

Jacob Returns Home

Genesis 33

Level C Teacher Overview



Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men.... Then Jacob crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Genesis 33:1,3,4

For Teachers:

Thank you for teaching! We hope this lesson will be enjoyable for you to teach and memorable for your students.

This Sunday School lesson is designed to accompany the *SHIFT: Small Changes. Big Difference.* program available from General Church Outreach. Further information for the week's story can be found in the adult workbook.

This lesson has several activity options. You may wish to choose 2-3. Reading through all of the options will help you identify the activities that are best suited to your group's size, gender mix, available supplies, and the time you have to prepare. You may also want to mix and match activities from other age levels.

Activity Options:

1. Talk About It
2. Illustration: Jacob Meeting Esau
3. Look Closer: Canaan's Compass
4. Explore: Letting Love Lead

Your feedback and statistical information will help us continue to provide quality Sunday School materials. Please take a moment to fill out the brief form on the next page soon after you finish teaching.

Teacher Feedback

Week 7 - Level C

The General Church Office of Education wants to support you in the important work of teaching Sunday School and leading youth groups. If you have questions—age ranges, curriculum, classroom discipline, safety, etc.—please feel free to contact us.

Email: sundayschool@newchurch.org **Phone:** 267-502-4949 **Fax:** 267-502-4935

Mail: Office of Education, P.O. Box 743, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, USA

Your Input Is Vital!

Please take a moment to complete this information and send it back to us by one of the methods listed in the box above.

Name of Congregation/Group:

Number of Students You Taught Today:

Materials Used Today (check all that apply):

- Talk About It**
- Illustration: Jacob Meeting Esau**
- Look Closer: Canaan's Compass**
- Explore: Letting Love Lead**

We welcome your comments:

Did you know that the General Church Office of Education offers a Sunday School E-Newsletter to let you know about available programs and resources? Each edition features classroom-ready ideas, teaching tips, and suggestions for maximizing your program's success. Subscription is free! To be added to our mailing list, send your email address to sundayschool@newchurch.org.

Talk About It

Reading: Genesis 33

Jacob comes towards Esau, humbly bowing to the ground seven times as he approaches. Esau, rather than being vengefully angry, looks on Jacob with compassion and love. The brothers joyfully embrace. Esau tries to refuse Jacob's gifts, saying that he has plenty, and he blesses Jacob. Esau proposes that they journey together but Jacob lets him go ahead saying that his group will need to travel slowly because of both the children and the flocks. Esau leaves and Jacob travels to Shechem where he buys land, builds a house and sets up an altar.

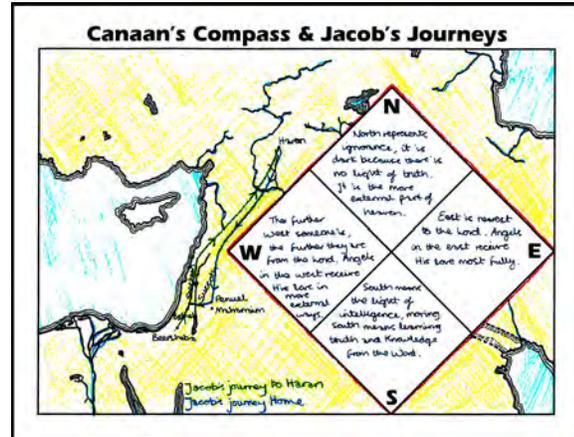
1. Have you ever bowed down to another person? (yes/no; some might think of bowing in prayer) Let's take this idea to a higher level. Have you ever bowed your spirit down to another person? (Draw out experiences of humility e.g. when they obeyed their parents, or made a friend's wish more important than their own.)
2. Why is humility important? (We cannot go to heaven unless we humbly submit ourselves to the Lord's will. A person who feels above others is ruled by self-love and does not care about what belongs to the Lord (see *Arcana Coelestia* 4347).)
3. Jacob bowed down seven times before meeting Esau. What other stories in the Word feature the number seven? (e.g. days of creation (Genesis), seven seals (Revelation), etc.) Numbers in the Word have special meanings. What clues do these examples give about the meaning of the number seven? (Seven means what is holy; a complete state. Jacob bows seven times in complete submission; for us this represents a state in which we are willing to submit everything to the Lord—to truly acknowledge “Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever” (see *Arcana Coelestia* 4347).)
4. What did Jacob see in Esau's face? (the face of God; Genesis 33:10) What qualities of the Lord's expression do you think Jacob saw in Esau? Describe a time when you saw the qualities of the Lord's face in another person's face.
5. What qualities in us help us to sense the Lord's warmly smiling face? (when we do what He teaches in His Word, e.g. help others, practice honesty, stop before saying something unkind, etc.)
6. Can the Lord be unhappy with a person? (The Lord loves us so much that “He is not even able to turn His face away from a person and frown upon him” *True Christian Religion* 56e).
7. Esau invited Jacob to go forward with him—but Jacob told him to go on ahead. What did this show Esau? (that Jacob did not want his needs to make Esau's journey more difficult) Give an example of a way in which you can put others' welfare first (e.g. let another person have their wish, offer a choice to someone else first, listen, etc.)
8. Jacob built an altar as soon as he settled which is a symbol that he put the Lord first in his life. In what ways can you put the Lord first in your life?



Look Closer: Canaan's Compass

At a Glance:

This is the third and final map activity about the land of Canaan. This lesson further introduces the New Church concept that there is a relationship between the physical features of the land of Canaan and spiritual ideas. When seen spiritually the land of Canaan is a picture of heaven. The directions north, south, east and west reflect a person's relationship with the Lord. When the Word mentions east, it is describing states when we are closest to the Lord. The west indicates being at a further distance from the Lord. The clear light of intelligence shines in the south. The light of intelligence is darker and more obscure in the north. Students will trace Jacob's journeys on the map of Canaan and note the meanings of the directions that Jacob traveled.



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Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- blank map to complete
- *Canaan's Compass* student page
- pencil or pen
- colored pencils or markers
- one or two *Teacher Copy* maps for the class to share
- *optional*: large contour map of the land of Canaan to show students

Directions:

1. Tell students that today we will take a look at Jacob's journeys with a special view to the directions he traveled. Each compass direction has a special spiritual meaning.
2. Read *Canaan's Compass* student page with the class.
3. Using the *Canaan's Compass* student page, write a brief summary of the meaning of each compass direction in the compass boxes on the map of Canaan.
4. Name the main cities Jacob visited.
5. Draw the route of Jacob's journeys using the *Teacher Copy* as a guide. Think about the directions Jacob traveled as you complete the map.

Canaan's Compass

The four corners of the earth mean all states of the goodness of love and the truth of faith. East and west mean varying states of the goodness of love, and south and north mean varying states of the truth of faith (see *Arcana Coelestia* 9642).

Have you ever noticed how many times north, south, east and west are mentioned in the Word? Look up the following passages to find out what is being described.

Reference from the Word	What is described?
Genesis 2:8	
Numbers 2:3,10,18,25	
Luke 13:29	
Revelation 21:13	

Why are these directions important? What clues do the directions give us about what is happening spiritually in the Word?

East

The east has long been regarded as sacred. It is where the sun rises. Many religions turn toward the east to worship. Some cultures bury their dead facing the east. In heaven the Lord appears in the east as the heavenly sun. So angels turning toward the east in heaven are turning their minds towards the Lord so that they can receive His love (warmth) and wisdom (light). The angels who live in the east part of heaven receive the Lord's love most fully into their lives in childlike innocence (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 121). When east is mentioned in the Word it signals a state in which people are especially receiving the Lord's love. When the human race was in its infancy people loved the Lord and lived in a garden "towards the east" (Genesis 2:8).

West

When an angel turns toward the east, his or her back faces west—towards the sunset. The further someone moves towards the west, the further he or she moves away from the Lord. People living in the west in heaven receive the Lord's love in more external ways. They still love the Lord, but less than those in the east.

South

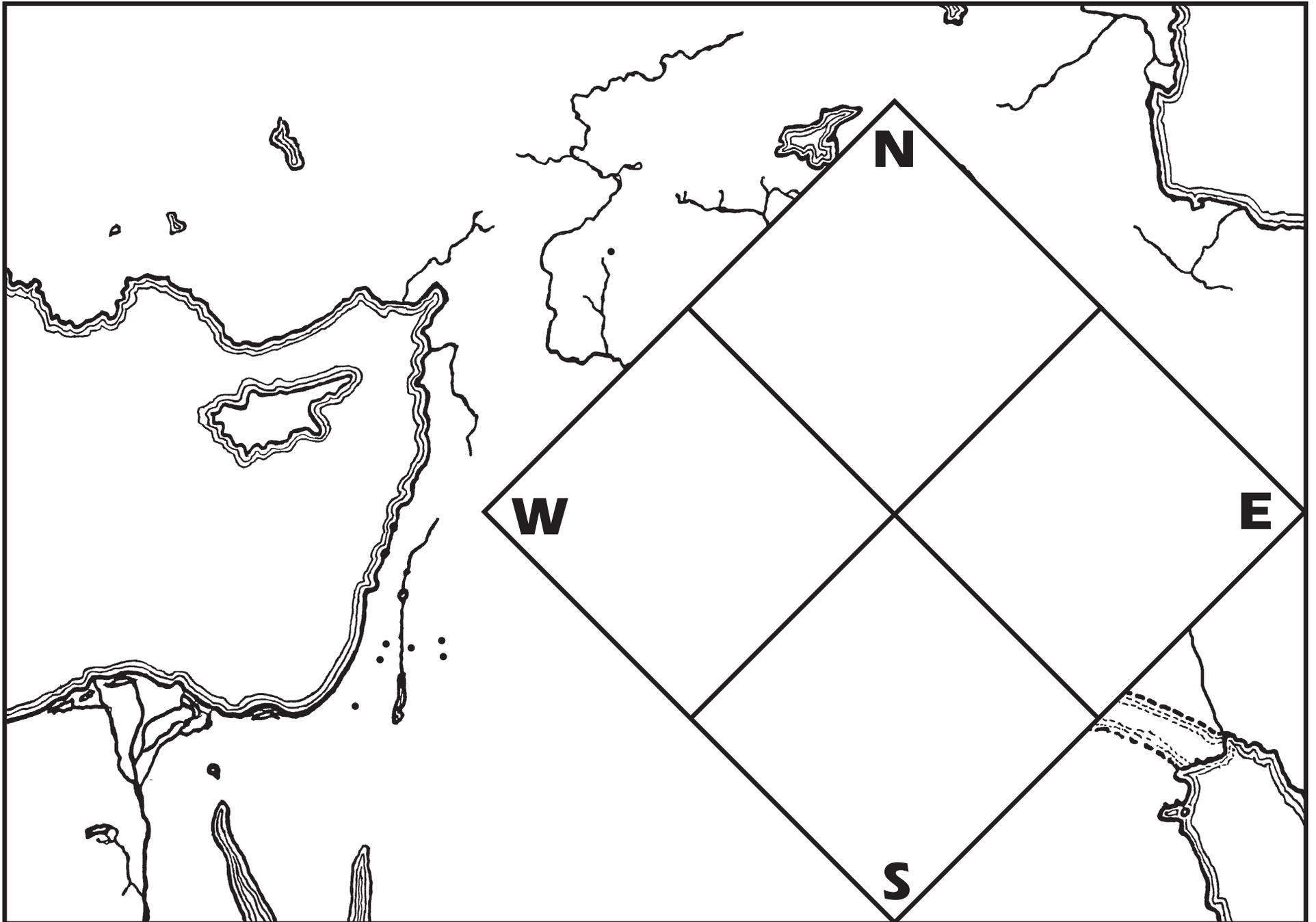
In Canaan the south receives full sunlight. When we see things in sunlight, we see them clearly. Truth in the Word is often compared to light. An ability to see natural objects in greater light is like the capacity for seeing spiritual things in the light of more truth. South means the clear light of intelligence. People who live in the south in heaven live in the light of what is good and true in the Word (*Arcana Coelestia* 9642).

North

The north is the darkest of all directions. In Canaan whatever faces north is in shadow. Spiritually speaking people living in the north do not have the light of truth. They live in the darkness of ignorance. The north is a more external part of heaven. Angels who live there receive less of the Lord's truth. Taking a journey from the north to the south pictures the spiritual journey we take as we gain knowledge, or truth, from the Word.

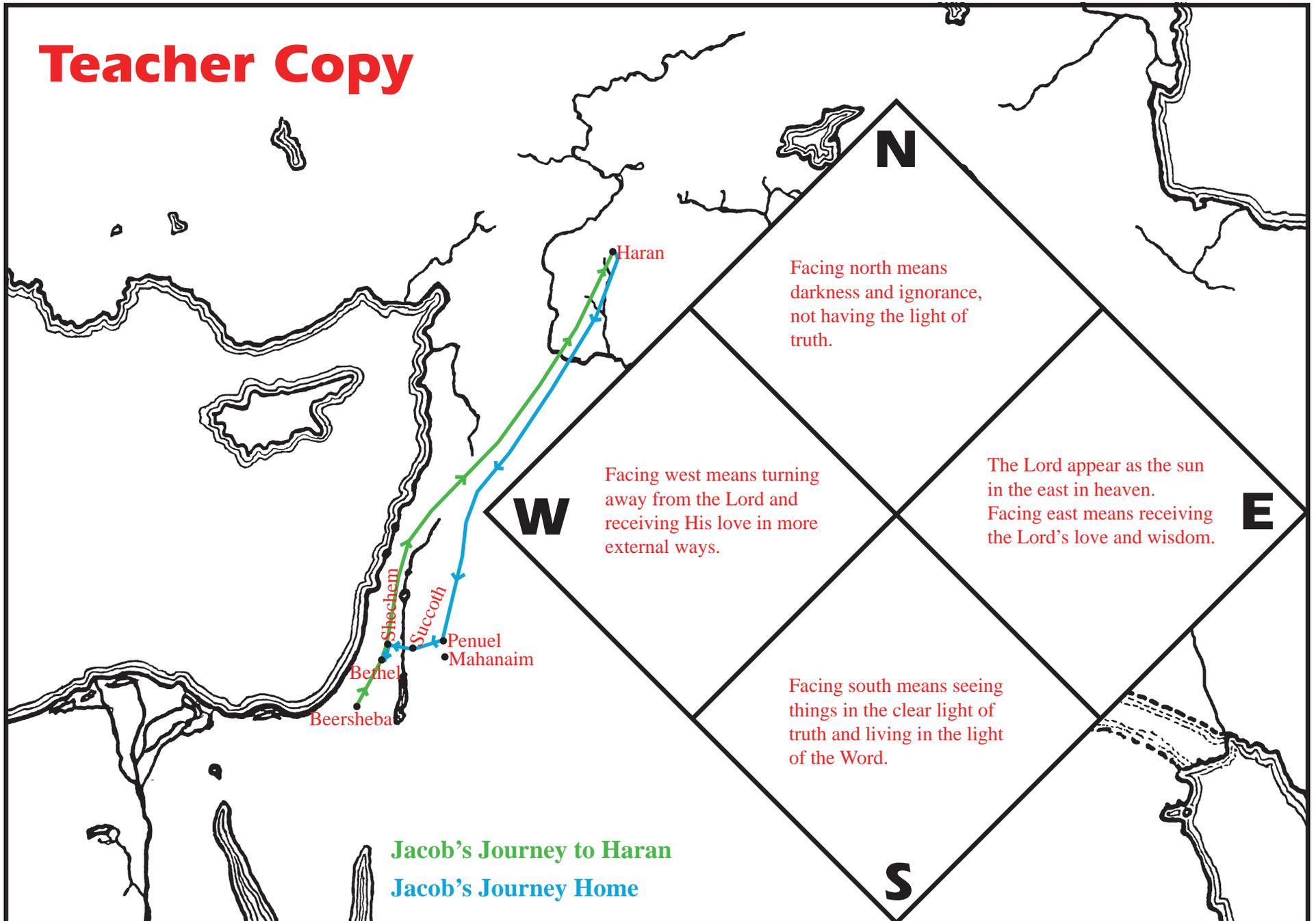


Canaan's Compass & Jacob's Journeys



Canaan's Compass & Jacob's Journeys

Teacher Copy



Explore:

Letting Love Lead

At a Glance:

Students will read selections from the Heavenly Doctrine describing the appearance of angels and devils and draw a cartoon depicting their spiritual qualities.

Teacher Background:

After years of separation Jacob and Esau are finally reunited. The brothers represent two parts of the human mind—the power of reason and the desire to act.

At the start of life a person tends to think about and love himself. To become heavenly a person must learn true ideas from the Word and then consciously live according to them. As these ideas are willingly put into action the person is in the process of being regenerated or made new by the Lord. The Lord will gradually give the person new motivations that re-structure his or her thinking.

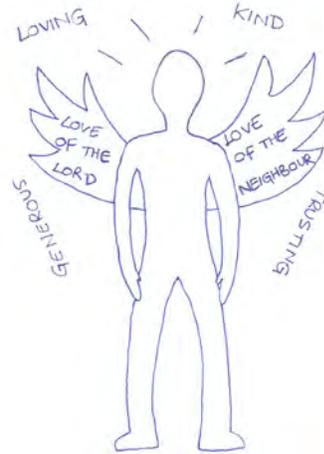
After death people appear to others as a form of what they love. People who love the Lord and others appear in the beautiful form of the marriage of goodness and truth and become angels. People who love themselves and worldly possessions appear in the ugly form of the marriage between selfishness and false thinking.

Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- blank paper
- pen or pencil
- *Angels and Devils* page
- one copy of sample drawings page to show the class

Directions:

1. Read each of the following statements. Ask students to tell you whether each statement is true or false.
 - When we are alive in the natural world we do not necessarily act the way we think. (T)
 - After death, once we go to heaven or hell we will not necessarily act the way we think. (F)
 - After death we will only act the way we think. (T, once a person has left his first state of mind in the life after death—in the world of spirits)
 - After death others will know whether we really believe what we are saying. (T)



Explore: Letting Love Lead continued

2. Today's story about Esau and Jacob pictures a time in our lives when what we believe is truly and honestly reflected in how we act.
3. This story follows a period in Jacob's life when he worked hard for Laban and became a wealthy man. This is similar to the work it takes to learn and live according to what the Lord teaches in His Word. The spiritual "wealth" we gain from this conscious obedience allows the Lord to form a new mental framework in our minds. As we delight in the truth and put it into action in our life, our new will develops and grows. From this new will the Lord gives us a "new understanding." People who choose this path become angels after death.
4. People who choose not to open their minds to higher spiritual thoughts remain in worldly and false ways of thinking. If false thinking goes hand in hand with selfishness or a love for worldly possessions a person is choosing a path that leads to a life in hell after death.
5. Hand out *Angels and Devils* student page. These passages from the Heavenly Doctrine describe the power and beauty of angels and the poverty and distortion of the selfishness of devils.
6. Read the passages. Choose whether you wish to focus on the qualities of angels or devils. Draw a cartoon to illustrate these qualities. Some cartoon examples are included for you to look at.
7. Encourage students to discuss their work and share it with others.



The Form of Angels and Devils

We read that human beings were created in the image of God, according to His likeness (Genesis 1:26-27)...A likeness and image of God is clearly apparent in angels, for love shines from within in their faces, and wisdom in their beauty, beauty being the outward expression of their love (*Divine Love and Wisdom* 358).

For a person to be in the form of heaven he must be taught the laws of Divine order from the Word. To the extent that a person knows and lives according to these because it is the Lord's will, his internal person is opened and the order of heaven is formed there. When the Lord forms a person anew (regenerates him), He arranges all things in him in accordance with order or into the form of heaven (see *Heaven and Hell* 202).

Angels are given clothes according to their intelligence or the Divine truth they have received from the Lord. The garments of some angels blaze as if with flame and those of others glisten as if with light. Some have garments that are a radiant white and others have garments of various colors (see *Heaven and Hell* 179).

One single angel is more powerful than ten thousands of spirits in hell—not from himself, but from the Lord. He has power from the Lord to the extent that he believes he can achieve nothing from himself. He is able to have such a belief in the measure that humility and a love for serving others exist in him, in other words, so far as he loves the Lord and behaves charitably to others (see *Arcana Coelestia* 3417).

The love of self takes away from others and robs others of all delight, and directs it to itself, for it wishes well to itself alone. The love of the world wishes to possess what belongs to other people. These loves destroy or take away the delights of others and the joys of heaven (see *Heaven and Hell* 399).

People in hell, being the opposite of what is good and true, are horribly ugly, and in the light of heaven do not look like human beings but like monsters (*Arcana Coelestia* 5199).

When love of the world forms the head, a person is merely hunchbacked; while if love of self forms the head, he is not like a man standing on his feet, but like one standing on the palms of his hands with his head down...but if the love of the world or of wealth forms the head, he appears from heaven with a pale face like that of a corpse, and a yellowish circle about the head. And if love of self, or of ruling over others, forms the head, he appears from heaven with a dusky-glowing face and a white circle about the head (*True Christian Religion* 507:2,3).

People are not aware that a spiritual sphere surrounds them. This sphere is determined by what they love. If a person is only interested in external things—from a perverse joy in hating others, revenge and cruelty, contempt for others, greed, deceit—the spiritual sphere which surrounds him stinks like the smell of dead bodies, refuse, and other things like this. Anyone who has been leading a life like this takes that sphere with him after death and lives in hell where such spheres belong (see *Arcana Coelestia* 4464:2).

