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GENESIS PART III - CHAPTER 26 -
ISAAC & REBEKAH TO JACOB
CHAPTER 26

Note: The page numbers in this part start at 300. This is so that references in the indices will indicate which of the five parts that reference is in. In other words "Nuts (45)" is a reference in Part I while "Nuts (172)" is a reference in Part II.

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There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. Then the Lord appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."

Genesis 26:1-5 (NKJV)

... *besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham.*" The account of Isaac and Rebekah begins with a famine. The text adds the above phrase to distinguish this account from the account we have already studied, and for good reason!

Because of the famine, Isaac went to Abimelech. Why? None of the source I checked seemed to know. It probably was the first stage of his migration down to Egypt. As he was preparing to continue further down to Egypt, the Lord appeared to him and instructed him not to go. But why? The Lord had not instructed Abraham not to go, so why Isaac?

Well, you go down to the beach, for example, and see thousands of people who all look, more or less alike - just a sea of humanity. That is what you see. God sees each and every one of us as individuals, speaks to us as individuals, and has individual plans for us. You can not do the work God has given me to do and I can not do the work God has given you. So, Abraham and Isaac were different persons and God had different plans. This is a round about way of saying "I don't know the answer to the question." but, nevertheless is true.

Besides that, Abraham wonderfully passes the test of faith in the offering of Isaac and so God is keeping His part in keeping them in the land of promise. This is brought out in the last part of this Scripture.

Abraham obeyed:

- *My voice*
- *My charge*
- *My commandments*
- *My statutes*

- *My laws."*

I would suppose this is an emphatic way of saying that Abraham did as God led him. But what does it all mean? I could give you the Hebrew terms for each of these and define them, but you would be not be any better off. I believe the best way of interpreting this is to say that Abraham obeyed the Lord in every possible way.

The Lord does the same with us (if we let Him). Sometimes the Lord speaks to me with his "voice" - not an audible voice but it has the same effect. Sometimes He "charges" me by putting it into my mind. And then, of course, we have the Bible with all of his commandments, statutes, and laws. To conclude, this is a very emphatic statement.

So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. And the men of the place asked about his wife. And he said, "She is my sister"; for he was afraid to say, "She is my wife," because he thought, "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she is beautiful to behold." Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she is your wife; so how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" And Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'" And Abimelech said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us." So Abimelech charged all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."

Genesis 26:6-11 (NKJV)

So, he remained at Gerar with the Phillistines. Then, afraid for his situation, he told them that Rebekah was his sister. What? We have been through this twice with Abraham! That is the problem. There is the old saying that we learn better by what people do than by what they say. His father had done it (and it was, no doubt, related to him at some point), so he does it.

The pretension went on for some time until something happened that I do not quite understand. Abimelech saw Isaac "showing endearment" to Rebekah (in public). I have always that this was forbidden in that culture. The word, צחק (tsaq), basically means "to laugh" or "to make sport of" and so it is used in the Old Testament, except here. What does it mean here? I would conclude that he did not see Isaac and Rabekah in the middle of a deep embrace - they were merely fooling around as married couples will do.

Abimelech confronted Isaac who, in this case, could not say "she really is my sister" as his father had done. The results were slightly different. Isaac was not sent away. He was not given gifts. He was only given the protection afforded by Abimelech.

There is yet one point to make here. If anyone touched Rebekah, the judgement was captial punishment. The word is emphatic in the Hebrew, "dying he shall die." and so it is translated in the newer translations. We must abolish capital punishment because the Bible says we can not do it? Poppycock!

Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold; and the Lord blessed him. The man began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of servants. So the

Philistines envied him. Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

Genesis 26:12-16 (NKJV)

As promised, the Lord prospered Isaac which was good news and bad news. It was good that he prospered, but it made him the envy of the Philistines. As a result, the Philistines "stopped up all the wells that Abraham's servants had dug. Wait a minute!

And he said, "You will take these seven ewe lambs from my hand, that they may be my witness that I have dug this well."

Genesis 21:30 (NKJV)

Abraham and Abimelech (presumably the same Abimelech) had made a treaty over, at least, one of his wells. So much for treaties! I had been in the practice of titling the sections of this study, this section would be titled "WELL, WELL, WELL!"

Abimelech's response is understandable. The land could support only so many and if Isaac's family and servants and cattle were increasing, there would not be room for them both.

Then Isaac departed from there and pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. He called them by the names which his father had called them. Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the name of the well Esek, because they quarreled with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also. So he called its name Sitnah. And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Genesis 26:17-22 (NKJV)

Isaac moved north again to Gerar. To his misfortune, in spite of the treaty Abraham had made and any others we do not know about, Abraham's wells had been filled in by the Philistines. I suppose that one may argue that the covenant was between Abraham and Abimelech so that, when Abraham died, the covenant was no longer in effect. I don't think you could find a lawyer that would agree that with but they didn't have as many lawyers in those days. It had been a number of years and some of the wells may have fallen to disuse anyway,

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT THE "WOMAN AT THE WELL"

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you **living water**." The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get **that living water?** Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?" Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a **fountain of water springing up** into

everlasting life."

John 4:10-14 (NKJV)

Have you ever asked yourself what "living water" is? The answer comes from a knowledge of Hebrew and Hebrew idioms. In the passage we are about to study, we are told that "they dug in the valley, and found a well of running water." It would be called, today, an artesian well - a well where the water is under pressure and comes to the surface on its own. All you need do is connect some plumbing and you have a (nearly) infinite supply of water for free.

In the Hebrew text, it is called a well of מים חיים (miin hiam) = "living water." K&D says this.

f. of water, flowing, fresh מים חיים Gn 26:19, Lv 14:5; 14:6; 14:50; 14:51; 14:52 15:13 Nu 19:17, Je 2:13 17:13 Zc 14:8 Ct 4:15

K&D, Genesis 26:19

A fountain of gardens, A well of living waters, And streams from Lebanon.

Song 4:15 (NKJV)

Since it was flowing (artesian) it appeared as if the well were alive and hence the expression. A "well of living water," in the Hebrew is this idiom. That the idiom is carried over into the Aramaic and Jesus' times is indicated that the Septuagint has here φρέαρ ὑδατος ζῶντος (phrear hydatos zontos) = "well of living water."

If you think of an artesian well with the water bubbling up to the surface and spewing out of the ground, you have a **fountain of water springing up** (John 4:14). An unlimited source of water, a picture of "everlasting life."

There are those who claim the study of the Old Testament is a waste of time but here is an example of where it sheds new light on the meaning of New Testament passages. I knew a lady Bible teacher once who claimed that the New Testament is the "frosting on the cake" (i.e. the Old Testament) and you have to have the cake before the frosting.

Back to the lesson! In addition to redigging the old wells, the dud this artesian well. But the Philistines claimed it was theirs! Why would it be? Perhaps their claim was that it was on their land and hence their well. The text does not say. The text does illustrate a New Testament teaching.

If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5:40-48 (NKJV)

Instead of quarreling, Isaac and his servants dug a second well, after naming the first Esek .עשק (hesek) = "To contend" or "to strive." It is in the Hithpael stem (reflexive and intensive). It is reflexive because the contended with each other and is not particularly significant. It is the intensive form of a verb, indicating that they did not simply walk away with "their tails between their legs." They did, however, leave the well to the others and dug a second one.

The same thing happened there except that it is not called a "well of living water." It would appear to be a less desirable well. There was still contention over that well so it was called Sitnah - שטנה (sitnah). This being the only place the word is found, we must assume that it has the meaning of "to quarrel." Finally, they also went the "third mile." This may be more literal than figurative as they kept moving were the dug and the third well may well have been out of the Philistine territory. There was no contention there and this would explain it.

The last well was called Rehoboth, Unger says,

2. The third of the series of wells dug by Isaac (Genesis 26:22). A Wadi Ruhaibeh, containing the ruins of a town of the same name, with a large well, is crossed by the road from Khan en-Nukhl to Hebron, by which Palestine is entered on the S. It lies about nineteen miles SW of Beersheba.

UNGER, Rehoboth

Apparently, the Philistines were not interested in this well so Isaac finally had his well. With this thought, he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." So he built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Genesis 26:23-25 (NKJV)

This section reads rather strange. He finally got a well and decided he could be fruitful in the land and then he moved to Beersheba and dug yet another well. But note the words, "Then he went . . ." Then? When? He may have moved many years later and so it is not like it sounds. The Lord appeared to him "that same night." This would be the first night in Beersheba. The expression אל תירא (al tira) - "Do not fear!" appears over fifty times in the Old Testament as God assures His people. Apparently Isaac had moved there for fear of Abimelech and the rest. God here gives him assurance by reiterating the promise made to Abraham.

Abraham had planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God. (21:33) and now Isaac built an altar there and, likewise, called on the name of the Lord. He "pitched his tent there" and his servant "dig a well." Both of these are indication of an intent to remain there. (By now, his servants must have been good a digging wells!)

Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, and Phichol the commander of his army. And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" But they said, "We have certainly seen that the Lord is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a

covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the Lord.' " So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. Then they arose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." So he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day.

Genesis 26:26-33 (NKJV)

And it came to pass at that time that Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, "God is with you in all that you do. . . . Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

Genesis 21:22 & 31 (NKJV)

Abimelech came to Abraham at Beersheba and now he repeats this with Isaac. According to Unger, this "Abimelech" was probably the son of the one who came to Abraham. It makes little difference.

Abraham accepted him openly for he had no reason to do otherwise. Isaac, on the other hand, asks, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" It is a strong word to use, to "hate" - אָשַׁח (shenah). We will find it with respect to Joseph's brothers hating him in Genesis 37.

Abimelech says with respect to this, "we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace." If you consider taking Isaac's wells away from him and etc. "good" then I guess he is correct. Otherwise, Abimelech is a liar. The later is evident by the fact that, before saying this, he showers Isaac with compliments, "We have certainly seen that the Lord is with you." It really is not a compliment but an admission that he is afraid of what God might do to him! Finally, he points out that Isaac was blessed of the Lord which, I suppose, would make Isaac more susceptible to the offer of Abimelech.

As with Abraham, they swore an oath there, basically reaffirming that covenant with Abraham. "And it came to pass the same day" is surely an important phrase. Abimelech was happy to swear an oath with Isaac while he was there with, apparently, no water. But, as soon as he leaves, the servants report to Isaac they have dug a well and found water. It might have been quite different had Abimelech known this - had he not already confiscated several wells?

The text indicates that Isaac called the place Beersheba ("well of the seven" - the seven animals used in the covenant) but Abraham had already done this! K&D say this.

"Therefore the city was called Beersheba." This derivation of the name does not shut the other (21:31) out, but seems to confirm it. As the treaty made on oath between Abimelech and Isaac was only a renewal of his covenant concluded before with Abraham, so the name Beersheba was also renewed by the well Shebah. The reality of the occurrence is supported by the fact that the two wells are in existence still (vid., Gen 21:31).

K&D, Genesis 26:33

When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.
Genesis 26:34-35 (NKJV)

This verse really belongs to the next chapter so we shall deal with it there.

Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." And he answered him, "Here I am." Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

Genesis 27:1-4 (NKJV)

In the last chapter, Isaac (and Rebecah and the rest) settled at Beersheba and there they probably live a number of years so that, now, Isaac has become an old man of about 137 years. The term is kind of curious, זקן (Zqan) appears to originate from , *"according to Thes, Arabic (image) a she-camel that lets her lower lip hang down."*¹ which, apparently, old lady camels do. Along with being old, he apparently had cataracts - his eyes were "dim." The term, כהה (caah) = "dim" comes from either the fact that cataracts make ones pupils appear dull (or dim) or that ones vision is dimmed. Both are true.

He called his son Esau. The text says his "older son" but we knew that. The addition is for emphasis. It didn't matter what his name was, what mattered is that he was Isaac's heir, being the oldest.

As noted by K&D, *without regard to the words which were spoken by God with reference to the children before their birth, and without taking any notice of Esau's frivolous barter of his birthright and his ungodly connection with Canaanites, Isaac maintained his preference for Esau.*²

With respect to the last part of the statement, we must look at the part of the previous chapter which we skipped over.

When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

Genesis 26:34-35 (NKJV)

Here I shall cite the entire comments from K&D.

Esau's Marriage.—To the various troubles which the Philistines prepared for Isaac, but which, through the blessing of God, only contributed to the increase of his wealth and importance, a domestic cross was added, which caused him great and lasting sorrow. Esau married two wives in the 40th year of his age, the 100th of Isaac's life (Gen 25:26); and that not from his own relations in Mesopotamia, but from among the Canaanites whom God had cast off. On their names, see Gen 34:2-3. They became "bitterness of spirit," the cause of deep trouble, to his parents, viz., on account of their Canaanitish character, which was so opposed to the vocation of the patriarchs; whilst Esau by these marriages furnished another proof, how thoroughly his heart was set upon earthly things.

K&D, Genesis 26:34-35

¹BDB

²K&D

That Isaac as very old is evidenced by the request he makes of Esau. Perhaps his spiritual eyes were also very dim!

Sensing he was about to die (but wasn't for a number of years), it was proper to pass his blessing on to his oldest son (normally). But, before he will do this, Isaac satisfies his physical appetite by requesting that Esau go out and get some meat and prepare him a savory dinner.

Esau did not say, "Wait, Dad, I sold my birthright to Jacob!" Whether this is because he didn't take the whole thing seriously, or he was content to let his father forget about it and get the blessing he had sold we can not say.

Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the Lord before my death.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death." And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing." But his mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me." And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Genesis 27:5-17 (NKJV)

This is not nice to say, but Rebekah must have inherited the habit of eavesdropping from Sarah. (18:10). Thus Rebekah formed a plan to get Isaac blessed instead of Esau. Something is wrong here because God had already promised it. It should not be necessary to resort to cunning tricks of which Paul wrote,

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,

Ephesians 4:11-14 (NKJV)

When God provides for us immediately, we have no problem. When we have to wait for a time, we get anxious and, as in this case, begin to take matters into our own hands. "Patience is a virtue" goes the old saying, but the Bible says more than that.

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may **the God of patience** and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,*

Romans 15:4-5 (NKJV)

remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and **patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ** in the sight of our God and Father,

1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NKJV)

... knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. **But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**

James 1:3-4 (NKJV)

It seems that no one did right in this case. Isaac should not have bribed Esau. Esau should have honored the sale of his birthright, Rebekah should not have eavesdropped and made the plan which we shall look at, and, finally, Jacob should not have gone along with it. I suppose this is an example of what Paul said,

As it is written:

"There is none righteous, no, not one;

There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

Romans 3:10-12 (NKJV)

Well, back to the plan! Esau grabbed his hunting equipment and left for the day. After telling Jacob what she had heard, she sent Jacob out to the flocks of goats (sheep would not have tasted like wild game) to select two choice goats, which he did..

Rebekah prepared a meal for Isaac. If anyone could prepare a meal that Isaac would like, she should have been able to. צַוָּה (tsah) = "command" is in the imperative and thus we might excuse Jacob on the basis he was supposed to honor his father and mother (i.e. do as they told him). With the food prepared, he would take it to his father. He would certainly get there before Esau since he did not have to go out and hunt for the animals.

It seems that Jacob was the only one with a little sense as he complained to Rebekah, *"Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."* It is a bit strange that Jacob brought this up except that he probably was jealous of Esau and hence this was always on his mind.

She replied with, *"Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me."* Whether or not she could choose to accept the curse, I do not know, but this eased the conscience of Jacob and he went. Meanwhile she gathered Esau's best clothes which were "with her in the house." K&D make a point of saying it was the house and not the tent. I am not sure what the significance of this might be. She then resorted to the greatest trickery of all. She put kid skins on Jacob's hands and neck so he would appear hairy like his brother. (Remember, Isaac eyesight was very poor!).

With the skins on and the food in his hands, Jacob was ready for the "great deception."

So he went to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?" Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me." But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because the Lord your God brought it to me." Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him. Then he said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He said, "I am." He said, "Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." And he came near and kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said:

*"Surely, the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field
Which the Lord has blessed.
Therefore may God give you
Of the dew of heaven,
Of the fatness of the earth,
And plenty of grain and wine.
Let peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren,
And let your mother's sons bow down to you.
Cursed be everyone who curses you,
And blessed be those who bless you!"*

Genesis 27:18-29 (NKJV)

It begins with Jacob entering Isaac's tent and speaking out "My father." Isaac replies "who are you" and adds "my son." The boy said "father" so he must be a son, but which one? The boy begins his frightful lie. He gives his brothers name, emphasizing the fact that "he is the firstborn." Jacob must not have been very tactful as he then invites his father to sit up and eat "that your soul may bless me" He wastes no time getting to the point.

In spite of his age, Isaac realized that the boy had returned home quite early, too soon to have hunted down some game, prepared it and brought it to him. So, now Jacob is in a bit of a fix! He settles it by stating, *"Because the Lord your God brought it to me."* I do not know about you, but to me lying is one thing, bringing the Lord into your lies is quite another! In a sense, it make the Lord out to be an accomplice. When you start to lie, you get yourself into situations like this where you are virtually forced to go even further with your lies.

SIDE NOTE: In the course of this study I have noted different names used for God. I have, perhaps, been neglectful in not stating why a particular name was used in a particular place. I felt, and still feel, that it would only complicate the study so have not done. I take a few lines here to review and make a few comments.

The first name we met up with was אלהים (Elohim) = "God". Then יהוה (Yahweh?) = Lord (or Yahweh). These are the predominate names. The first is in impersonal name that is more a description than a name = the all-powerful one. The second is a personal name which probably

should be Yahweh but we really do not know precisely what the pronunciation was so we usually use "Lord" (and sometimes Jehovah which is a bastardization between the Hebrew letters and the Hebrew vowel points for "lord"). Most of the other names are these two in connection with one or more other Hebrew terms (i.e. "God Almighty").

Some scholars(?) Divide the book of Genesis up on the basis of who wrote it - as identified by the name they used for God. This is absurd. We all used different names at different times. Sometimes we refer to "Pastor James Wickstrom," sometimes Pastor Jim," or just "Jim", etc. depending on the context. The different names for God are used depending on the context.

He claims "the Lord your God" helped him. I am not sure what these "scholars" do who divide the book up according to the names of God because Jacob uses both in one sentence! *"Because the Lord your God brought it to me."* (Literally, "caused it to be in front of me").

Again, Isaac is not so old as to have lost his senses. He is not convinced of Jacob's explanation. He wanted further proof. As expected, he wanted to feel his son, whether he was hairy or smooth. Even that plan did not go too smoothly. The hand felt o.k. but the voice was all wrong. Eventually, the hand won out over the voice and he was convinced it was Esau. Even so, he asked one more time, *"Are you really my son Esau?"* I wonder how many times Jacob had to lie and cheat in the course of this conversation.

How could the Lord possibly bless such a situation? Well, how could the Lord make David the greatest king of Israel in view of the sins David committed. If receiving a blessing from God depended on our never doing wrong - even very wrong, none of us would receive a blessing. Have you ever told a lie, especially to another Christian? Have you ever brought the Lord into your lie? If so, you have nothing to say here as you are as guilty as Jacob - except that you are made clean by the blood of Christ.

The last part of the deception was when Jacob when close to Isaac with Esau's clothing on and Isaac smelled the smell of the fields (Rebekah did use the right detergent). This clinched it for Isaac and he then gave his blessing. It is here recorded proleptically. I bet you do not know what that means - I didn't when I read it in K&D. According to Oxford, it is "2 the representation of a thing as existing before it actually does or did so, as in he was a dead man when he entered." In other words the final blessing is given here while we are studying the account rather than when it was actually pronounced.

The first part of the blessing is brought about because of Isaac's mental pictures of the fertile fields. *"Surely, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed Therefore may God give you of the dew of heaven, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine."* It deals with material blessings. God does give us material blessing as well as spiritual.

"Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!"

The last part of the blessing has political importance. Jacob was to be the master over nations, in a broad sense, and over his brothers in a narrow sense. The last part is a reiteration of the blessing pronounced on Abraham (Gen 12:9).

So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in

his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob." And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau comforts himself concerning you by intending to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran. And stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury turns away, until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?" And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

Genesis 27:41-46 (NKJV)

Lies are like viruses - they spread! They are also like poison in what they do to people. Esau was not happen with the turn of events - who would be! He wanted to kill Jacob. Perhaps the following phrase may need a bit of amplification. "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob." In other words, he would wait until after the death of Isaac before he did anything - out of respect for his father and also, most likely, in view of what his father might do to him.

Esau "hated" שָׂטָם (shitam) Jacob. According the BDB, "to cherish animosity against, accusative of person Gn 27:41." Note the word "cherish," according to Oxford, "2 to nurture (a hope or ambition)." It was something that he lived for! One could not keep this secret for long and thus Rebekah found out. In order to prevent his plan from succeeding, she sent Jacob back to her home and to Laban "for a few days." (Another lie!) It would not be a "few days" if Esau was waiting for Isaac to die!

In order to understand the statement, *Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?*" She is referring to what would happen to Esau as he killed Jacob.

"Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

Genesis 9:6 (NKJV)

Rebekah then turns to Isaac with another lie. She will send Jacob away to get a proper wife. That would satisfy him. In fact, Jacob procured two wives back there! So the deed is done. Jacob has the blessing and is back with Rebekah's family (and Laban). Isaac would die before long and Esau's intentions would be thwarted. It seems that things turned out pretty well, but did they?

Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him, and charged him, and said to him: "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

*"May God Almighty bless you,
And make you fruitful and multiply you,
That you may be an assembly of peoples;
And give you the blessing of Abraham,
To you and your descendants with you,
That you may inherit the land
In which you are a stranger,
Which God gave to Abraham."*

So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Genesis 28:1-5 (NKJV)

Isaac did what Abraham has before, wished for a wife for his son from his own kinspeople. However, the details are different. Let me put the two side by side.

Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to **the oldest servant** of his house, who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not **take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites**, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac." And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. The Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

Genesis 24:1-9 (NKJV)

Isaac called **Jacob** and blessed him,

and charged him, and said to him: **"You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.**

Arise, go to Padan Aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

←←←←←

Isaac sent Jacob himself whereas Abraham sent a servant with the instructions that, by all means, he should not take his son back there! Abraham only wanted a wife for Isaac from “his own people.” Whereas Isaac wanted Jacob to marry one of his first cousins. He made no provision for failure as Abraham did for the servant. Isaac sent no gifts as did Abraham.

In short, Isaac was very lax in the selection of a wife for Jacob. He never mentions the “Lord God,” God’s angel, or any other type of spiritual guidance. And, most notably, he did not insist that Jacob remain in the land of promise. The account of obtaining a bride for Isaac is very beautiful indeed. The account of obtaining a bride for Jacob is filled with problems.

What is the point? If your parents were very good Christians, following the Lord in all they did, where does that leave you? Your relationship with the Lord is up to you! You do not inherit a relationship with the Lord from your parents.

Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. Also Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. So Esau went to Ishmael and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Genesis 28:6-9 (NKJV)

“Monkey see, monkey do.” Upon see the above event with Jacob going to Padan Aram, Esau determined he would do “virtually” the same thing. He would not take a wife from the Canaanites (but, of course, as we read in the last chapter, he had already done so). As Isaac would marry his first cousin on this mother’s side, Esau would marry a first cousin on his father’s side, a daughter on Uncle Ishmael. Only one problem here as explained by Keil and Delitsch.

When Esau heard of this blessing and the sending away of Jacob, and saw therein the displeasure of his parents at his Hittite wives, he went to Ishmael—i.e., to the family of Ishmael, for Ishmael himself had been dead fourteen years—and took as a third wife Mahalath, a daughter of Ishmael (called Bashemath in Gen 36:3, a descendant of Abraham therefore), a step by which he might no doubt ensure the approval of his parents, but in which he failed to consider that Ishmael had been separated from the house of Abraham and family of promise by the appointment of God; so that it only furnished another proof that he had no thought of the religious interests of the chosen family, and was unfit to be the recipient of divine revelation.

K&D, Genesis 28:6-9

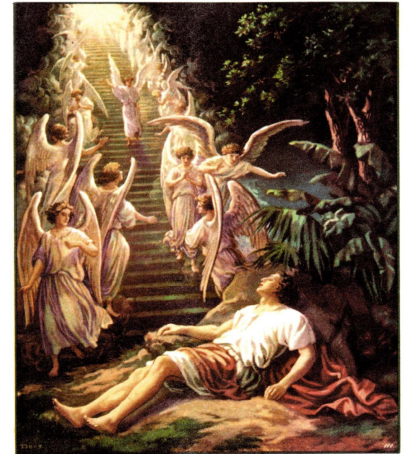
Nabajoth, by the way, was her brother. We now leave Esau, for a time, and go with Jacob as he seeks a wife.

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also

your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

Genesis 28:10-17 (NKJV)

One the way he slept out in the wilderness with a rock for a pillow (ouch). It is no wonder he had a strange dream. He saw a ladder ascending from the earth into heaven - hence all the illusions and hymns, etc. which refer to Jacob's Ladder. He also saw the angels "ascending and descending" on this ladder. The ladder was always there and will be until the end of the age, we just can not see it as Jacob did in his dream. As K&D put it, "*The ladder was a visible symbol of the real and uninterrupted fellowship between God in heaven and His people upon earth. The angels upon it carry up the wants of men to God, and bring down the assistance and protection of God to men.*"³ Have you ever looked at it that way? Do you feel that it is not that way with you? Perhaps, through broken fellowship, some of the rungs of the ladder are missing!



With this in view, the Lord spoke to him from the top of the ladder and gave him a promise. "*Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.*" What a promise? God would always be with Jacob until he returned home (and then thereafter as well). Would you like God to promise this to you?

Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**"

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV)

"Surely the Lord is in this place." Well, I have news for Jacob, the Lord is omnipresent - He is in all places, all of the time, not just at that particular spot. God is always available to us (Deuteronomy 4:7 Psalm 16:8, 35:22, 38:21, 71:12, 75:1, 119:151, 145:18 Isaiah, Isaiah 55:6 Jeremiah 23:23 Lamentations 3:57 Matthew 20:30 Acts 2:25, 17:27 Romans 10:6 Revelation 3:20).

Anyway, sensing God's presence there, "*he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! One should not be critical of his being afraid.*

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Hebrews 10:31 (NKJV)

"Awesome" אָרָא (irah) is from the same verb is "afraid" here He was afraid and said so! He then proclaim that this was the "house of God."

³K&D, verse 10-17

He also refers to it as “the gate of heaven” to which K&D say, “As a symbol of the means of access or entrance, gate is used in expressions such as "gate of death" (Psalm 9:13, "gate of the Lord" (Psalm 118:20), and "gate of heaven" (Genesis 28:17).

The importance of all this is that particular location was not “the house of God” because, again, the Lord is omnipresent. If you are a born again Christian, there is a ladder at your feet with angels ascending and descending to take care of your needs - only you can not see it.

Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Genesis 28:18-22 (NKJV)

There it is again, Jacob “rose early in the morning.” He had something important to do. He set up a primitive altar (apparently Isaac had not instructed him on the proper way), He called the place בית־אל (Bethel) = “The House of God.” (It was formally called Luz, of which there are several cities with that name).

There is something in what he said which you should take notice as it indicates his state of mind. He had seen “the Lord” (Yahweh) in that place. Had he seen God (Elohim)? I God, the great power of the universe, did as he requested, then he would know that “the Lord” would be his God - in other words, he would recognize the “Lord” as being one in the same as God. He would know what the Psalmist wrote.

*Know **that the Lord, He is God**; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*

Psalm 100:3 (NKJV)

In Genesis 35:7, Jacob did make an alter there and, presumable, offered a tithe to the Lord. When he was satisfied the Lord was, indeed, God, he became “Israel” rather than “Jacob.” (35:9). It is evident, then, that Jacob did not have the relationship with God that Abraham had. That will come. It is the same for us all. When we accept Christ, we do not have to have studied Christology (the study of Christ) and other theologic subjects - a simple believe will do. But then we are to grow as the Lord blesses us and come to a full understanding. This Jacob will do in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 29

So Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the East. And he looked, and saw a well in the field; and behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone was on the well's mouth. Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

Genesis 29:1-3 (NKJV)

Going back a few chapters, we had,

Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water.

Genesis 24:10-11 (NKJV)

In looking for Rebekah, the servant went to “*Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor*” whereas it says that Jacob went to the “*land of the people of the East.*” These are not necessary different places, only different descriptions. However, the wells were, apparently not the same wells, and this well was likely further from the city than the earlier well.

There is, apparently, a missing antecedent here because the text reads poorly as it is. As it reads, the sheep rolled the stone away from the well! There would not be flocks gathered at the well without the shepherds too who would roll the stone away. Why the stone? You can read four commentaries and get four different answers: (1) to keep the water from evaporating (not very likely); (2) to keep others from using your well (others could also roll the stone away), (3) to keep the blowing sand and dirt out of the well (quite plausible); etc. The point is, the shepherds cooperated and gathered there at set times and watered their flocks together. As we shall see, Rachael had not yet arrived and so they were just lying around waiting.

And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran." Then he said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him." So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And look, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep." Then he said, "Look, it is still high day; it is not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.

Genesis 29:4-8 (NKJV)

Jacob asked the shepherds where they were from and found that they were from Nahor and that Rachel, Laban's daughter was coming with her family's sheep. Not understanding the situation, Jacob scolded them for lying around since there was plenty of daylight left for the sheep to graze - water them and let them out to graze some more! They inform him that, since it takes several shepherds to roll the stone away, they wait for all of the flocks and water them at the same time. At this point a word of explanation is in order. It was not unusual for a shepherdess to be in charge of the family's sheep, as Rachel was. The shepherds who were there, no doubt, could have rolled the stone away, watered their sheep, replaced the stone and gone back to graze. But, when Rachael showed up, how would she water her sheep? Thus they wait until all were there.

Now while he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's relative and that he was Rebekah's son. So she ran and told her father.

Genesis 29:9-12 (NKJV)

Seeing Rachael, Jacob rolled the stone away all by himself! Presumably the other shepherds then watered their flocks as well. Jacob, however, water Rachael's flock.

"Then Jacob kissed Rachel." Those of you who subscribe to *"My True Romance"* or whatever will likely misinterpret this statement. The kiss is not necessarily an act of deep affection. If it were, Paul would not have written . . .

Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

Romans 16:16 (NKJV)

All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Corinthians 16:20 (NKJV)

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:12 (NKJV)

*Greet **all** the brethren with a holy kiss.*

1 Thessalonians 5:26 (NKJV)

"All" the brethren would include those of the opposite sex. I tried to promote this concept when I was in high school to no avail. As K&D state, *"Kissing the lips by way of affectionate salutation was customary among near relatives of both sexes, both in patriarchal and in later times (Genesis 29:11; Song 8:1). Between individuals of the same sex, and in a limited degree between those of different sexes, the kiss on the cheek as a mark of respect or an act of salutation has at all times been customary in the East."*⁴

Having kissed rachael, he "lifted up his voice and wept." If this sounds strange to you it is because you have to realize that weeping in Jacob's day was not with the eyes (only) but with the voice. It was then he introduced himself formally which seems out of order - I would have introduced myself and then kissed her. Perhaps he did and this refers to a more formal introduction. With this information, as would be expected, she ran home to tell her father. I wonder what happened to the sheep! Perhaps Jacob tended to them or one of the other shepherds.

Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all

⁴UNGER, Kiss

these things. And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month. Genesis 29:13-14 (NKJV)

Note that Laban also kissed Jacob as noted above. So, being invited into Laban's home, he told Laban "all these things." What things? Probably not much more than what had happened at the well the day and that his father, Isaac, instructed him to take a wife from one of Laban's daughters. This was sufficient for Laban to realize that Jacob was a kinsman and invited him to stay- for a whole month. I wonder what went on during that month?

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what should your wages be?" Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance. Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, "I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter." And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

Genesis 29:15-20 (NKJV)

From the above, it would appear that Jacob served Laban during that month and Laban began to get a guilty conscious and decided that Jacob needed some sort of compensation for his work.

It is at this point we find Laban had two daughters. So Jacob had two daughters to choose from. Leah, however, had "delicate" eyes. Many have taken this to mean her eyesight was not good. This is not likely the case. Commentators differ on what it does mean. Adam Clark says, "*The chief recommendation of Leah was her soft and beautiful eyes; but Rachel was beautiful in her shape, person, mien, and gait, and beautiful in her countenance.*"⁵ But JFB say, "*that is, soft blue eyes—thought a blemish.*"⁶ and K&D say, "*the elder daughter, Leah, had weak eyes, and consequently was not so good-looking; since bright eyes, with fire in them, are regarded as the height of beauty in Oriental women.*"⁷ Whichever, Rachael was regard by Jacob as the more beautiful of the two.

Is outward beauty a thing from which one would choose a wife? After spending a month there, Jacob musy surely have had opportunity to talk with both girls and so know of more than their outward appearance. Also, people's outward appearances is often affected by their internal beings. A person who looks like a slob probably is. A person who is grossly overweight most likely has emotional problems. Rachel was probably as beautiful on the inside as on the outside.

One wonders how Jacob knew about Rachel's beauty. In the part of the world, even today, should would not have gone around in a bikini! You can not tell much about a whether a person is "beautiful of form and appearance," when they wear long cloaks or tunics typical of that part of the world - outside. I do not know what they would wear inside the confines of the house.

⁵CLARK, Genesis 29:17

⁶JFB,

⁷K&D

We asked the question, do you pick a bride from their outward appearance? Well, next it says, "Jacob loved Rachel." which truly is the basis for a marriage (assuming it goes both ways). The rest of the conversation is a bit complicated.

One would think that Jacob would have asked Laban how long he would have to searview him in order to have Rachel as a bride but, no, he suggested the price. Seven years - why seven? Why any, Isaac did not have to serve any time for Rebekah - but he had plenty of gifts from Abraham to give her and her family - Jacob had nothing. K&D say "*just as many years as the week has days, that he might bind himself to a complete and sufficient number of years of service.*"⁸ I don't think this is the entire story, a week is seven days because of the creation with God resting the seventh day and, from this, seven became the number of perfection or completion. This is likely the reason.

I think back and recall it cost me only \$2.00⁹ for Gail, less than a half-hour's pay. Seven whole years - wow! But, "they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her." This is a better story than you would find in "My True Romance." or whatever. The seven years passed. And now it is time for the wedding!

Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in to her." And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and made a feast. Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. And Laban gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid. So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it was Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?" And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years." Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. And Laban gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

Genesis 29:21-30 (NKJV)

So, Laban arranged for the marriage ceremony. There are a few details missing here which make the account a little more difficult to understand. It doesn't say anything about Jacob taking "Rachel" into his mother's tent - his mother had no tent there - so he must have used another tent. More important, recall from the meeting of Isaac and Rebekah that the bride is to remain veiled until the consummation of the marriage. When Laban brought Leah to him, she would have been completely covered so there would be no way (from looking) to know she was not Rachael. Inside the tent, one can imagine, she was not covered with a veil, or anything else, but it would have been dark in there at night. So the night passed and she became his wife. To this K&D say, "*Jacob went in unto her, without discovering in the dark the deception that had been practised. Thus the overreacher of Esau was overreached himself, and sin was punished by sin.*"¹⁰

It isn't necessary to say what Jacob's attitude was in the morning when the first light entered the tent! Jacob confronted Laban. He should have hired a divorce attorney! Of course, they didn't have

⁸K&D, Genesis 29:17

⁹Marriage License

¹⁰K&D, Genesis 29:23

attorney's in those days (lucky them) but it would not have mattered. Jacob kept his vow, even though it was to Leah. But why the deception? Look at Laban's answer and see if you agree. *"It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn.* That was probably true but that does not excuse Laban, he was honor bound to inform Jacob of that before the marriage. Do not forget, however, Jacob would not have even been there had he not deceived Isaac into thinking he was his sibling! The Scriptures have something to say about this.

A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies will not escape.

Proverbs 19:5 (NKJV)

A false witness will not go unpunished, And he who speaks lies shall perish.

Proverbs 19:9 (NKJV)

So Jacob received his recompense. Laban was most likely afraid that if he did not do this, Leah would never get married (still no excuse). In an attempt to make things right, he offered to give him Rachael for another seven years service.

It seems to be that we are replacing one sin for another. Now Jacob is going to be a bigamist. "Bigamy" comes from "this is big of me" (only kidding). Seriously, does (did) God forbid bigamy? Did (does) God allow it? There is nothing that I have found in the Mosaic law pertaining to it. You do not need to go that far!

And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Genesis 2:18 (NKJV)

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

. . . and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?

Matthew 19:5 (NKJV)

From the beginning it is clear that God did not intend for man to have more than one wife or vice versa. The fact that it was rather common and I can not think of any place in the Old Testament where God brings down punishment for it, would seem to indicate that God allows it even though it was not His intention.

The marriage feast lasted seven days ("fulfill her week") Then Laban gave Jacob Rachael, even before Jacob worked the additional seven years. He also gave each of his daughters a "maid" as Rebekah was given maids. These girls only got one each. So, Jacob had two wives and seven years of service to fulfill. In the meantime both marriages were fulfilled. *Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah.* Note that it says he loved Rachael (מִן־ (min) = "over," Leah, "Over" may mean "more" or in may mean "rather than"

When the Lord saw that Leah was unloved, He opened her womb; but Rachel was barren. So

Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben; for she said, "The Lord has surely looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the Lord has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also." And she called his name Simeon. She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called Levi. And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the Lord." Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she stopped bearing.

Genesis 29:31-35 (NKJV)

From here we see it is “rather than.” This sentence leaves us with a curious question.

Leah: God “opened her womb”

Rachel “was barren”

Is there an implication here that all women are “barren” until God opens their wombs? It would seem that we would not be having millions of babies out of wedlock if this were the case. I suspect, in view of the fact they had no OB doctors in those days, a woman was considered “barren” only because she had no children - not because she could not conceive.

I should point out a fine distinction here. It is difficult to know exactly how to translate נִשְׂנָה (sanah) here. The word, basically means “hate” and so it is translated in the old KJV. But it often is not strong as in this case where it indicates a relative state. One may say that, “Compared to his love for Rachael he hated Leah,” but this really means she was not loved like Rachael was.

So, in fairness, the Lord opened Leah’s womb and she had four sons. Apparently she could not have been hated by Jacob that much because she certainly did not have the four sons on her own!

The meaning of many Hebrew names can not be ascertained for sure since Hebrew is such a context sensitive language and names rarely appear in context. This is an example for the text tells us why she named them as she did:

- REUBEN רְאוּבֵן (Reuben) from “See, a son.” The NIV has a footnote: “Reuben sounds like the Hebrew for *he has seen my misery*”
- SIMEON שִׁמְעוֹן (Simeon) from, apparently, “hearing” (שָׁמַע) Simah).
- LEVI לֵוִי (Levi), from “joined as in “*Also bring with you your brethren of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be joined with you and serve you while you and your sons are with you before the tabernacle of witness.* Numbers 18:2 (NKJV)
- JUDAH יְהוּדָה (Judah) from the Hebrew for “praise.”

If you put this together, her remarks become, “He has seen me and heard me, and has thus joined me with my husband and I will praise him for that.” So, in a period of about four years (apparently) Jacob had four sons - but not from Rachael.

I suppose God thought that was enough for the present and so caused her to be “barren” again. So, what happens next? That’s in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 30

Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" So she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear a child on my knees, that I also may have children by her." Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan. And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. Then Rachel said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name Naphtali.

Genesis 30:1-8 (NKJV)

Rachael, as would be expected, was jealous of Leah. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die!" What are we to make of this? Was she saying that Jacob had been neglecting her in having children through Leah. Considering he loved her much more, I would doubt it. There is indication that Leah had communicated with the Lord concerning her barrenness, she certainly praised him afterward. But Rachael did not turn to the Lord but to Jacob. "You help me!" Assuming he did his duties as a husband, what more could he do?

Hence, in anger, he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" I suspect that, had he not been in a state of anger, his response would have been a bit more loving. It is not a good thing to say much when we are angry - you know the old thing about counting to ten!

As had been done with Abraham (and others) she decided to have children through her maid, Bilhah. She would "bear a child on my knees." What does that mean? First, According to UNGER

Most of the early instances of adoption mentioned in the Bible were the acts of women who, because of barrenness, gave their female slaves to their husbands with the intention of adopting any children they might have. Thus Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham, and the son (Ishmael) was considered the child of Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 16:1-15). The childless Rachel gave her maid, Bilhah, to her husband (Genesis 30:1-7) and was imitated by Leah (Genesis 30:9-13). In such cases the sons were regarded as fully equal in the right of heritage with those by the legitimate wife.

UNGER, Adoption

As far as the expression "on my knees" is concerned, CLARK says,

The handmaid was the sole property of the mistress, as has already been remarked in the case of Hagar; and therefore not only all her labor, but even the children borne by her, were the property of the mistress. These female slaves, therefore, bore children vicariously for their mistresses; and this appears to be the import of the term, she shall bear upon my knees.

ADAM CLARK, Genesis 30:3

As far as I can tell, there is not literal meaning here, only the philosophical concept. At least one commentator has suggested that, according to natural feelings, she should have been closer to

Leah's children than to those of a servant, but, she considered them, as per the custom, to be her very own.

A word must be said her about this practice. UNGER says,

Concubinage came early into general practice, for we read (Genesis 22:24) of Bethuel, the father of Rebekah, having not only his wife Milcah, but also a concubine, Reumah, who bore him four children. Indeed, concubinage substantially appeared when Abraham took Hagar as a sort of wife, by whom Sarah hoped he would have children—to be reckoned, in some sense, as her own, and to take rank as proper members of the family (Genesis 16:1-3). In the next generation of the chosen family we find no mention of a state of concubinage; Isaac seems to have had no partner to his bed but Rebekah and no children but Esau and Jacob. But the evil reappears in the next generation in an aggravated form: Esau multiplying wives at pleasure, and Jacob taking first two wives and then two concubines.

UNGER, Concubines

But, in this text, it says that Rachael “gave him Bilhah her maid as wife.” (I.e. not as a concubine). So, with the situation set up, Jacob finds himself with two more sons.

- Dan דן (Dan) “To Judge”
- Naphtali נפתלי (Naphthali) from פתו (Phatel), “To twists”, hence “To wrestle”

When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.

Genesis 30:9-13 (NKJV)

Well, if Rachael could use her maid, so could Leah. It seems rather sad to me that two women are using children in their contest with each other. Also, I wonder if Jacob sensed something was going on when he had all sons!

At any rate, along come

- | | | |
|-------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Gad | גד (Gad) | “Good Fortune” |
| Asher | אשר (Asher) | “Happy” (not the dwarf!) |

Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?" And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes." When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night. And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar. Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. Afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Genesis 30:14-21 (NKJV)

Perhaps a word is in order here how Jacob would live with four women and, especially, how he would “lie with” four of them.

Bilhah . . . Zilpah—Following the example of Sarah with regard to Hagar, an example which is not seldom imitated still, she adopted the children of her maid. Leah took the same course. A bitter and intense rivalry existed between them, all the more from their close relationship as sisters; and although they occupied separate apartments, with their families, as is the uniform custom where a plurality of wives obtains, and the husband and father spends a day with each in regular succession, that did not allay their mutual jealousies. The evil lies in the system, which being a violation of God's original ordinance, cannot yield happiness.

JFB, Genesis 30:3-9

So far, three of the women in Jacob's home had born him sons. Only his real love, Rachel had not. Now, something which may surprise you. Reuben brought in four “mandrakes” from the field. I guess I've always thought of a mandrake as a bird or some sort of animal. This is not the case.

Mandrake (Heb. dūday; Genesis 30:14; Song 7:13). A narcotic plant of the order Solanaceae, Mandragora officinarum, L., esteemed by the ancients as a love medicine and evidently so referred to in both the above-cited passages. Taken in considerable quantities, it is an acrid narcotic poison. It is not used in modern medicine

UNGER, mandrake

These are sometimes referred to as “love apples.” What puzzles me here is her statement, “*Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.*” We have already noted that, according to custom, the children born to the concubine were regarded as the children of the wife. If so, why would she say, “your son's?” I suppose, between the two, he would still be the maid's son.

Actually, there is a quite a bit that puzzles me here. The conversation sounds a bit like prostitution with Leah bargaining for the right to sleep that night with Jacob (although the pay is going in the opposite direction than normal). The whole affair seems rather sordid. But God can use any circumstance to further His plan. I am constantly reminded of Joseph's words at a later time.

But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

Genesis 50:20 (NKJV)

I do not know for how long this bargain for the mandrakes was to last because Leah concieved not just one child but three more (the mandrakes must have really worked! Remember Rachael said, “*give me **some of** your son's mandrakes.*” She did not give her all of them, she saved some for herself.

So, we now add:

- Issachar יִסַּכָּר (Issachar) “There is recompense”

- Zebulun זבולון (Zebulun) “Exalt, honor”
- Dinah דינה (Dinah) “Judgement”

At this point it should be noted that Jacob had other daughters, nowhere mentioned by name, but referred to in the following.

And all his sons and **all his daughters** arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.
Genesis 37:35 (NKJV)

*His sons and his sons' sons, **his daughters** and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.*

Genesis 46:7 (NKJV)

Dinah is only mentioned because of her part in Jacob's history.

Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." So she called his name Joseph, and said, "The Lord shall add to me another son."

Genesis 30:22-24 (NKJV)

God listened to her and opened her womb. Is this the first time that Rachael thought about praying to the Lord for a son? We can not say, but I can say that many of us try are best and, when all else fails, then we decide to pray. We ought to do that first!

- JOSEPH יוסף (Joseph) “He adds or increases”

So, now Jacob has eleven sons and one daughter.

b. The expansion of the promised seed in the births of the tribal ancestors (29:31-30:24)

The desire for affectionate approval often leads down dangerous paths. The contest of childbearing between Rachel and Leah shows just such a struggle within a family. The story is about the craving of human beings for love and recognition, and the price of thwarting it.

29:31-35. In his family relationships Jacob still sowed some bitter seeds. He was cool to **Leah**, his unwanted wife; God, as well as Leah, was aware of it. **Rachel**, like Sarah and Rebekah before her, **was barren** (v. 31; cf. 16:1; 25:21).

Leah's first four sons were born in rapid succession; and this must be contrasted with the long waits of the earlier fathers. The story of these births is sad, but in them, as in the chapter as a whole, God is recognized as the One who gives life in spite of human efforts.

Leah named her firstborn **Reuben**, indicating that **the LORD** had **seen** her **misery**. Another wordplay joins it: **Now at last my husband will become attached to me**. This naming showed her hope but also her

consolation and faith. Jacob never saw her affliction, but God did (cf. "Beer Lahai Roi," lit., "the well

of the living One who sees me,” 16:14; 24:62; 25:11).

Simeon was so named **because the LORD heard that Leah was not loved**. “God heard” was her testimony in faith to His provision (cf. “Ishmael,” which means “God hears,” 16:15). **Levi** was named for her hope that her husband would become attached to her, but it was not to be.

Judah was her consolation; she would be satisfied to **praise the LORD**, for Judah means “let Him be praised.” Leah exhibited genuine faith during her great affliction.

30:1-8. Rachel’s sons through **Bilhah** do not reflect the faith Leah had. **Rachel** felt wronged over her barrenness. Her effort to have **children** through her **maidservant** reflects Sarah’s similar attempt with Hagar (16:1-4). The names of the two sons born to Bilhah reflected Rachel’s bitter struggle and feeling of victory. The name **Dan** is explained by the word **God has vindicated me**, that is, He now had corrected Rachel’s wrong, her barrenness. The name **Naphtali** reflected her **great struggle** which, she said, “I fought” (nîpÔtalœò) **with my sister** (30:8).

30:9-13. **Leah** responded by offering **Jacob** her **maidservant Zilpah**, to whom **Gad** (**fortune**) and **Asher** (“blessing”) were born. **Leah** saw that with God’s help she was prospering.

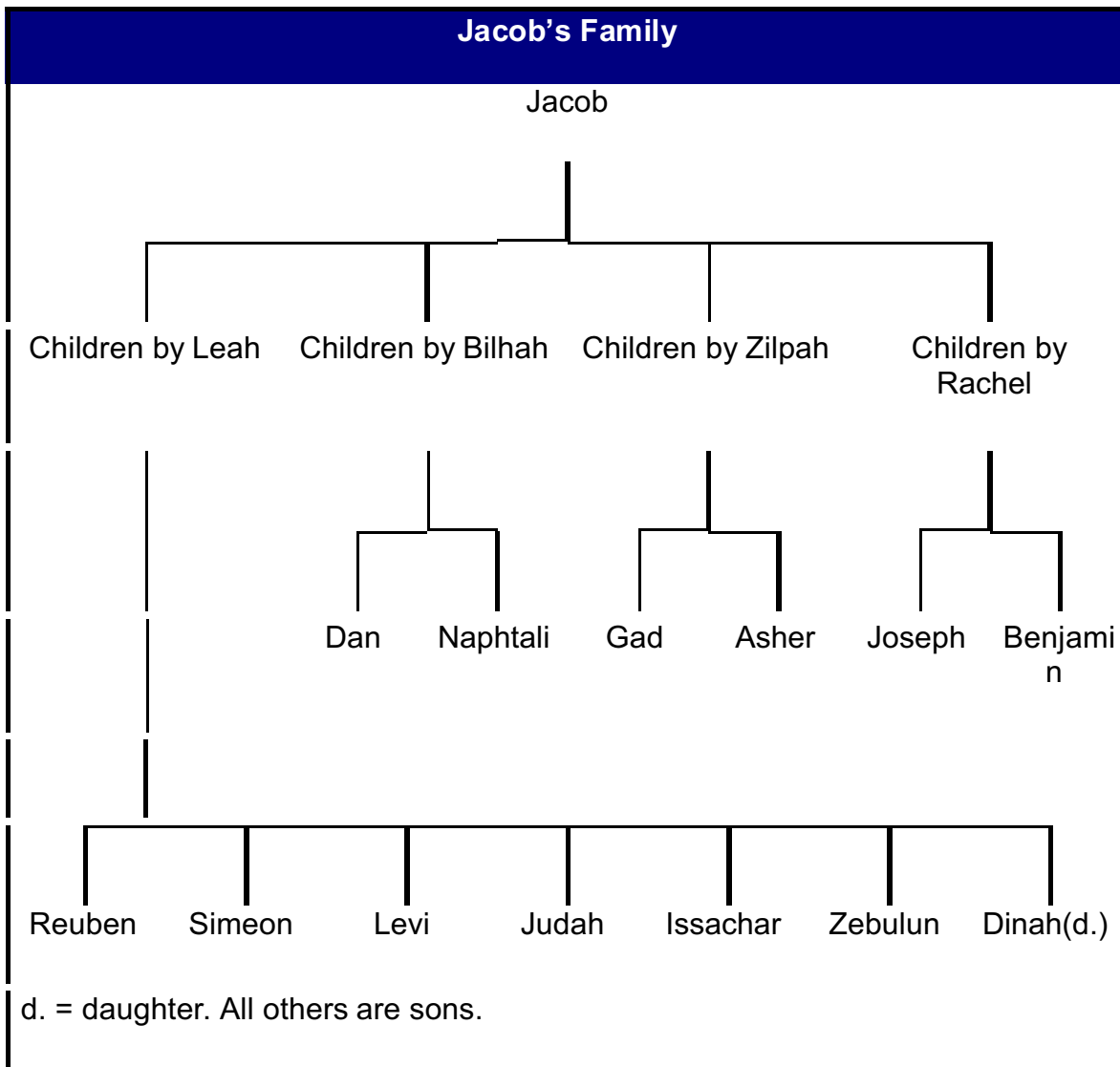
30:14-21. **Reuben**, Jacob’s firstborn, **found some mandrake plants**, supposedly aphrodisiacs, and **Rachel** felt they would work for her (vv. 14-15). Thus Leah **hired** Jacob with the plants and had a son **Issachar**. Issachar is explained by (“my hire,” KJV). The name of Leah’s **sixth son... Zebulun**, has the double significance of dowry or “gift” as well as “honor”; **Leah said God** gave her Zebulun as a **gift** and her

husband would treat her with honor. Thus Leah’s hopes never left her. Then **Dinah**, a **daughter**, was born to her. **30:22-24.** Finally **Rachel** gave birth to **Joseph** but not by the mandrakes. This shows that births are given by God, not manipulated by people. Joseph’s name, like Zebulun’s, had a double meaning. She **said, God has taken away my disgrace**; and **she** prayed that He would **add another son**. Finally Rachel was jubilant, looking in faith for a second child from God. This passage (29:31-30:24) is a combination of small narratives, accenting the puns on Jacob’s sons’ names. Each name was interpreted by Leah or Rachel to reflect concrete family conditions at the price of the pious substance which they had as testimonies to God as the Giver of Life.

Certainly the passage shows how God prospered Jacob and started to make from him a great nation. All Israelites could thus look back and see their ancestry in Jacob and in the conflict of the women. As brothers the sons of Jacob, who became “Israel,” were not to become envious like their mothers. To Israel these narratives were more than interesting little stories. The rivalry that appears here explains much of the tribal rivalry that followed. But Genesis is clear: God chose the despised mother, Leah, and exalted her to be the first mother. The kingly tribe of Judah and the priestly tribe of Levi trace back to her, in spite of Jacob’s love for Rachel and her son Joseph.

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See table, "Jacob's Family".



BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY, Genesis 30:22-24

Note that, in the table above, they have Benjamin listed even though he was not born until later.

And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake." Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the Lord has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?" So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled

among the goats; and these shall be my wages. So my righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me." And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Genesis 30:25-36 (NKJV)

Jacob had been with Laban for over fourteen years, the exact length of time not being given - but time to have eleven sons and a daughter!

It was time from them to part company so that Jacob could set up his own family and estate. There was a polite objection on Laban's part that he should stay, seeing how he, too, had been blessed because of Jacob's presence. Nevertheless, he agreed and wanted to know what he owed Jacob. There was no question with respect to the wives and children, they were obviously his. So the discussion turned to what had profited Laban with Jacob's stay - large flocks of sheep and goats.

Jacob felt it only fair that he share in some of the livestock since he had been responsible for it. But, how to divide the flocks? Then a bit of double talk follows. You shall give me nothing - then he asks for certain sheep and goats. It is really not double talk. One wish to have white sheep and black goats. Any others were considered "seconds." That is all Jacob want the less desirable of the flock.

This was a great plan (so it seemed) for Laban since (1) he would not give away any of his prize flock, and (2) it would be easy to distinguish which were Laban's and which were Jacob's. So all of the speckled animals were separate from the flock by Jacob as well as the black sheep and any goat with white on it. It is apparent that it was not to be a one time arrangement but a continuing one - one with no set time frame. Laban saw to it that Jacob's sheep were tended to by Laban's son - three days journey away, so that there would be no mixing of the flocks.

We are not told what percentage of the flocks Jacob thus received, probably a smaller percentage - but that would change.

Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock. And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. Thus the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Genesis 30:37-43 (NKJV)

Now Jacob took the limbs from three trees with noticeably black bark and white wood underneath. He peeled strips of the bark away so the rods (branches) were striped (like a barber's pole?). These he set in the ground near the "gutters" where the flocks came to drink.

There is some question as to the statement "*So the flocks conceived before the rods.*" Did these act as some sort of love aphrodisiac? Some of the old commentators say there was actually something to this practice. More recent commentators say no and cite Genesis 31

So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. . . . And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.

Genesis 31:9 &12 (NKJV)

Where the text indicates it was God who brought about the selective breeding. It is interesting that this event has led to an animal called the "Jacob Sheep" today! Also, it appears to me that there is a middle ground here. God blessed Jacob in fulfilling what Jacob believed would cause the selective breeding. Most commentators do not see here a divine miracle as such, only God providing for His own.

As noted above, Jacob is credited by animal breeders today as the first person to practice selective breeding. Whether or not the "rods" had anything to do with it, you can not escape the words, "*Whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in.*" That is certainly selective breeding - and God blessed it.

In a sense, both were to gain. Laban got the "valuable" white sheep and black goats" while Jacob got the stronger of the livestock. Which would rather have, a strong black lamb or a weak white one?

Over a period time (how long? I do not know) Jacob had a great herd of healthy sheep and goats and "*became exceedingly prosperous.*" The text indicates that, in addition to the sheep, he had "*female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.*" How this came about is not said but, presumably they were in exchange for some of his livestock.

It is interesting to see what noted commentators say about this.

The talent possessed by Jacob was a most dangerous one; he was what may be truly called a scheming man; his wits were still at work, and as he devised so he executed, being as fruitful in expedients as he was in plans. This was the principal and the most prominent characteristic of his life; and whatever was excessive here was owing to his mother's tuition; she was evidently a woman who paid little respect to what is called moral principle, and sanctified all kinds of means by the goodness of the end at which she aimed; which in social, civil, and religious life, is the most dangerous principle on which a person can possibly act. In this art she appears to have instructed

her son; and, unfortunately for himself, he was in some instances but too apt a proficient. Early habits are not easily rooted out, especially those of a bad kind. Next to the influence and grace of the Spirit of God is a good and religious education. Parents should teach their children to despise and abhor low cunning, to fear a lie, and tremble at an oath; and in order to be successful, they should illustrate their precepts by their own regular and conscientious example. How far God approved of the whole of Jacob's conduct I shall not inquire; it is certain that he attributes his success to Divine interposition, and God himself censures Laban's conduct towards him; see Genesis 31:7-12. But still he appears to have proceeded farther than this interposition authorized him to go, especially in the means he used to improve his own breed, which necessarily led to the deterioration of Laban's cattle; for, after the transactions referred to above, these cattle could be of but little worth. The whole account, with all its lights and shades, I consider as another proof of the impartiality of the Divine historian, and a strong evidence of the authenticity of the Pentateuch. Neither the spirit of deceit, nor the partiality of friendship, could ever pen such an account

ADAM CLARK, Genesis 30:43

I would not consider Jacob to be a “scheming man.” He was smart. He was also a man who kept his word - he kept Leah and served another seven years for Rachael. I do not know if I would have turned the other cheek and put up with that. Was it illegal (if there were such laws) what Jacob did with the selective breeding? Laban put him in charge with no restrictions on how they should be bred. In the next chapter, Laban accuses Jacob of several things (incorrectly) but not for the selective breeding of his flock! Apparently Laban did not see it the way some commentators do!

The best course of action here is to go on to the next chapter to see what God says (as well as what Laban has to say).

SPECIAL NOTES

Did Jacob actually accomplish his purpose with the rods noted in this chapter? Here are some things you may wish to read.

About Jacob Sheep

Jacob Sheep have graced the large estates and country homes of England for many centuries. Their impressive horns, black and white faces and spotted bodies have no doubt contributed to their popularity and survival. Their actual origins are not known. However, documentation throughout history indicates that the spotted or pied sheep may have originated in what is now Syria **some three thousand years ago**. Pictorial evidence traces movement of these sheep through North America, Sicily, Spain and on to England. **There are many romantic stories about the Jacob Sheep being direct descendants of the flock of sheep acquired by Jacob during the time he worked for his father-in-law as mentioned in the Bible (Genesis 30),** or that they were washed ashore from shipwrecks during the attempted invasion of the Spanish Armada during the reign of Elizabeth I. Jacobs differ from other British and Northern European polycerates (sheep with more than one set of horns) in that they have a medium fine fleece and no outer coat. Other primitive breeds are double coated, having a fine inner coat and a coarser, longer outer coat.



<http://www.jsba.org/history.htm>

The origins of the Jacob breed are obscure, to say the least. There are almost as many stories about where they came from as there are story tellers. They are a British breed, and all the animals in the United States have been brought here in just a few importations in the past several decades. Prior to the twentieth century they were referred to as Piebald sheep; the name Jacob comes from the Old Testament story of the dealings between Jacob and his father-in-law Laban. This Biblical story of Jacob's striving to achieve spotted sheep and goats is thought to be the earliest record of selective breeding. Until recent times, Jacobs were kept only at a few large estates in England. In spite of some of the more fanciful tales, it appears that their black and white coloring may have originated with Moorish sheep brought from Spain or Africa and their four-horned characteristics from Norse sheep from Scandinavia and the northern Scottish islands. Certainly there are sheep in North Africa with black and white fleeces like the Jacob, and there are other British breeds with four horns, particularly in the northern and coastal regions



provided by Sally Anne Thompson

<http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/breeds/sheep/jacob/>

There are other articles such as this which one can find on the Internet.

CHAPTER 31

Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before. Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you." So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not favorable toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me. And you know that with all my might I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted.

Genesis 31:1-10 (NKJV)

This is one of the longer chapters in this book (67 in Ch. 24, 57 in Ch. 41) with 55 verses in it. The average chapter in Genesis is 31 verses long. Now the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is not included in the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures, but, this is still an indication of an important chapter.

Three things eventually happened to Jacob, affecting three of his senses.

1. Laban's sons complained about what Jacob was doing - Jacob learned about this
2. Laban's relationship with Jacob was not what it was before - Jacob saw this
3. The Lord spoke to Jacob, he was to return to his own land - Jacob heard this

Whether Laban's sons knew what Jacob was doing or if it was just an observation that Jacob was getting the best of the deal is not said. The main thing is they saw their inheritance slowly being eroded away and wanted it stopped before they had nothing.

Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also is vanity and grasping for the wind.

Eccles. 4:4 (NKJV)

Laban himself was not happy about the relationship. Literally, the Hebrew reads, *"was not the same as yesterday, and the day before,"* There was a rather rapid change in Laban's disposition. It was then that the Lord spoke to Jacob. Did He speak to Jacob as a result of Jacob praying to him? I can imagine Jacob praying, "Lord, Laban and his sons have all turned against me, what am I to do?"

Whether in answer to prayer and just a command from God, he was told to return to the land God had given to Abraham and Isaac: to return to his family. In this the Lord promised *"I will be with you."*

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "***Do not be afraid***, Abram. ***I am your shield***, your exceedingly great reward."

Genesis 15:1 (NKJV)

As always, God is protecting His people.

Now, there were no moving companies and airlines in those days so all the preparations and arrangements fell on Jacob's shoulders. First, he had to inform Leah and Rachael. Note two things:

1. His reference was to Rachel first even though Leah was his first wife (not first love).
2. He called them out into the fields to talk with them - "walls have ears!"

He begins by relating to them what we have just studied, concluding with "*And you know that with all my might I have served your father.*" One might argue that he was really serving himself! Yet, he kept his word to Laban, especially in view of what follows.

"*Your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times.*" It is assumed that "ten" is just a round number with no special significance. What is significant is there is no mention in the previous chapter of Laban changing the agreement! It appeared in Chapter 30 that there was one single but somewhat complicated agreement. From what is said here, it was a series of simple agreements. Jacob could have all the sheep that bore a certain characteristic - so Jacob saw to it that this is the way they were born. Please note that we are not to think that every sheep that was born had the prescribed characteristics, only that a considerable number of them did.

Could Jacob actually selectively breed these sheep (and goats) with these rods. No one knows, not even in the scientific community. This is what I think. I think the rods, with the bark peeled back emitted an aroma that served as an aphrodisiac for the sheep. The had nothing to do with the kind of lambs which would be born. This was arranged by Jacob by placing the rods there when he knew that the sheep watering there were such that they would have offspring of the desired type. If they were not the right sheep, he would not put the rods there.

You will, probably, say there is a weakness in that argument - how did he know which kind of sheep were which? I do not know but the Scriptures do say,

And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.

Genesis 30:41-42 (NKJV)

We thus have Biblical basis for saying he could tell the stronger livestock from the feeble ones so it would not be strange to find that he knew which sheep (or herds) were likely to give birth to a certain type of lamb. This leads us to consider what is meant by the following.

And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. To this,

K&D say,

The attempt so unmistakably apparent in Jacob's whole conversation with his wives, to place his dealing with Laban in the most favorable light for himself, excites the suspicion, that the vision of which he spoke was nothing more than a natural dream, the materials being supplied by the three thoughts that were most frequently in his mind, by night as well as by day, viz., (1) his own schemes and their success; (2) the promise received at Bethel; (3) the wish to justify his actions to his own conscience;

K&D, Genesis 31:12

A natural dream? The text says, "the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' Now, if it were a natural dream, then Jacob is lying to his wives here, and to you and me! The other alternative is the Scriptures are not telling us the truth! Do people in the Bible ever tell lies? Sure they do, but as far as I can remember, the Bible makes it clear that this is what they were, lies. There is no indication at all here that he was lying. There really would be no great incentive for him to lie thus anyway.

I believe this further answers the question of selective breeding and how Jacob knew which sheep were which. I believe what he is saying here is that, whenever it was time for a group of sheep to breed, the angel would show Jacob which kind they were. Thus he could do his selective breeding.

The statement, "*the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted,*" does not necessarily mean they were all three at the same time.

Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' " Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

Genesis 31:11-16 (NKJV)

Having revealed the fact that the Lord was the reason for his success. He goes on with the fact that the Lord had seen what Laban was doing and wanted Jacob to get out of that place. Recall what Jacob had promised.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Genesis 28:20-22 (NKJV)

God had kept Jacob for twenty years now (7+7+6). He now had *bread to eat and clothing to put on* plus a lot more. So it was time for Jacob to return as the Lord had fulfilled His part. This he related to his wives, *God has said, "I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family." "*

The statement made by his wives is a bit difficult to interpret. The bottom line is, according to what they said, there was nothing left for them with their father Laban. All that Laban had a value was now Jacob's and, as his wives, theirs too. Thus they gladly agreed to do what Jacob said. It is nice to have obedient wives? Not all wives are this way!

Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan. Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gilead.

Genesis 31:17-21 (NKJV)

Jacob got his "moving vans" together (i.e. his camels) and loaded them up with his family and his belongings (except for the flocks which could walk). Notice he did not say "Goodbye" to Laban. JFB say,

He carried the cattle of his getting—that is, his own and nothing more. He did not indemnify himself for his many losses by carrying off any thing of Laban's, but was content with what Providence had given him. Some may think that due notice should have been given; but when a man feels himself in danger—the law of self-preservation prescribes the duty of immediate flight, if it can be done consistently with conscience.

JFB, Genesis 31:18

If the first part of the above sounds strange, it is because it is a commentary on the old KJV. As far as the comment about feeling in danger, and Jacob leaving without a "goodbye" is concerned, recall that 'the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family' and Jacob's remark, "God did not allow him to hurt me." Jacob had good reason to think he was in danger if he remained with Laban. Since Laban was away shearing sheep, he would not know about the departure until it was too late.

While Jacob could leave in good conscious, Rachael could not for she "*had stolen the household idols that were her father's*. She had taken the תרפים (terephim), a household god which is often small and, hence, portable. K&D say they were "*probably small images of household gods in human form, which were worshiped as givers of earthly prosperity, and also consulted as oracles*"¹¹ Jacob had been with Rachael for, at least 13 years, more likely 20, and yet she still worshiped household

¹¹K&D, Genesis 31

gods (apparently). But remember Jacob's vow that, when he returned with possessions, *:then the Lord shall be my God.*" Jacob still has no personal relationship with the Lord and hence no impetus for evangelization.

She stole a household god, Jacob stole "away," we have already commented on this. So he had to pack and leave. I do not know about moving companies today, but JFB tell us how it worked then.

Little time is spent by pastoral people in removing. The striking down the tents and poles and stowing them among their other baggage; the putting their wives and children in houdas like cradles, on the backs of camels, or in panniers on asses; and the ranging of the various parts of the flock under the respective shepherds; all this is a short process. A plain that is covered in the morning with a long array of tents and with browsing flocks, may, in a few hours, appear so desolate that not a vestige of the encampment remains, except the holes in which the tent poles had been fixed.

JFB, Genesis 31:17

So, the broke up camp and went "over the river and to Grandmother's house . . ." No, wrong story. They did cross a river on his way to Gilead. From the map, one can see it was the Euphrates River they crossed. This would mean that

they had gone nearly one hundred miles by the time they had crossed the river.

And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. Then he took his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. But God had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."

Genesis 31:22-24 (NKJV)

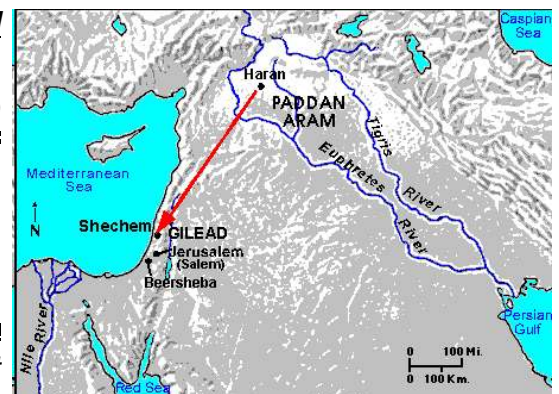
Three days later, Laban found out and the chase began. It lasted for seven days and covered about 300 miles. It would have been very bad for Laban except for one thing, the last part of Jacob's vow before he left for Laban's was, "so that I come back to my father's house in peace." In order to fulfill this, the Lord had "a little talk with Laban." He told him not to speak anything good or bad. Laban was not to punish Jacob in any way. It was as it was with Laban's father.

*Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the Lord; **we cannot speak to you either bad or good.***

Genesis 24:50 (NKJV)

Apparently, regardless of the type of man Laban was, he did fear God and hence would obey his voice.

So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent



in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and carried away my daughters like captives taken with the sword? Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have done foolishly in so doing. It is in my power to do you harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Genesis 31:25-32 (NKJV)

Laban caught up with Jacob in the mountains of Gilead. (It simply says that Jacob pitched his tent in the "mountains" - it is to be understood that "Gilead" refers to both parties).

First come the accusations:

- *Why did you flee away secretly?*
- *why did you steal away from me?*
- *why did you not tell me?*

There are all stating the same thing in different ways and were correct. Why should Jacob have said "Good bye?" Laban says "*for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp.*" Would he have? It seems that one would not pursue another for a full week just because he wanted to say "Goodbye!" He wanted to "*kiss his sons and daughters.*" (I assume "sons" includes "grandsons").

Then he reveals to Jacob that, although he could do him a lot of harm, God instructed him not to. Remember Jacob's vow before he left for Laban's, "*If God will be with me, **and keep me in this way** that I am going, . . .*" Laban's words verified the fact that God was "keeping him along the way."

Since Laban can do no more regarding Jacob's departure, he changes the subject to some extent and seems to indicate he understood Jacob's position, "*you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house.*" But, does he really understand or does he use this as an excuse to make the next accusation? Why did Jacob steal his gods? Jacob answers both questions.

He left because he was afraid of Laban, He was afraid he would not allow him to take his family (and flocks?). Secondly, he claims no knowledge of Laban's gods and promised execution for anyone who, without his knowledge, might have taken them. For our edification, the text informs us that he did not know what Rachael had done - he certainly would not have vowed what he did had he known!

And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the

tent but did not find them. And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is with me." And he searched but did not find the household idols.

Genesis 31:33-35 (NKJV)

With his "search warrant in hand" (i.e. Jacob's permission), Laban went from tent to tent and found nothing. The tents did not contain any of Laban's gods. The only place left to look would be in the saddle bags on the camels. Presumably he searched these as well, all except Rachael's. She was more than willing to have him search her bags but, alas, the "manner of women" was with her. Does she say (or imply) she can't get off her saddle because of this? The answer lies in another direction. According to K&D,

The fact that Laban passed over Rachel's seat because of her pretended condition, does not presuppose the Levitical law in Lev 15:19ff., according to which, any one who touched the couch or seat of such a woman was rendered unclean. For, in the first place, the view which lies at the foundation of this law was much older than the laws of Moses, and is met with among many other nations (cf. Bähr, Symbolik ii. 466, etc.); consequently Laban might refrain from making further examination, less from fear of defilement, than because he regarded it as impossible that any one with the custom of women upon her should sit upon his gods.

K&D, Genesis 31:35

So the bags went unreached and the gods not found. She did not know what God spoke to the Israelites many years later.

. . . then take note, you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out.

Numbers 32:23 (NKJV)

Everything went well for Rachel and the rest in spite of her direct lie to Laban. Would God allow that to go unpunished? We shall have to wait and see.

Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What is my trespass? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set it here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. There I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night."

Then Jacob rebuked Laban This is what the text should read, but it does not. First, he was angry. The best thing to do when we are angry is (nothing). חרה (gharah) means “to burn” or “to be kindled” and, since we tend to “burn” when we are angry. It evolves to being angry - very angry. There is nothing necessarily wrong with being angry.

"Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,

Ephesians 4:26 (NKJV)

In fact, God, at times, becomes angry. Just one of the many places is below.

"The Lord has been very angry with your fathers.

Zechariah 1:2 (NKJV)

As stated by K&D, “*Anger is sinful when it rises too soon, without reflection; when the injury that awakens it is only apparent; when it is disproportionate to the offense; when it is transferred from the guilty to the innocent; when it is too long protracted and becomes revengeful*”

In his fiery anger, Jacob rebuked Laban. Jacob had said, “*identify what I have of yours and take it with you.*” It was alright to say “I told you so!” but the lambasting that he gave Laban was certainly not justified. He goes on at length about how honest he was with Laban. The probably explanation for this behavior was simply that Jacob was spewing forth what he had held inside himself these many years. Perhaps I am wrong, but it appears to me that Jacob needed the advice from Paul (above) about letting the sun go down on ones wrath. He should have kept short accounts with Laban - but this is only my opinion.

He closes with a strange expression. “*the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac.*” Why “God” in one place and “Fear” in the other? Well, when Abraham offered up Isaac as a sacrifice (until God stopped him), God told Abraham, “*now I know that you fear God.*” Now Abraham was gone, someday to be in heaven with you and I. He truly found “God.” Isaac had not yet reached that point and so was still one to “Fear” God.

And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock; all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? Now therefore, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me." So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, also Mizpah, because he said, "May the Lord watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my

daughters, although no man is with us--see, God is witness between you and me!"

Genesis 31:43-50 (NKJV)

At least Jacob's stern rebuke had positive results. Just as Jacob released his pent up emotions to Laban, Laban unloads to Jacob. These are my daughters. These are my sons! These are my flocks, all of this is mine. Having said this, he assumes the attitude of one who realizes his situation and concludes with, "But what can I do? (I.e. nothing!). JFB note that "*these two relatives, after having given utterance to their pent-up feelings, came at length to a mutual understanding, or rather, God influenced Laban to make reconciliation with his injured nephew*"¹².

When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Proverbs 16:7 (NKJV)

A good lesson for us! But, as noted previously, rather than let our emotions build within us, it is better to keep short accounts and solve small problems before they become large ones.

Laban thus offers to make a covenant between he and Jacob which Jacob thoroughly agrees. It is to be a "witness" between them. We usually think of a "witness" as a person who can testify to something. It need not be. A טע (ghad) may be a number of things which provide evidence of an event. It may be a pile of rock as here, a song such as the song of Moses Deuteronomy 31:19; 31:21, a law-book v. 26, and so on.

Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.

Deuteronomy 31:19 (NKJV)

"Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;

Deuteronomy 31:26 (NKJV)

To enact this covenant, Jacob began by setting up a stone (i.e. on end) and then had rocks gathered together upon which they could partake of the covenant feast. The term "heap" is, perhaps a poor one as it implies a disorderly pile of rocks whereas it really was, basically, a table formed with rocks. As they celebrated this covenant. They gave the place a name. *Laban called it Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.*

On the basis of the meaning of the two designations, I would disagree with the NKJV (and NASB) translation "but." It should be "and." Why? Because both terms means precisely the same thing, Laban called it "heap of witness" in Aramaic and Jacob called it the same thing in Hebrew. There is

¹²JFB, Genesis 31:43-50

no contrast intended lest it be with reference to the language. This does give rise to another question or observation. It would appear that at least one of them was bilingual in order for them to have communicated for twenty years!

K&D has this.

The geographical names Gilead and Ramath-mizpeh (Josh 13:26), also Mizpeh-Gilead (Judg. 11:29), sound so obviously like Gal'ed and Mizpah, that they are no doubt connected, and owe their origin to the monument erected by Jacob and Laban; so that it was by prolepsis that the scene of this occurrence was called "the mountains of Gilead" in vv. 21, 23, 25.

K&D, Genesis 31:47

Laban also called it מצפה (Mizpah), "The watchtower" which symbolically, if not in reality, served as a barrier between Laban and Jacob. One would not cross this barrier to bring harm to the other. In this regard, Laban places a restriction on this. He warns Jacob to take care of his daughters and not to take any other wives. What if he did? God would see.

Was Laban a "Godly man?" Yes he was - in a literal sense. You see all of Abraham's families believed in God. There is a catch though. Why did Laban say, "The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father?" Because Laban had other gods as well (less not that Rachael took some of them). Laban was polytheistic - believing in many gods, one of which was the true God. The Muslims believe in God - in Arabic "Allah" is equivalent to the Hebrew "Elohim." Belief in God, however, does not get one to heaven!

Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is this pillar, which I have placed between you and me. This heap is a witness, and this pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. And early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.

Genesis 31:51-55 (NKJV)

Laban never seems to change. Look at what he says! *"Here is this heap and here is this pillar, **which I have placed** between you and me."* We already read, *"So **Jacob** took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then **Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones."** And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap.*

The purpose of this memorial is somewhat confused in the NKJV. In this NASB (and other translations) it is made clear.

*"This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you **for harm**, and you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, **for harm**.*

It was not that they would never pass it, only that they would not do so to harm the other, Having done this, Laban swore by *“the God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father,”* three gods in his polytheistic belief. Jacob swore by the *“Fear of his father Isaac.”* This is a strange name for God but we have already looked at it. *Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain . . .* Jacob seems to be the one who has to take all the initiative, to his credit. Laban does nothing but talk (they say talk is cheap).

With the matter settled, Laban kissed and blessed his daughters and grandsons and returned home. (Note: verse 55 is actually verse 1 of chapter 32 in the Hebrew).

CHAPTER 32

So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

Genesis 32:1-2 (NKJV)

Before continuing, I must note the discrepancy here between the Hebrew text and the English texts. The last verse of chapter 31 is verse 1 of this chapter in the Hebrew texts and so all the verses in this chapter are displaced by one which made the study a bit more complicated.

Jacob continued on his way home. As he did, some angels met him. When he previously saw the angels on the ladder, he pronounced that place "the house of God, and the gate of heaven!" Now he meets with angels again. Before he left the first meeting of angels, he said, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God." Well, God has done all that he asked for except that he is not yet home. He was one more hurdle to jump. He has to make amends with Esau if he is to return to his father's home "in peace."

He called this place מחנים ("Mahanaim.") = "two companies" or "two camps." (I.e. his and the angel's). The angels would accompany him back home (unseen).

Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, "Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight." ' "

Genesis 32:3-5 (NKJV)

Considering the circumstances of Jacob's departure - Esau was waiting to kill him, Jacob did the prudent thing and sent some messengers to "test out the water." Remember it was been some twenty years since he left Esau - a long time to hold a grudge. He has the messengers tell Esau what has been accomplished while he was with Laban and now asks if he can find "favor" in his sight.

The Hebrew idiom, ך ן מצא חן (la mtsa hin) is to be found below.

*And I will give this people **favor in the sight of** the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed.*

Exodus 3:21 (NKJV)

*And the Lord gave the people **favor in the sight of** the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.*

Exodus 11:3 (NKJV)

*And the Lord had given the people **favor in the sight** of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.*

Exodus 12:36 (NKJV)

*Now when the turn came for Esther the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther **obtained favor in the sight** of all who saw her.*

Esther 2:15 (NKJV)

All of these say that that "Lord gave" this to the people (in the Esther passage it may be implied). It will be necessary for the Lord to work this out with Esau as well.

Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." So Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

Genesis 32:6-8 (NKJV)

It would have been fine if the messengers returned saying that Esau was happy to hear Jacob was coming and that he would come to meet him. But, coming with 400 men was another thing. Four hundred men could mean nothing more than an army. Why so many? I shall refer to K&D on this subject.

His reason for going to meet Jacob with such a company may have been, either to show how mighty a prince he was, or with the intention of making his brother sensible of his superior power, and assuming a hostile attitude if the circumstances favoured it, even though the lapse of years had so far mitigated his anger, that he no longer seriously thought of executing the vengeance he had threatened twenty years before. For we are warranted in regarding Jacob's fear as no vain, subjective fancy, but as having an objective foundation, by the fact that God endowed him with courage and strength for his meeting with Esau, through the medium of the angelic host and the wrestling at the Jabbok; whilst, on the other hand, the brotherly affection and openness with which Esau met him, are to be attributed partly to Jacob's humble demeanour, and still more to the fact, that by the influence of God, the still remaining malice had been rooted out from his heart.

K&D, Genesis 32:6 (7)

It appears to me that, had Esau been coming for harm, Jacob's actions would have been wrong. There is the saying "Divide and conquer"), and Jacob was doing this himself! True, if Esau attacked one company, the others would be safe - until Esau caught up with them and attacked them as well.

But, that is what he did so we go from there.

Then Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two companies. Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me and the mother with the children. For You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

Genesis 32:9-12 (NKJV)

Well, at least Jacob did the one most important thing one can do in a situation. He prayed; he prayed to the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac. As yet, he has not personally dealt with these "gods" and hence the distinction. He begins by acknowledging that all he has is from God. He then gives his petition, asking for deliverance from Esau. He ends by claiming the promise which was made to him, "*Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you.*" (Genesis 31:3), adding to this the promise made to Abraham and Isaac as well. Here is a point which I have considered for a long time. If you pray, "*Lord give me (such and such) because you promised it to me!*" are you blackmailing God, holding him to His promise, or are you simply showing faith in what God promised and claiming this on the basis of that faith? Is Isaac saying, "you have to protect me because you promised it!" or is he saying that he has faith in this promise and is praying that the Lord would protect him for the purpose of making good on this promise? I suppose it is all a matter of your heart's condition toward God.

Having prayed, there was nothing much more to do. This is not always the case. Sometimes an answer to prayer depends upon us doing our part. So, what did Jacob do?

So he lodged there that same night, and took what came to his hand as a present for Esau his brother: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. Then he delivered them to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose are these in front of you?' then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us.' " So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.' " For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

Genesis 32:13-21 (NKJV)

As noted, often when we pray for something, we have an obligation to do our part. Jacob did it in a most interesting and effective manner. As JFB say,

Jacob combined active exertions with earnest prayer; and this teaches us that we must not depend upon the aid and interposition of God in such a way as to supersede the exercise of prudence and foresight. Superiors are always approached with presents, and the respect expressed is estimated by the quality and amount of the gift. The present of Jacob consisted of five hundred fifty head of cattle, of different kinds, such as would be most prized by Esau. It was a most magnificent present, skilfully arranged and proportioned. The milch camels alone were of immense value; for the she camels form the principal part of Arab wealth; their milk is a chief article of diet; and in many other respects they are of the greatest use.

JFB, Genesis 32:13-21

He divided the gift into three parts. We are not told what each part consisted of. K&D note that the arrangement (i.e. the number of males and females of each variety) were according to the custom of the day. The psychology was great. Suppose Esau was still very angry with Jacob. Along comes these men with a flock of animals and, naturally, Esau would ask them who they were and where they were going. Their part answer, as requested by Jacob, was *'They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau.'* Esau might greet this with the thought, "Well, he can not buy my affection for him with a simple present," but still he could not help have his hatred quenched **a bit** by the gracious gift. Still not enough! But then, a second group meets him in the same way. His hatred would be quenched **some** more. Then, when the third group got there, his hatred must subside by a significant amount. It was a gradual appeasement to Esau which would bring him around to a civil attitude toward Jacob.

The words that follow are very significant in my mind. He had (1) prayed, (2) done his part in making the meeting agreeable, so what was the third thing to do? He went to bed and got a good night's sleep (I presume). Why?

*Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.*

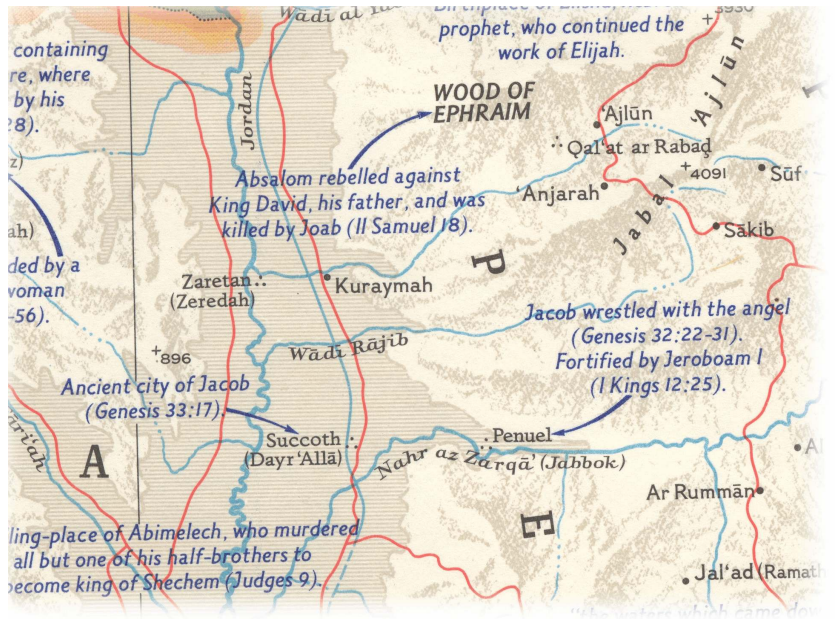
Psalm 37:7 (NKJV)

We have done our part, God will do His part. There is nothing more to be done except be patient.

And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. He took them, sent them over the brook, and sent over what he had. Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell me Your name, I pray." And He said, "Why is it that you ask about My name?" And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which is on the hip socket, because He touched

The first verse he seems to be contrary to the previous one which said he remained in camp that night. The verse did not say where that camp was and this is simply a more detailed description of it. The map to the right shows the Jabbok river and Penuel where Jacob camped that night (note that the Jabbok flows into the Jordan).

Jacob setup his family and possessions on one side of the Jabbok (presumably the South side of it) while he remained on the other side by himself. We all have times when we need to be left alone, Jesus did! Sometimes these times alone are very fruitful as we deal with the Lord. For example -



*And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. **Therefore I was left alone** when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.*

Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.** And he said to me, "O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and **stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.**" **While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

Daniel 10:7-11 (NKJV)

So now, Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. K&D describe the wrestling below.

When Jacob was left alone on the northern side of the Jabbok, after sending all the rest across, "there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." נִאָבֵק an old word, which only occurs here (vv. 25, 26), signifying to wrestle, is either derived from אָבַק to wind, or related to חָבַק to contract one's self, to plant limb and limb firmly together. From this wrestling the river



evidently received its name of Jabbok (= יַבְבֹּק).

K&D, Genesis 32:25

He wrestled with a “Man” according to the NKJV. It is the only translation that has “M” in upper case. It is not wrong except that it comes from an interpretation rather than a translation. Who was this “man” and why does the NKJV capitalize it?

*Yes, he struggled with the **Angel** and prevailed;
He wept, and sought favor from Him.
He found Him in Bethel,
And there He spoke to us--
That is, **the Lord God of hosts.**
The Lord is His memorable name.*

Hosea 12:4-5 (NKJV)

(Hosea 12:2 identifies “he” as Jacob). So, now, we have “man”, “angel,” and God Himself - all descriptions of the same being.

When He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. Why would God dislocate Jacob's hip? There were no chiropractors in those days. What purpose did it serve. We shall answer this presently. The point for now is that Jacob was winning the wrestling match. How could he prevail over God? He could not unless God allowed him to do so - for a purpose. The purpose? To prove to Jacob that he truly was the “Supplanter” and could prevail. It was to increase his faith.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

James 1:2-4 (NKJV)

God was about to make Jacob “perfect and complete and, in fact, change his name!

CHAPTER 33

Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Genesis 33:1-3 (NKJV)

Jacob arranged a procession: first himself, followed by the two maids and “their” children, followed by Leah and her child, and lastly Rachel and Joseph. This would, apparently, put the least esteemed in front, the most esteemed in the rear. As they met, Jacob bowed down seven times. Seven, again, was, and is, regarded as the number of completeness (or perfection) and so he owed before his brother seven times. He was not leaving anything undone.

But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down. Then Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "These are to find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself." And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." So he urged him, and he took it.

Genesis 33:4-11 (NKJV)

All was for naught. At the sight of Jacob, the past hatred was forgotten and brotherly love overpowered him and he “fell on his neck” and kissed him. Now for a real quick Hebrew lesson. For “kissed him” we have **וַיִּשָׁקֵהוּ**. The word for kiss but look at all the dots above the letters! These are called “puncta extraordinaria” (extraordinary punctuation, see below) and are probably intended to mark the word as suspicious. They “are like a note of interrogation(?), questioning the genuineness of this kiss; but without any reason” (Del.). Whether they kissed or not is not important, there was a real reconciliation between the two brothers.

| Ex | Position | Reference | Example in CCAT | Example in Hebrew | Occurrence |
|----|----------------------|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | centered, both | Psa 27:13:1 | L5253W.L"815253)5253 | | rare |
| 2 | centered, upper only | Gen 33:4:7 | WA52Y.I52\$.F52Q"9252H52W.52 | | rare |

Examples of Puncta in Biblical Hebrew

Then, to Esau’s surprise four women and a whole bunch of children passed by him for inspection (like at a reviewing stand?) Then there is an exchange of words that is easily misinterpreted. Esau asks what is meant “by all this company” and Jacob replies by offering them to Esau who, in the custom of that time and place, was the proper thing to do. What did he except? Not the women and children who had just passed by “for inspection” but the gifts of herds that Jacob has sent up ahead.

What is meant by “receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God.” According to k&D, “The thought is this: In thy countenance I have been met with divine (heavenly) friendliness (cf. 1 Sam 29:9; 2 Sam 14:17). Jacob might say this without cringing, since he “must have discerned the work of God in the unexpected change in his brother’s disposition towards him, and in his brother’s friendliness a reflection of this divine.”¹³

Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you." But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir."

Genesis 33:12-14 (NKJV)

At this point the brothers separate. When he says the children are “weak” he is not saying there is anything wrong with them, only that they are not as strong as Esau and his company that they could keep up. At least one can not say that Jacob was unsympathetic with the plight of the women, children, and animals in his care. They would travel along at a pace suited to the children and livestock, which would be quite slow compared to Esau and those with him on horseback.¹⁴

And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. Therefore

¹³K&D, Genesis 33

¹⁴K&D insist that Esau’s group were on horseback although it is no so stated.

the name of the place is called Succoth.

Then Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. And he bought the parcel of land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. Then he erected an altar there and called it El Elohe Israel.

Genesis 33:15-20 (NKJV)

Jacob then turned down the help offered by Esau, namely to provide him with an escort. Jacob was soon to come face-to-face with the Lord and even here shows an increasing belief in the Lord's protection.

So the brothers split up, Esau returning to his home and Jacob going to Succoth. This seems to be at odds with his previous statement, *"until I come to my lord in Seir."* There is no record of their meeting there but, as noted by commentators, he did not necessarily mean that he would go to Seir immediately.

Why is the place called, סכּוּת (succoth)? It is the word for "booths" (stalls). Ultimately, he reached Shechem where he purchased property. One does not spend a lot of money on property unless he intends to remain there for some time. This is born out by the following.

The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

Joshua 24:32 (NKJV)

As did Abraham and Isaac, he also built an altar. This one was called, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (El Elohe Israel) "God, the God of Israel." Is he "Jacob" or Israel?" God gave him a new name but the text still uses Jacob, except here as the name for the altar.

CHAPTER 34

Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife." And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob held his peace until they came. Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved and very angry, because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, a thing which ought not to be done.

Genesis 34:1-7 (NKJV)

In the midst of the account of Jacob we have this account of what happened to Dinah. Is it important? Why is it placed in here? The answers to these questions will be forth coming.

It begins with Dinah, who at this time was likely a young lady, (age 13-15¹⁵) who “*went out to see the daughters of the land.*” It was a natural thing to do, so go out to be with other girls her age. Josephus says that Dinah went into the city for a festival:

Now as the Shechemites were keeping a festival Dina, who was the only daughter of Jacob, went into the city to see the finery of the women of that country. But when Shechem, the son of Hamor the king, saw her, he defiled her by violence;

Josephus Antiquities 1:21:4

I question how accurate Josephus was as he says nothing about the action taken as we proceed. Unfortunately, she was seen by Shechem and, also unfortunately, he was in the family of the tribal leader of the area (prince of Shechem). He did what any red-blooded man without much in the way of moral convictions would have done. He “*lay with her, and violated her.*”

While “violate” is a good technical description of what happened, it is not an especially good translation of the Hebrew. הִנָּח (hanagh) means “to humble’ or “to humiliate.” What was liekly done in haste grew to a more sincere act. He became attracted to her (apparently more than before he took her). דָּבַק (debak) is, literally to “cling to.”

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be **joined** to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Genesis 2:24 (NKJV)

¹⁵K&D

It also says he loved her and “spoke kindly” to her. Literally, he spoke to her “heart” לב (lev). Thus he asked Dad for her, telling him he wanted her for a wife. (It seems rather like finding something on the internet and purchasing it!)

A parenthetical statement is added her noting that Jacob, when he was alone, heard that Dinah had been “defiled.” Here the term תמא (tama) denotes being ceremonially unclean. It was not so much that he had laid with her as it was the he was “an circumcised Philistine” (1 Samuel 17:36). Having heard, he did nothing because he was alone, his sons were working in the field.

Later, as the news got out, as it usually does, when Hamar came to speak with Jacob, his sons gathered around to hear for themselves. As a result they were grieved and very angry. It is interesting that a person can be grieving and burning with anger at the same time - they seem to be such opposite emotions. Yet their grief for their sister turned to anger at Schechem. Shechem had done a disgraceful thing in Israel. This is the first time the name is used for a location. Of the K&D say the following.

*disgrace, because it was an uncircumcised man who had seduced her. “Because he had wrought folly in Israel, by lying with Jacob’s daughter.” “To work folly” was a standing phrase for crimes against the honour and calling of Israel as the people of God, especially for shameful sins of the flesh (Deut 22:21; Judg 20:10; 2 Sam 13:2, etc.); but it was also applied to other great sins (Josh 7:15). As Jacob had become Israel, the seduction of his daughter was a crime against Israel, which is called folly, inasmuch as the **relation of Israel** to God was thereby ignored (Ps 14:1).*

K&D, Genesis 35:11

But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it." Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. Ask me ever so much dowry and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife."

Genesis 34:8-12 (NKJV)

First the father, Hamor, pleased with Jacob and his eleven sons for Dinah as Shechem’s wife. He most likely dealt especially with Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah, being the Dinah’s blood brothers (i.e. same mother). In order to make the deal seem more feasible, he suggested that they intermarry and live as one big happy family (my words). Then Shechem took over speaking with Jacob and the sons. (Note: . . . “to her father” refers to Dinah’s father - the antecedent is quite a way before). He was more specific in what he offered. He offered to give Dinah, Leah, and Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah (her brothers) whatever they wished for. “Just tell me what you want and it’s yours!” He sounds as if he had limited resources but, I suppose, he knew it would be improper for them to ask anything too unreasonable.

But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us. But on this condition we will consent to you: If you will become as we are, if every male of you is circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."

Genesis 34:13-17 (NKJV)

The sons of Jacob responded - that would have been the custom. I would guess that Simeon and Levi were the most vociferous ones (according to Josephus, they were the only ones in on it). In answering they spoke "deceitfully."

But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."

Genesis 27:35 (NKJV)

As we have noted several times before, the things you do wrong will probably be repeated by your children! Jacob had spoken with מרמה (merma) "deceit" and so the sons do here.

*A Prayer of David. Hear a just cause, O Lord, Attend to my cry; Give ear to my prayer which is not from **deceitful lips**.*

Psalms 17:1 (NKJV)

*For they do not speak peace, But they devise **deceitful matters** Against the quiet ones in the land.*

Psalms 35:20 (NKJV)

*For the mouth of the wicked and the **mouth of the deceitful** Have opened against me; They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.*

Psalms 109:2 (NKJV)

God's people, like David did not speak this way. The others did. It was not right that Jacob's sons answered in this way. But, they had an excuse - Shechem had defiled their sister! No! That is still no excuse. What was the deceit? First, they appeared to agree with Shechem that they all get together but they pointed out the other's lack of circumcision. If they were circumcised, then everything would be alright. In Genesis 17:10-14, God told who should be circumcised - the children of Abraham. No one else was to be circumcised (as a sign anyway, medically speaking, it is different). They were deceitful in proposing such a thing! The deceit went much further than that.

And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He was more honorable than all the household of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: "These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only on this condition will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one

people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised. Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

Genesis 34:18-24 (NKJV)

The request "pleased" Hamer and Shechem, but not for reasons that were apparent at that time! One must understand Hebrew history to understand what follows properly. The next thing the text says is that Shechem "did not delay" to "do the thing." Then the two of them went to the city to convince the rest to do likewise. Shechem was not circumcised until after he went to the others. The point in the Hebrew is that he was probably the first to do it. What is to be noticed here is the statement that he was "more honorable" than the rest. כבד (cabad) in its base form means "heavy." In the Niphal stem, as here, it means "weighty" in the sense of influence. He had more influence than others in his household. This made it easier for him to convince the others to follow suit.

He proposed that they all (the men) be circumcised. Why, so they could intermarry as was the agreement? No! "Will not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs be ours?" It was a scheme to get Jacob's property (how many other daughters did he have to intermarry with?) So all the men of the city, in their greed, went through the ordeal. Think of it! It was a terrible ordeal for them to go through unless there was something pretty good in it for them.

There is an old saying, "if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!"

Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what was in the city and what was in the field, and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that was in the houses. Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I." But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

Genesis 34:25-31 (NKJV)

Here is where Simeon and Levi enter in. They went to the city with their swords and did a bit more "surgery" on the men (they slew them). They grabbed Dinah, their sister, and ran back to Jacob, carrying as much of the goods in the city as they could, including the women and children.

Jacob was elated when they returned - or was he? No, he was furious. They had made him "obnoxious" among the people in the land. "Obnoxious" is about as good a word as any for שׂוֹנֵא (bash). It is also found in Exodus.

*So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not **stink**, nor were there any worms in it.*

Exodus 16:24 (NKJV)

Not only did they stink (figuratively speaking) but they had עכר (hacar) stirred it up, spread the bad smell over the land. "There is that stinker Jacob and his family!" It seems like they were in the same state that the U.S. is in today - except we are not "few in number."

The two brothers had an answer - they had treated their sister like a harlot. Yes, there was a penalty to be paid but there is a right way to do something and a wrong way and this was definitely the wrong one.

Do not worry Jacob, Romans 8:28 applied then as well as now. In the next chapter we shall read

And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

Genesis 35:5 (NKJV)

We shall comment on this when we come to it. One other passage will require some comment.

"Simeon and Levi are brothers;
Instruments of cruelty are in their dwelling place.
Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united to their assembly;
For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they hamstrung an ox.
Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.

Genesis 49:5-7 (NKJV)

In a paper by one Jewish rabbi I can across, he pointed out that God spread Simeon out over the land when it was divided. But Levi was spread out because the Levites became the priests. One of them was made to be nothing, the other was elevated to the priesthood! We shall consider this when we come to it.

CHAPTER 35

Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother." And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem.

Genesis 35:1-4 (NKJV)

"Then God said . . ." When? We are not told. We tend to think, when we read things like this that what happens now followed immediately after what happened in the last chapter. There is no reason to assume this. "Then - at some time later . . ." is the thought. (K&D say ten years).

God instructed to go to Bethel and make an altar there. Why?

Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."

Genesis 28:18-22 (NKJV)

Jacob had made a vow there. The Lord had fulfilled His part of the vow, now it was up to Jacob to keep his part. The vow had to be completed. As a side note, there is a lesson to be learned.

But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes," be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment.

James 5:12 (NKJV)

The above passage is a bit out of context, but the point is there. If you make a promise, a covenant, or whatever, be sure you can and will keep it! Jacob had made a vow. So far he has made no effort to complete it. So God instructs him to go.

Jacob responded by making preparations and saying, "*put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments.*" What gods? The only one we know about are the ones Rachael stole. None of the others had any unless Rachel shared them. Man has a propensity to find gods anywhere and so, along the way, they must have picked up more. Consider the following.

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord!

Joshua 24:14 (NKJV)

"Now therefore," he said, "put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel."

Joshua 24:23 (NKJV)

In spite of the fact that the Israelites were to leave Egypt without foreign gods, they now had them. How many other "gods" do you have? The "gods" of money, fame, possessions, etc. Just about anything can be a god if it gets in between you and God!

He also told them to change their garments. Why? K&D say, *"the putting on of clean and festal clothes, as a symbol of the sanctification and elevation of the heart to the Lord"* Why the earrings? They were not simple earrings like women wear today, they were amulets and charms which went along with their worship of foreign gods. These Jacob buried *under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem*

Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him.

Genesis 12:6-7 (NKJV)

This was, apparently, the same tree. Many years later, the same sort of ritual would be repeated under Joshua

"Now therefore," he said, "put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel." And the people said to Joshua, "The Lord our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!" So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. Then Joshua wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took a large stone, and set it up there under the oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord.

Joshua 24:23-26 (NKJV)

Jacob "hid" them there. We usually think we hide something so we can get it later. A dog buries his bone so (hopefully) he will be able to get it when he wants it. On the other hand, it is said, "out of sight, out of mind" and this is, no doubt, the thought here. Indeed, man has practiced this throughout time. Just some examples are below.

So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. (The man Moses killed).

Exodus 2:12 (NKJV)

(But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) (The spies Joshua sent out)

Joshua 2:6 (NKJV)

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. (Achin's loot)

Joshua 7:22 (NKJV)

Or why was I not hidden like a stillborn child, Like infants who never saw light?

Job 3:16 (NKJV)

And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

Genesis 35:5-7 (NKJV)

So off they went. I wonder what was in Jacob's mind as they traveled in as much as Simeon and Levi had made him "odious" in the eyes of the people of the land. ". . . but God meant it for good." The text says "*the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them.*" He was "odius" alright - so much so they were terrified of him and, contrary to his words, "*since I am few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me.*" (34:30) they "*did not pursue the sons of Jacob.*"

Jacob went to Bethel (or Luz) where he had been before and did as the Lord had commanded him. When he was there before (Gen 28:19) he called it Bethel. (How could he journey to "Bethel" if it wasn't called that?) But now he renames it "EL" (ל) Bethel = "God of the House of God." This is a strange form for a name. K&D say he named it "God of Bethel" which does not make sense, translating part of the name and not the rest of it. In any case, the name did not "stick" as it never appears again, only "Bethel."

Previously, he had set up only a stone marker. Now, having returned with the fulfillment of God's blessing, he built an altar. He did that but when he left there before, he said, "and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." Did he forget this promise? How would you fulfill such a promise? I do not know how to lead a herd of sheep into heaven, or even up "Jacob's Ladder." Perhaps, then, the purpose of the altar was so he could offer up his tenth as a sacrifice on the altar. Consider the following.

"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. And you shall eat before the Lord your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may

learn to fear the Lord your God always. But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry the tithe, or if the place where the Lord your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the Lord your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses. And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household. You shall not forsake the Levite who is within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you. "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Deuteronomy 14:22-29 (NKJV)

According to this, you can give your tithe to the Lord by simply eating it in His presence - in the place He designates. This, then, is probably what happened and Jacob did pay his tithe.

Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.

Genesis 35:8 (NKJV)

This section is only one verse long - it is parenthetical in order to account for Deborah (for her death). The name of it (the tree) was called אלון בכות (Allon Bachuth) = "The tree of weeping." or the "mourning oak."

Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

Genesis 35:9-15 (NKJV)

Some of the things in this section seem a bit out of place. He had come from Padan Aram some time before. He had already called this place El Bethel. He had already wrestled with the Angel of God and hence was renamed "Israel." Yet these are all mentioned again here. Why? Because we have reached the point we have been waiting for through seven chapters. After the vision of the ladder and the resulting vow, Jacob had gone to Laban and obtained much goods and cattle. He has been blessed and protected, and he had now returned to Bethel and fulfilled his vow. He is now one who would "walk with God" (although that is not claimed for Jacob).

So now God appears to Jacob again. From the text, it appears that this time it was (a) not in a dream and (b) God was not way up at the top of the ladder. God came down and spoke to him face-to-face. God then gave him a number of promises, most of which had been promised to his fathers before him.

- *He called his name Israel*
- *A company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body*
- *I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land (Canaan)*

From this point on in Genesis, Jacob is referred to as Jacob about 35 times and as Israel about 35 times. As we proceed, let us see if there is any reason why the names are used interchangeably.

It is interesting to note that the only other place in the Old Testament that the expression, “*A company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body*” (i.e. its equivalent) is to be found is as below.

No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.

Genesis 17:5-6 (NKJV)

This is the place where Abram, like Jacob, had his name changed! Also, if you go down a few verses, it is also the place where he promised Abraham the land. So, Jacob is now in precisely the same place that Abraham was many years before (Gen. 17). Finally, he again set up a pillar of stone and called it Bethel (which may explain why it is never called El Bethal.)

Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

Genesis 35:16-20 (NKJV)

Having completed his vow, Jacob/Israel continued on to go to Ephrath. In order to determine where Ephrath was we jump ahead.

But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

Genesis 48:7 (NKJV)

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting."

Micah 5:2 (NKJV)

Ephrath was the old name for Bethlehem. אפרתה (Ephrath) does not seem to have a meaning that we can find. We will leave it at that. On the trip she began to give birth and she *"labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor."* There is no need to elaborate on this, it is a pretty exact translation of the Hebrew. Her midwife told her she was going to have a son. I would presume that she knew this because enough of the baby had emerged to make this determination and Rachel's difficulty was in completion of the birth. Her last words were the name for the son and, having uttered them, she died.

She called him בן אונִי (Ben-Oni) = "Son of my Trouble" or "Son of my Sorrow." I don't think that would be a very good name to have. Apparently Jacob didn't think so either. He gave him another name, בנימין (Benjamin) = "Son of my Right Hand."

What is the significance of this name? According to K&D, it signifies, *"son of good fortune, according to the meaning of the word jamin sustained by the Arabic."* They are the only ones who think thus! Why would he use an Arabic word for his name anyway? According to JFB, *"this is thought by some to have been originally Benjamin, "a son of days," that is, of old age. But with its present ending it means "son of the right hand," that is, particularly dear and precious."* That does not make a whole lot of sense either. Adam Clark has, *"the son peculiarly dear to me. So man of the right hand, Psalm 80:17, signifies one much loved and regarded of God. The Samaritan has Benyamin, the son of days; i.e., the son of his old age, as Judah calls him"* So there are three or four different meanings. Unger says, *"perhaps, "son of the South," Southerner"* The only one which makes any sense at all is, as Clark has it, *"one much loved."* We know that Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father which would seem to go along with it. But even this does not fit. When we get to Genesis 48, Jacob spends five verses praising the "heir" (Judah) and five verses praising Joseph. But of Benjamin, all he says is this.

"Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he shall devour the prey, And at night he shall divide the spoil."

Genesis 49:27 (NKJV)

This hardly sounds like "one much loved!" So, I may as well give another interpretation, one that has a bit more merit to it. Consider the passages below.

But when the children of Israel cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab.

Judges 3:15 (NKJV)

Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. And from their cities at that time the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six

thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. Among all this people were seven hundred select men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's breadth and not miss.

Judges 20:14-16 (NKJV)

Now these were the men who came to David at Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers in the war, armed with bows, using both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows with the bow. They were of Benjamin, Saul's brethren.

1 Chron. 12:1-2 (NKJV)

Before commenting on the verses as a whole, let it be noted that “*using both the right hand and the left in hurling stones*” does not necessarily mean that each man was using both hands, only that some used one, some used the other, so the, collectively, they were using both hands.

In all three passage we have reference to left-handed men - 701 in the first two passages, the is no number given in the last. Note also that all were from the tribe of Benjamin! If your son stretches out his hand to you for you to take (i.e. to go for a walk, etc.), he would normally stretch out his right hand and you would take hold of it with your left. If you take hold with your right, you would be holding your son's left hand. On this basis, it is my contention that Benjamin was left-handed, thus “son of my right hand.” In any case, he must have carried left handed genes in light of the passages above!

Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard about it.

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

Genesis 35:21-26 (NKJV)

This chapter concludes with several notices. First, it is noted that Reuben lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine. Is this wrong? Well, this is what Paul had to say many years later.

*It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles--that **a man has his father's wife!** And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

1 Corinthians 5:1-2 (NKJV)

It is not necessary to say more. But, why is it mentioned here. It is mentioned here because this is when it occurred and it is necessary to know when we get to chapter 49 and Jacob passes over Reuben in the primary blessing. The leads to a recount of the children.

~~Reuben, Simeon, Levi~~, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; - Joseph and Benjamin - Dan and Naphtali - Gad and Asher. These are listed, not in the order of birth but in the order of blessing. (More or less).

Note that I have crossed out the first three. In Genesis 49 they are passed over as far as the primary blessing is concerned because of the acts we have now read about. Thus Judah would be the leader upon Jacob's death and thereafter. The tribe of Judah was the last to be taken into captivity.

Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre, or Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Genesis 35:27-29 (NKJV)

Returning to Mamre, Abraham's and Isaac's home, they found Isaac and old old man (168). The text says he died at 180, which would be twelve years later, not long before they family had to go to Egypt. The text sounds like he died almost immediately but this is because of Hebrew historical style. We are here completing the account of the life of Isaac. In the next chapter we will move on to Jacob and, especially, Joseph. The text says he was "old" which is obvious. It also says he was "full of days." The expression is a Hebrew idiom used of a number of the patriarchs and Job as well. So Isaac is dead and buried and we are ready to go on to the next section - almost.

CHAPTER 36

Now this is the genealogy of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite; Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; and Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. Now Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. And Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan. Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau dwelt in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.

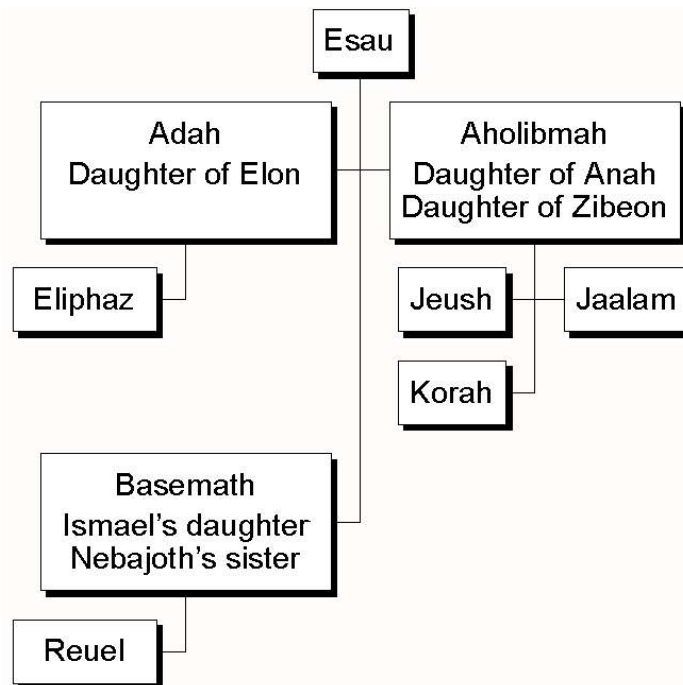
Genesis 36:1-8 (NKJV)

In concluding the last chapter, I said we were “almost” done with Part III of the study. As before, however, it closes with a genealogical chart which we shall go through briefly. This leads me to make an important comment.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV)

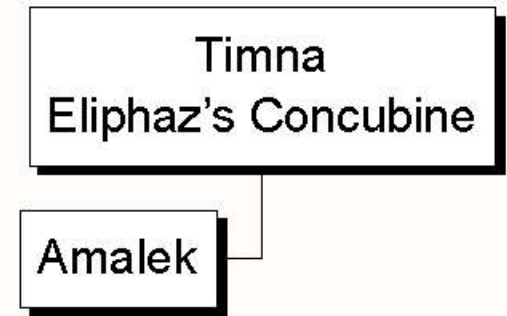
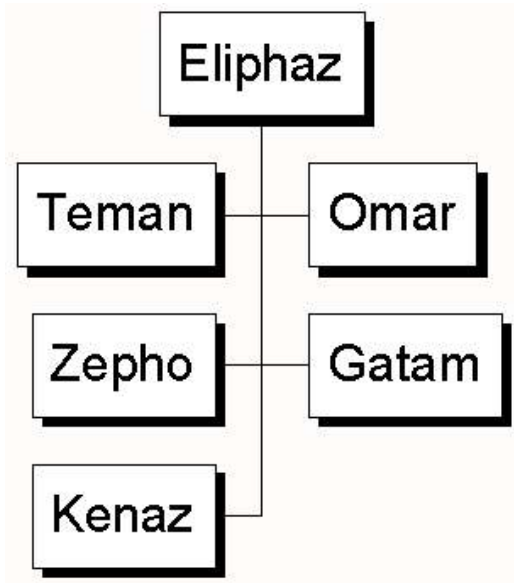
You may say, “Well, I sure do not get much from these charts!” Studying them as such does not profit us very much. that, later in the Bible, where a certain study of this chapter the study of other now. I shall use this chapter.



They are there so we need to know people came from, In other words, the is more important in books than it is right charts to go through

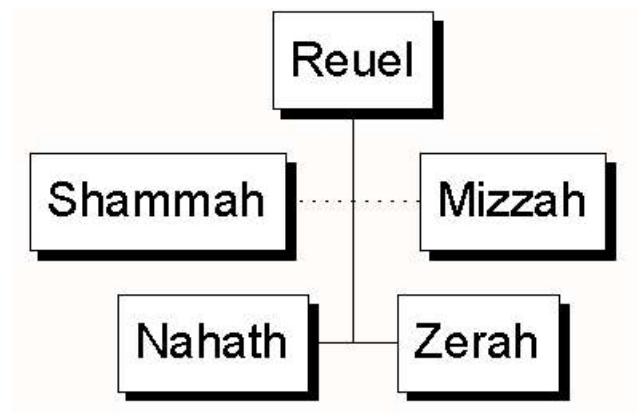
And this is the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. These were the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz. Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore Amalek to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. These were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. These were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

Genesis 36:9-14 (NKJV)



Most of the names in these charts will not be of much significance to you, but the Amalekites are heard of time and time again through the Scriptures and here is where they came from.

As we proceed to the next section, we have what appears to be a repetition of what we just covered. But note a particular difference!



These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn son of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, and Chief Amalek. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah.

These were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath,

“These were the **chiefs** of the sons of . . . Is there a difference? The charts above are full of people but now, if we were to redraw these charts, they would contain the names of tribes or family groups. While there is not a lot of difference, it is provided here to make certain that the reader understands that whole tribes of people issued from these men.

And these were the sons of Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These were the chiefs who descended from Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. These were the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs. Genesis 36:18-19 (NKJV)

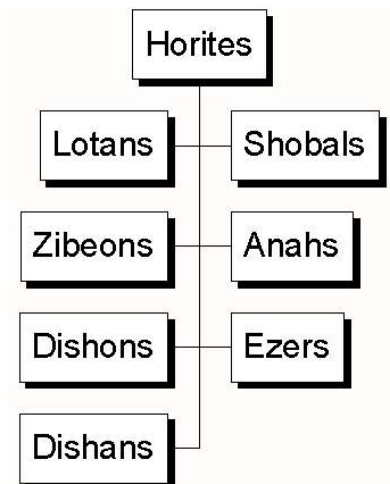
From this genealogy of God’s chosen people, we now move on to other genealogies.

These were the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

אֱלֹפִי (lep) = “chief.” These men were leaders of tribes and hence chiefs, not kings over nations.

and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which is by the wilderness.

Next we turn to the Horite tribes. Who the Horites were we do not know other than their showing up back in Genesis 14. From them descended seven other tribes of people, as indicated above and in the chart.



Now these were the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Avith. When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, Hadar reigned in his place; and the name of his city was Pau. His wife's name was

Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

Genesis 36:31-39 (NKJV)

We just look at the chiefs of some of the tribes. Here is a reference to the kings who reigned during this period of time - before any king reigned over the children of Israel. This last expression is not very definite. Israel had no king until Saul but it is unlikely that this is meant to be the cutoff. (Note that these genealogies are repeated in I Chronicles 1.) It must date back to when (or before) Israel was in Egypt. I have not charted this as it is not really chartable. The kings were not a succession of father-sons but from different roots.

And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau was the father of the Edomites.

Genesis 36:40-43 (NKJV)

We already have had a chart of those descended from Esau and now we have another. But note that it is "according to . . . places. These are thus to be regarded as place names and not people.

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