed
2 X 6 =

stay
2 - 1 =

tend
15 ÷ 3 =

pay
9 - 5 =

wages
12 ÷ 4 =

stronger
2 X 7 =

with
7 + 4 =

agreed
4 X 2 =

produce
8 + 5 =

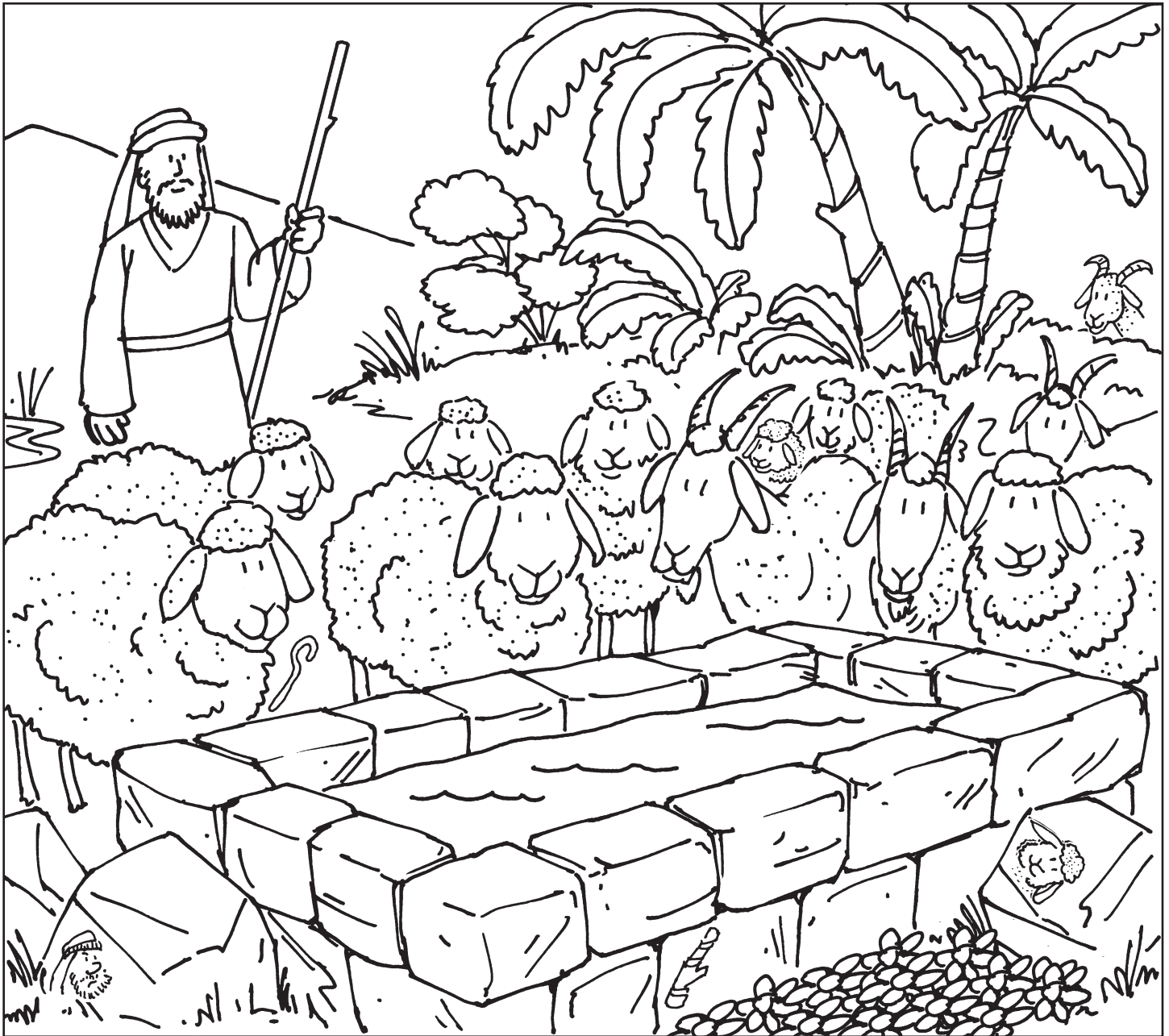> Unscramble the letters that do not overlap. They will form words.

Jacob grew very prosperous. He owned large flocks, servants, camels and donkeys. Jacob never forgot how his blessings and success had come. How did Jacob's blessing come?

_____   _____   _____   ____   _____

Name _____

JACOB'S BARGAIN WITH LABAN   GENESIS 30:25-43

Rachel's father, Laban, tried to cheat Jacob. But with God's help, Jacob kept getting more sheep and goats.

Circle these hidden items.

Name _____

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