

# Exegetical Lessons 301–400 on Genesis

When I exegete a book, I tend to get very bogged down in the details and so, I decided to develop a series of a few short lessons on various chapters of the Bible, where I attempt to simply deal with the primary points of each verse without getting too detail-oriented. Each lesson is 4–5 pages long and designed to be read at one sitting. Although it is always nice to have a Bible open when studying this, I have, in almost all cases, included the actual Scripture within the text.

I am adding a brief summary to each chapter as an addendum lesson. These chapters will be anywhere from 5 to 15 additional pages. Eleven such chapters will be added to this set of one hundred lessons (Genesis 37 had already been summarized).

I began this study with a general introduction, followed by introductory lessons to studying the Bible, followed by some introductory lessons to the book of Genesis. These 21 lessons precede the lessons lined to below.

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## Lesson 301: Genesis 26:12–35

## Abimelech Reconciles with Isaac

So far, this is what we have studied:

Genesis 26:12–16 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him. (Now the Philistines had stopped and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father.) And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we."

So God blesses Isaac so markedly, that those around him are envious, and ask for him to leave their territory.

Genesis 26:17–22 So Isaac departed from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar and settled there. And Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of Abraham his father, which the Philistines had stopped after the death of Abraham. And he gave them the names that his father had given them. But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, 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 contended with him. Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that 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, saying, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

Isaac moved a ways away, and dug a well, but herdsmen from Gerar would contend with him over the water rights; so he would move further away. He moved far enough away to where he could dig a well without having to defend it; and he moved far enough away so that the blessing by association no longer applied to the people of Gerar.

Genesis 26:23–25 From there he went up to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake." So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

God, from His grace, blesses Isaac; and this is one of the few times that Isaac interacts directly with God. Note that his blessing is based upon Abraham, his father.

Genesis 26:26–27 When Abimelech went to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army, Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?"

There are also some simple economics at work here. God blessed Isaac and those in his periphery. However, because God blessed Isaac, he would have a large contingent of peoples working for him, and he would need to purchase a great many supplies, as well as a lot of food for his people and livestock. This was great for the economy of the Philistines in Gerar. The more that God prospered Isaac, the more that these blessings spilled over into the lives of citizens of Gerar. However, when they drove Isaac away, he left with his possessions and his prosperity, and the Philistines lost the great economic boom that was Isaac.

**Application:** France recently increased taxes on their very rich to 75%, and [these rich people began to leave France](#), thus reducing the money coming into the government. Taxing the rich excessively was a stupid idea, which [they did eventually realize](#).

Do you see how up to date the Bible is? Things which are written 4000 years ago are pertinent to today's world. The key is simply understanding what is written and interpreting it in that era, and then applying these lessons to today's world.

Genesis 26:28–29 And they said, "We saw certainly that Jehovah was with you. And we said, Let there be now an oath between us, between us and you, 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 but good to you, and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of Jehovah."

Abimelech isn't quite sure how to present his case, so he tells Isaac that he treated Isaac fairly and did not harm him, and did not do anything but good to him, even though this is not exactly what occurred. It is true that, when Abimelech found out that Rebekah was Isaac's wife, he did issue an edict for the men of that city to not violate her. There is every indication that Abimelech and Isaac had a cordial relationship.

On the negative side, the people of Gerar convinced Abimelech to drive Isaac away; and they continued to harass Isaac until he had moved 30 miles away (which was a great distance in those days).

Abimelech and those with him do recognize that Isaac is blessed by God, and this is key; they understand. That is a breakthrough. Look, you can live in the same house with a maturing believer and never recognize how much God has blessed that believer. However, these men could see that is what had happened, which suggests that they do believe in Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim; and recognize that, they need to make their peace with Isaac.

We studied this topic sometime ago, but if you have forgotten it, it is worth reviewing: **Blessing by Association** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

**Genesis 26:30** And he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.

This feast indicates that these men fellowshiped together. Isaac was willing to be gracious to them. He doesn't send them off saying, "What about those wells? I think you need to compensate me for those wells that your men stole from me. Also the ones that they destroyed. When you are ready to do that, then we will talk." But Isaac did not do that. Isaac treats them in grace. He is willing to accept things as they were; and he was willing to be at peace with all men.

Isaac is not a perfect man, and this will become clear in the next chapter. However, at this point, he is doing the right thing.

**Genesis 26:31** And they rose up early in the morning, and swore to one another. And Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

The swearing is likely a non-aggression pact, and a pact of friendship. Departing in peace meant that everything between them was now fine. Was Isaac compensated for the wells? Probably not. However, we do know that God greatly blessed him; so, he was compensated in that way.

**Application:** In your life, you will be cheated. People will take advantage of you; and many times, you will not be reimbursed—not by them, anyway. As believers, it is not our responsibility to settle every score. It is not up to us to find the people who have wronged us, and try to harm them back. This does not mean that you should be dishonest. You don't give a good review to a lousy employee or to a lousy tenant; but, at the same time, you do not chase after every person who has done you wrong and sue them. God has a lot more for us to do than to try to deal with all the injustices in our lives. There are many times when it is better to just let someone flow away from the periphery of your life, and to let God deal with them. God is very good at dealing with those who have wronged believers.

You may recall that, when Isaac came clean with Abimelech, God blessed him a hundredfold. Here, Isaac has come to a point of friendship and fellowship with Abimelech, and note what happens:

**Genesis 26:32** And the same day it happened, Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug. And they said to him, "We have found water."

This is important. Isaac showed some signs of spiritual maturity. He was able to resolve the difficulties with these men without being self-righteous about it. As a result, God blessed him greatly. **Pursue peace with all men** (Heb. 12:14a; NASB). **If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men** (Rom. 12:18; NASB).

**Genesis 26:33** And he called it Shebah. Therefore the name of the city is The Well of Sheba to this day.

The word for *well* is *b<sup>e</sup>êr* (בְּעַר) [pronounced *b<sup>e</sup>-AIR*], which means *well, pit; spring*. Strong's #875 BDB #91. That is transliterated *beer*. *Sh<sup>e</sup>bâ' (שְׁבַע)* [pronounced *sh<sup>eb</sup>-VAW*], which means *seven; an oath; transliterated Sheba, Sebean*. Strong's #7614 BDB #985. When we put these together, we have *Beersheba*, or *Well of the Oath*.

If you will recall, we have a very similar narrative back in the life of Abraham, at the end of Genesis 21. The common explanation given by those who do not believe in the Word of God, is that this is the same story, but it got passed along through two different sources, and a few names and details got changed. But that is not what happened. We have similar situations occur in the lives of Abraham and Isaac. When Abraham gave this area the name *Beersheba*, this is how his family knew the area; this is the name by which the camp of Abraham knew this particular area. However, Isaac, when this incident occurs again, will give this name to the area, and that name will stick—it will be more than just a family name for that area—and become its name even [until today](#).

Now, what is the significance of this similar story, apart from the name *Beersheba*? This indicates that there is still some positive volition in Gerar. The royalty of that area still understands that Abraham was blessed by God and that his son Isaac is also blessed by God. Therefore, an alliance should be formed.

This is not a weird thing, by the way. If you are going to college, and you know of a good teacher, then you attempt to get into one of that teacher's classes. When you become an adult and you start interacting with businesses (either as a consumer or as another business), then you choose businesses where the people are serious and have character. You do not necessarily choose the good-time, rock-and-roll businesses where, at 4:59 pm, they padlock their doors and head off to the nearest watering hole to imbibe. If you are able to find a person of character to associate with or to interact with, then you do it.

Similarly, Abimelech and Phicol—probably the sons of Abimelech and Phicol who knew Abraham (Abimelech is doubtless a title; Phicol may or may not be) recognize the importance of an association with Abraham. Abimelech I may have told Abimelech II, “You want to continue to have a good relationship with the people of Abraham, because he knows God.” So Abimelech II has the good sense to locate Isaac and form a bond with him. Remember, when Isaac was in Abimelech's periphery and not only did Isaac enjoy great blessing, but so did Abimelech and his people. Blessing by association. Then Isaac was forced to leave. Guaranteed that the prosperity of Gerar began to decrease the moment Isaac left town. So Abimelech's personal experience combined with what his father told him, causes him to realize that an association with Isaac is a good thing.



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Unlike Abraham, Isaac plays a fairly small role in the New Testament.

### Isaac in the New Testament

1. Isaac is named in the line of Jesus. Matt. 1:2 Luke 3:34
2. Isaac is named in the formula, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; or in similar passages. Matt. 8:11 22:32 Mark 12:26 Luke 13:28 20:37 Acts 3:13 7:8, 32
3. Paul talks about the line of Abraham, and names Isaac. Rom. 9:6–12
4. Believers are compared to Isaac, insofar as, he is called a child of promise. We are also children of promise. Gal. 4:28
5. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are all called heirs to the same promise in Heb. 11:8–10
6. The New Testament mentions that Abraham offered up Isaac to God. Heb. 11:17–19 James 2:21
7. One of the few times Isaac is spoken of according to something that he did is, he passed along blessings to Esau and Jacob, his twin sons. Jacob was the child of promise and Esau was not. We will study this in the next chapter of Genesis. Heb. 11:20 [By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau](#). Isaac knew that giving these final blessings to his son had actual impact upon their lives.

So, whereas Abraham's actions are related to a number of doctrines in the New Testament, Isaac is primarily noted for being the child of promise and the one Abraham was ready to sacrifice to God. In these two ways, Isaac portrays Jesus. Isaac is the type and Jesus is the antitype. However, there was very little that Isaac did that any New Testament author thought was worth noting and explaining in terms of Church Age doctrine.

At this point, we leave Isaac and go to Esau—Jacob's twin—but only for a moment.

[Genesis 26:34](#) [And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite.](#)

As has been the case throughout the Bible, certain men will be followed; certainly lines will be followed. However, for the lines that do not lead to the Messiah, they would no longer be listed after a generation or three. That line might continue to live on for many generations, but the Bible no longer records the people in that line. We know that there were detailed records of these lines in the first third of the book of 1Chronicles, which does follow many genealogies. However, in the rest of Scripture, there is no need to follow out any other line except for the line of promise. And the various authors of Scripture appear to know which line that is.

The important line is the line of the Messiah, so that is followed all the way from Adam to Noah to Abraham to David to Jesus. That is the *only* line followed out in the Bible. This, in itself, is quite remarkable. There are all kinds of detractors to Scripture, who disagree

about when it was written and who wrote it. But, you know what no one disagrees with? There is about a 400 year gap between the Old and New Testaments. Furthermore, no one thinks that the Old Testament was written all at once, but over a period of several hundred years at least (I believe that, technically, the Old Testament was written over a period of about 2000 years). But somehow, whoever wrote it and at whatever time it was written, they knew enough to follow only one genealogical line from beginning to the end. There is a line going from Adam to Abraham. There is no other line followed during that time period. Then the line from Abraham to David is followed—and no other line. And then, *two* lines are followed from David, and one leads to Joseph and the other leads to Mary. How did someone know which line to follow? How did they know to make mention of this line of Esau, and to follow it out a couple of generations, and then to stop?

As an aside, this is one of the many places where Mormons go off the rails. Although the Bible has genealogical lines, the focus is always on the line from Adam to Abraham to David to Jesus. The Mormon Scriptures (written long after the Bible) are filled with genealogical lines. If you understand why there are genealogies in the Bible (these genealogies lead from Adam to Jesus Christ), you then ask why do the Mormons record genealogies? There is only one genealogical line that matters. The first 8 or so chapters of 1Chronicles inform us that genealogical records for many people were preserved and over a long period of time. However, apart from these chapters in 1Chronicles, the Bible concerns itself with one genealogical line, because there is only one celebrity in the Christian life, and that is Jesus Christ. There is only one genealogical line that matters, and that is *the line of promise or the line of grace*. We may find our own genealogy to be interesting, and I have studied my own to some extent. However, I would not include my own genealogy in the study of this or that chapter, because it is not pertinent to anything. If you understand that my own genealogy has no place in the study of the Word of God, that should help you to understand why the Mormon genealogies recorded in their *scriptures* are without meaning—because there is only *one* line of promise.

[Genesis 26:35](#) They made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

*They* refers back to the wives of Esau. Esau, in his marriages, did not make good choices. The fact that his wives did not fit into the family well, will actually be used later by Rebekah, when she sends her son Jacob away.

It is interesting. Isaac has two children, twins, Jacob and Esau. Jacob is clearly a schemer and a chiseler, always trying to put one over on Esau. He knew of the spiritual blessing and he believed it. However, Jacob tried to get this blessing through subterfuge and by human effort and deception. God's plan is going to move ahead, no matter what. However, it does not require deception in order to further it.

Esau was more straightforward than Jacob, but he married the wrong kind of women.

The verb here is in the feminine plural, which means, these wives of Esau made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah. The Bible does not give us specifics as to *how* these women made life miserable for Isaac and Rebekah. We do not know why, exactly; but these wives

were an unhappy choice. If you have lousy in-laws, then you have an inkling of what is going on. If a woman wants to make herself anathema to her mother-in-law, then she will find a way to do that. Women tend to be very skilled when it comes to making another woman dislike them.

You will recall that Abraham went to great lengths to go east to find a wife for Isaac; and that Jacob also will go east to find a wife from his family as well. Esau did not do this; he does not appear to be interested in perpetuating faith in the God of Abraham. Very likely, these other women worshiped false gods, and this was difficult for Isaac and Rebekah.

Esau appears to have married at least 7 different women, comparing this passage to Genesis 28:9 36:2, 34.

Why did Esau marry so many women? He was not happy with the first wife, so he married a second. He was not happy with the first two women, so he married a third. And so on. He came from a family that worshiped Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim, and he married women who worshiped heathen gods. As a result, Esau himself could not be made happy; and with each additional wife, his parents were made more unhappy.

It is likely that they all lived together on the compound. They would not all live in the same tent, but their tents would not be far from one another—Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau all being the chief members of this compound. How do you think things worked out with Esau and two or three or four wives, all living in the same compound, none of whom worshiped Y<sup>e</sup>howah, all of whom practices various forms of paganism, and these wives would have been jealous of one another. How do you think that was for camp morale? How do you think Isaac and Rebekah felt about these wives?

The Bible tells us:

[Genesis 26:35](#) Esau's wives made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

We will study more about Esau and his wives, and even study, in a very limited way, his children. But the line of Jesus does not go through Esau; therefore, even though this portion of the Bible is written about 2000 B.C., the author knows enough that, Esau's genealogical line is not the line to follow.

**Lesson 301 addendum: Genesis 26:1–35**

**A Brief Exegesis of Genesis 26**

### **An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 26:**

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord,

JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

### The Section Headings in Genesis 26:

vv. 1–33	<a href="#">Isaac in Gerar and Beersheba</a>
vv. 34–35	<a href="#">Esau and His Hittite Wives</a>

### Isaac in Gerar and Beersheba

Genesis 26:1 [And there was a scarcity of food in the land, besides the first scarcity of food which was in the days of Abraham. And Yitshaq \[= Isaac\] went to Abimelek, sovereign of the Philistines, in Gerar.](#)

As happened from time to time, there was a famine which was taking place in Canaan. The simplest reason for this would be a dry year. You cannot grow without water. Something similar took place in the time of Abraham.

The intent of God might be for Isaac to move around a bit more in the land which God had given him.

Isaac goes to Abimelech, the ruler of the Philistines in Gerar. The proper way to do this was through direct interaction between the two men.

Genesis 26:2 [And יהוה \[= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah\] appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Mitsrayim \[= Egypt\], live in the land which I command you.](#)

Apparently, when there was the drought, Isaac had considered moving down to Egypt. God told him, “Absolutely not.”

Genesis 26:3 [“Sojourn in this land. And I shall be with you and bless you, for I give all these lands to you and your seed. And I shall establish the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.](#)

God tells Isaac, “Use this time as an opportunity to travel around Canaan and get a better look at what God has given to you and your descendants.

Genesis 26:4–5 “And I shall increase your seed like the stars of the heavens, and I shall give all these lands to your seed. And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because Abraham obeyed My voice and guarded My Charge: My commands, My laws, and My Torot.”<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Torot - plural of Torah, teaching.

God takes His promise originally made to Abraham and reiterates it to Isaac. God tells Isaac that his father Abraham obeyed God’s voice and guarded His Charge, His commands, His laws and His Torah.

I would postulate that there were a number of laws given to the human race when Noah and his three sons exited the Ark. Let me also suggest that these laws were almost universally known.

Genesis 26:6 [And Yitshaq dwelt in Gerar.](#)

**The Journeys of Isaac** (a map); from [bible-history.com](http://bible-history.com); accessed June 21, 2024.

At one time, Isaac stayed in Beer-lahai-roi while waiting for Rebekah to come to him. It appears that he decided to move further north but still remain in the Negev until his new wife arrives onto the scene (Genesis 24:62). Maybe Isaac and Rebekah stayed there; and maybe they moved around a little. You can see by the map that Gerar is a bit closer to the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistine-controlled cities were located on or near the coast.

Genesis 26:7 [And when the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, “She is my sister.” For he was afraid to say, “She is my wife,” thinking, “lest the men of the place should kill me for Ribqah \[= Rebekah\], because she is good-looking.”](#)

Interestingly enough, Isaac puts Rebekah into the same circumstance as his father Abraham put Sarah into when in a *foreign* region. At first, you may think, *isn't this too much of a coincidence for Isaac to do the same thing that his father Abraham did?* No, and for a variety of reasons. Both Abraham and Isaac had married beautiful women, women





who remained beautiful for many years. They both lived in a land where this section was controlled by one group, and this other region was controlled by another group. Since both men traveled around the land—as God had required them to do—they were both going to run into similar circumstances. And, most importantly, Isaac knew about this happening previously to Abraham (it happened twice); so why would he not try what his father tried? Since we know about these incidents today, Isaac no doubt knew about them back then.

The way that the Genesis Scriptures were preserved were, the patriarch of any era would speak, from memory, all of the previously recorded Scriptures (and by *recorded*, I mean *remembered*). Then this same person would add information about himself. When appropriate, one of the patriarch's sons would stand up after and speak to his life and personal circumstances. Isaac seems to be very big on knowing about his extended family (particularly because he did not seek them out and spend time with them, as they were outside of Canaan). Jacob will pretty much talk about himself. As we will find out, there are many chapters about Jacob. Many chapters about Abraham, many about Jacob, but not so many on Isaac.

Isaac, realizing that he is about to be put in the same situation as his father, reacts exactly as his father did. He makes the claim that Rebekah is his sister (and I believe this word can stand in for a relative). If memory serves, Isaac and Rebekah are third cousins; so they are relatives.

Genesis 26:8 [And it came to be, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelek sovereign of the Philistines looked through a window, and he watched and saw Yitshaq playing with Ribqah his wife.](#)

Isaac and Rebekah lived among the Philistines for a significant amount of time and Abimelech once, through their window, saw them being unusually playful (this is not necessarily a word that refers to sexual overtures). The interaction is intimate enough for Abimelech to recognize, this is not brother and sister, but husband and wife.

Genesis 26:9 [So Abimelek called Yitshaq and said, "See, truly she is your wife! So how could you say, 'She is my sister'?" And Yitshaq said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.'"](#)

Abimelech appears to have confronted Isaac right then and there. He has just caught them in the act of being too familiar with one another.

Genesis 26:10 [And Abimelek said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people had almost lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt on us."](#)

This Abimelech, unlike the ruler that Abraham interacted with, did not collect attractive women as his wives. However, it was certainly possible that any of his people could have been particularly forward with Rebekah.

I don't think that this was something which has actually happened, but this is what came to Abimelech's mind.

Genesis 26:11 And Abimelech commanded all his people, saying, "He who touches this man or his wife shall certainly be put to death."

Abimelech later made a decree that no one was to touch Isaac or his wife; otherwise, they would be subject to execution.

Genesis 26:12 And Yitshaq sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year a hundredfold, and הוהי blessed him.

Isaac continued to live in this land and when he planted crops, God blessed him with a massive harvest. I think the idea here is not that Isaac got exact 100 plants for every seed he planted, or anything that was so precisely measured. I believe the idea is, he had an incredible amount of produce for the amount of land which he planted, so much so that, anyone who knew about his farm was aware of that great return.

Genesis 26:13 And the man grew great and went forward until he became very great.

Based upon his farming, both with regards to his crops and his animals, Isaac did very well.

Genesis 26:14 And he came to have possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great body of servants, and the Philistines envied him.

Isaac possessed great herds of animals and he has many servants. I would assume that much of this he inherited from his father (Abraham was alive when Jacob and Esau are born, and apparently producing his own crop of kids at the same time). However, we read about Abraham's death in the previous chapter. Therefore, Isaac has what he has amassed on his own along with the slaves which previously belonged to Abraham.

Genesis 26:15 And the Philistines had stopped up all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and filled them with dirt.

Because of the jealousy of the Philistines, they stopped up all of his wells. Apparently, these were wells dug earlier by Abraham's servants.

You may recall that in Genesis 20, Abraham and Sarah also lived in Gerar, so Isaac apparently moved in the land where Abraham lived previously, since many of the wells were already dug.

Was this the same Abimelech in Genesis 20 and 26? I would suggest that this is father and son. The father would have hit on Rebekah from the beginning. This Abimelech did no such thing.

Also, it is possible that *Abimelech* is simply a title (*melech* means *king, ruler*).



Genesis 26:16 And Abimelek said to Yitshaq, “Go away from us, for you are much mightier than we.”

Those who were jealous of Isaac tried attacking him indirectly (by blocking his wells). Abimelech became concerned that Isaac, with his servants, was becoming more powerful than the Philistines over whom he ruled. This relationship could go in a completely different direction if Isaac was after power and/or land.

Genesis 26:17 So Yitshaq went from there and pitched his tent in the wadi Gerar, and dwelt there.

Isaac moves further away, apparently, but is still in Gerar.

Genesis 26:18 And Yitshaq 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. And he called them by the names which his father had called them.

His father had lived in this region previously and had dug many wells. Isaac has his people go out and clean these wells out.

Genesis 26:19–20 But when Yitshaq’s servants dug in the wadi and found a well of running water there, the herdsmen of Gerar strove with Yitshaq’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” And he called the name of the well Ėseq, because they strove with him.

When Isaac’s servants were digging in this region, coming across a very strong well of water, there were men of Gerar who disagreed with Isaac’s servants as to who had clear ownership of this well.

Genesis 26:21 And they dug another well, and they strove over that one too, and he called its name Sitnah.

Isaac’s servants dug another well and that also became a point of contention.

Genesis 26:22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not strive over it. And he called its name Rehoboth, and said, “For now הוהי has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.”

Isaac apparently moved far enough away to dig another well, and there was no one who challenged him in this new location.

Genesis 26:23 And from there he went up to Be’ērsheba.

At some point, Isaac went up to Beersheba (along with his wife, children, and slaves).

Genesis 26:24 And הוהי appeared to him the same night and said, “I am the Elohim of your father Abraham. Do not fear, for I am with you, and shall bless you and increase your seed for My servant Abraham’s sake.”

God appears to Isaac and reiterates His promises that he made to Abraham.

Genesis 26:25 And he built a slaughter-place there, and called on the Name of הוהי, and he pitched his tent there, and the servants of Yitshaq dug a well there.

Isaac built an altar here and his servants dug a well here as well.

Genesis 26:26 And Abimelek came to him from Gerar, with Auzzath, one of his friends, and Pikel the commander of his army.

Abimelech, one of this friends, and Phicol come to Isaac.

Genesis 26:27 And Yitshaq said to them, “Why have you come to me, seeing you have hated me and have sent me away from you?”

Isaac is somewhat upset with Abimelech. The circumstances in Gerar caused Isaac to move further and further from Abimelech’s city.

Genesis 26:28–29 But they said, “We have clearly seen that הוהי is with you. And we said, ‘Please, let there be an oath between us, between you and us. And let us make a covenant with you, that you do no evil to us, as we have not touched you, and as we have done only good toward you, and have sent you away in peace. You are now blessed by הוהי.’ ”

Abimelech admits that it is clear that God is with Isaac. He asks to have a treaty with Isaac.

This also tells us that all three of these men believe in the Revealed God. They do not take the attitude that they have their gods and Isaac has his.

Genesis 26:30 And he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.

Apparently Isaac agrees; and they have a large feast where they all eat and drink.

Genesis 26:31 And they rose early in the morning and swore an oath with one another. And Yitshaq let them go, and they departed from him in peace.

In the morning, Abimelech and his crew left. There would have been more than three in this group; but we are only told about the three.

Genesis 26:32 And on the same day it came to be that the servants of Yitshaq came and informed him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, “We have found water.”

Isaac informs Abimelech about the well he recently dug.

Genesis 26:33 [So he called it Shibah. Therefore the name of the city is Be'ersheba to this day.](#)

The well was given a name like the others.

Someone, perhaps 100 years later, remarks that this well is still in Beersheba. Given that Jacob and his sons will move to Egypt at the end of the book of Genesis, logically, this additional remark had to be made by someone prior to that move. This also speaks to the fluidity of the book of Genesis. Although we stay with this day and time, an extra verse was added which looks back from the perspective of 100 years in the future.

### **Esau and His Hittite Wives**

Genesis 26:34 [And when Ĕsaw \[= Esau\] was forty years old, he took as wives Yehudith \[= Judith\] the daughter of Be'eri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Ĕlon the Hittite.](#)

Now we consider Esau and he has two wives who are Hittites.

Genesis 26:35 [And they were a bitterness of spirit to Yitshaq and Ribqah.](#)

These Hittite wives never got along with Isaac and Rebekah. Let me suggest that the cultural difference and the morality difference are too much for the wives and Isaac and Rebekah to reconcile.

## **Lesson 302: Genesis 27:1–13**

## **Rebecca's Plot**

There is a lot that goes on in the narrative of Genesis 27. Isaac desires to give a blessing to his son Esau, but he predicates this upon Esau preparing a great meal for him. So there is the concept of earning or deserving attached to this blessing. Both Isaac and Esau are aware that Isaac wants to give Esau the blessing of the firstborn. That is, the promise which God made to Abraham and reaffirmed to Isaac—that promise will be passed along to Esau. This is Isaac's intent.

To give you an idea, Isaac is somewhere between 130–140 years old and he will live another 40–50 years. This is based upon several sets of dates which are estimated for the **Patriarch Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

However, Isaac only shows up in the narrative in this chapter and the beginning of the next chapter. After that, the focus of the Genesis narrative will be upon Jacob.

People are confused about the Bible and some things which people do in the Bible. Jacob, throughout most of his life, was not a very good person. He does things which ought not

be emulated. Just because we find a Biblical character doing something, that does not mean, that should be the pattern for our behavior.

In this chapter, Jacob, aided by his mother, will seek to obtain Isaac's special blessing through deception. He and his mother both participate in this deception—in fact, his mother plans out and initiates the deception.

What seems to be the case is that Rebecca, Jacob's mother, was teaching Jacob that, if he did not look out for his own self, that no one else would do it for him. If he needed to deceive someone else in order to get ahead, then he should do this. When interacting with someone else, and there was some advantage to be gained, then, essentially, Rebecca was teaching her son Jacob to try to gain that advantage.

As a result, Jacob believed in looking out for #1. He believed that, unless he looked out for his own interests, then no one else would. He did not look to God for his needs or desires. When you understand this, then you understand Jacob and all that happens to him. Furthermore, because of this, God is going to see to it that Jacob spends 20+ years of his life working for someone who is just like he is. Jacob is a chiseler; Laban, his uncle, whom he will work for, is even more so. Jacob is looking out for #1; but Laban, who Jacob will work for, is even more so. Jacob may or may not understand this lesson; but it is placed in the Bible so that we can understand it.

Rebekah, Jacob's mother, believed that she could get what she wanted for her favorite son through duplicitous means. But, that is not how God's plan works. For this reason, God will separate Jacob from his mother for 20 years, and from her negative influence. In fact, after the incidents in this chapter, she will never see her favorite son ever again. Her plans, based upon deception, will seemingly be for nought. She will lose her favorite son by doing what she does. God's blessing is not to be conferred by duplicitous means.

**Application:** Do not teach your children the wrong things; you may find that God separates you from them as a result. Part of what a parent is to teach their children is morality. You do not let your child grow up like a weed, and allow him to figure out what is right and wrong on his own, any more than you plant a tree or a bush and never trim it so that it is pleasing to look at. You do not plant a lawn and then decide, "Whatever happens, happens." You water it, you fertilize it, and you mow it. Surely your own children are more important than your lawn.

**The Key to Genesis 27:** One of the most remarkable things to me about this chapter is, it is all about words. It is all about the words that Isaac will say, perhaps alone with Jacob (not knowing that he is Jacob and not knowing that Rebekah is nearby). We do not have Isaac pledging his own wealth to Jacob; he does not hand over the keys to the barn (house, factory, car, whatever). Isaac says a few words, which are understood by all to be the defining words of the blessing that will come to Jacob (who is posing as Esau). And, as far as Isaac is concerned, the only persons hearing these words are Jacob (whom he thinks is Esau) and God. This entire chapter is all about the words spoken by Isaac in vv. 27–29 (Isaac may have said more, but this is all that has been preserved).

Furthermore, when all is said and done, Jacob will have to leave the land of Canaan, fearing for his life—so, clearly, there is no immediate material benefit associated with this deception. So, everything in this chapter is about the few words that Isaac says when everyone believes it is near the end of his life. I do not know of a single commentary which drives this point home.

**Genesis 27:1** And it happened when Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called his oldest son Esau and said to him, “My son.”

If Isaac is between 130 and 140, and will live another 40–50 years, then he is going to be in old age for a considerable amount of time. He will live to the age of 180, so his infirmities will naturally increase. Right now, he cannot see well enough to distinguish between his two sons, so he is virtually blind—probably as a result of cataracts.

Isaac clearly favored Esau and Rebekah favored Jacob. Esau was a hunter, and Isaac requested that he kill some wild game for him to eat.

You will note that we have had very little about Isaac’s life to study, and this is because he did not have a life filled with divine good production as Abraham, his father, did. When Abraham offered up his uniquely-born son, this was an act which has stood for all time as a type of Christ offering. We do not find a similar act on the part of Isaac. The bulk of Isaac’s life as recorded in Scripture is associated with births, marriages and deaths—the milestones of life.

What Isaac says in this verse is just one Hebrew word with a suffix, which we translate *my son* (or, *son of mine*). Isaac has two sons, but this narrative will reveal that he is very attached to this particular son. Esau is *his son*.

**Genesis 27:2** And Esau said to him, “I am right here.” Then Isaac begin, “Listen: now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death.

Isaac believes that he is going to die soon and that there are some things that he needs to do before he dies. He needs to bless his favorite son Esau. This is #1 on his list to do before dying.

This is an important moment, because Isaac is going to be passing down his inheritance and his blessing to his favorite son. One of the things which is wrong is, raising a son is a day-by-day process. A father cannot give his son everything on a day when the father knows that he is dying. In this way, both Isaac and Rebekah have failed. This narrative tells us that they have been teaching their sons, Esau and Jacob, the wrong things.

**Genesis 27:3** And now please take your hunting equipment—your quiver and your bow—and go out to the field and hunt game for me.

The word which I translated as *hunting equipment* is k<sup>e</sup>lîy (כֶּלִי) [pronounced k<sup>e</sup>lee]; and it means, *manufactured good, artifact, article, utensil, vessel, weapon, armor, furniture,*

*receptacle; baggage, valuables.* This word is a multi-use term. It is something which has been made or manufactured. Strong's #3627 BDB #479. You may think that it is odd to have such a multifarious-use term but we do this all the time. We use the word *electronics* to describe everything from a cellphone, to a computer, to a big screen tv.

Isaac believes that it is possibly his time to die, and he wants to bless Esau; but he asks Esau to go kill him some wild game. This is going to be a tit-for-tat arrangement.

**Genesis 27:4** And make tasty meat-based meal for me, such as I love, and bring [it] to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die.”

Isaac's approach here is wrong. You will note that Isaac is offering somewhat of a trade-off here. “I am going to bless you; but what I need from you is an incredible meal of wild game.” This is not grace. His logic is simple. “I am hungry; there is nothing I love more than Esau's cooked wild game. And it is time for me to bless him. So let's do both of these together.” Unfortunately, this approach does not teach grace. He is teaching his son that blessing is a matter of works.

God's blessing and the line of Jesus goes from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; however, it ought to be clear that Isaac and Jacob are not in the same league as Abraham, spiritually speaking.

**Genesis 27:5** And Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game in order to bring it.

Rebekah overhears what is going on, so she calls for Jacob. It will be clear from her plan that she believes the Jacob should look out for #1, and that is how she has raised him. Jacob was born second, and she has not only been his advocate but his teacher.

Both parents are teaching their favorite son the wrong things. Isaac is teaching Esau legalism; and Rebekah is teaching her son, Jacob, duplicity and looking out for #1. Neither parent really understands grace or God's will.

Amazingly enough, God will take these 4 very flawed people and work His will among them. There is one genealogy that matters, and that genealogy goes through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and no matter what these people do to screw things up, God does not lose focus; and God's plan is never thwarted. That is grace.

**Genesis 27:6–7** And Rebekah spoke to her son Jacob, saying, “Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, ‘Bring me game, and make me delicious things so that I may eat and bless you before Jehovah before my death.’”

My guess is, they lived on the same ground, but in different tents, each family has a tent and a specified area which was theirs. One might reasonably assume that there was a reasonable amount of space between these tents. From what we have studied, it is clear

that Isaac lives on and oversees a compound; however, this compound may have a central area that is 5 or 10 acres, with tents scattered in that area.

We know that Abraham oversaw a group of 500–1200 (recall that he raised up an army of over 300 men). However, for the most part, we do not even realize that these 500 or so men and women were in close proximity to Abraham. That is because the Bible focuses in on the person of Abraham and his relationship to God. The same thing is true of these 4 principals—there might be anywhere from 300 to 3000 employees and slaves in close proximity with Isaac; but the focus of our narrative is on the interactions of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau. So these people are around, but the Bible rarely makes reference to them.

In any movie that you see, there are the actors and there are the extras. Your eyes are always on the actors, even if they are in a scene with 15 other people in the background. God's plan works very similar to this. Angels are watching the human race—and during this part of human history, they were to focus on this particular genealogical line. Through Scripture and through His promises, God made it clear who should be watched.

**Genesis 27:6–7** And Rebekah spoke to her son Jacob, saying, “Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, ‘Bring me game, and make me delicious things so that I may eat and bless you before Jehovah before my death.’”

Rebekah tells Jacob exactly what Isaac had said to Esau.

Given all that is about to occur, I don't believe that Rebekah simply wandered nearby, heard Isaac speaking, and then decided that she needed to hear more. I believe that this was intentional—she knew this was on Isaac's mind and that she wanted her favorite son to receive the blessing that Isaac was going to give Esau. I am saying that Jacob's devious behavior is not an anomaly. He learned this from his mother Rebekah.

These parents, who have their favorite sons, have raised these two young men incorrectly. Esau is learning legalism and Jacob is learning deception.

**Genesis 27:8** And now, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you.

Rebekah has put together a plan. It is likely that she has been thinking of a plan for some time now. She needs for Jacob to get a meal together for Isaac before Esau is able to shoot or trap anything. Esau will be out hunting, and he could be gone for hours or even days.

**Genesis 27:9** Go now to the flock, and bring me from there two good kids of the goats. And I will make them delicious things for your father, such as he loves.

Rebekah knows how to cook (or how to supervise cooking). Remember that she and Isaac are quite prosperous, and probably have a very large staff. Even though these historic



recollections involve only these 4 people, this does not mean that they live on this compound alone. It is very likely that she has a staff of cooks that she oversees.

The two kids will have to be killed, drained of blood, skinned—and there are likely other people involved taking care of these things.

**Genesis 27:10** And you will bring it to your father so that he may eat, and that he may bless you before his death.”

The trade-off which she suggests is, Isaac will bring him the meal, and he will bless Isaac. However, as we will see, her plan is more complex than that.

**Genesis 27:11** And Jacob said to his mother Rebekah, “Listen, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man.

Rebekah has explained enough to Jacob that he gets it. They are operating on the same wavelength. Jacob doesn't say, “But, mother, this is wrong.” He says, “Here is a flaw in your plan.” So she has said enough to where he understands that he is going to pretend to be Esau. Jacob understands that the plan is for Isaac to bless him.

Obviously, Esau and Jacob were not identical twins; and, comparatively speaking, Esau had a lot of hair.

**Genesis 27:12** My father will perhaps feel me, and I will seem to him as a deceiver. And I will bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.”

Jacob understands that his mother wants Isaac to confer a blessing upon him rather than Esau. He also recognizes that this is being done to deceive his father. Furthermore, if Isaac realizes that Jacob is trying to pull a fast one, he will curse Jacob.

Rooted in all of this is the fact that they believed that what was said by someone like Isaac near the end of his life was important and predictive. Now, this might strike you as being superstitious and perhaps a bit silly. However, what Isaac says will not only be heard by God, but by all angelic creation, both fallen and elect angels; and the words spoken by some men have meaning. These words represent the thinking of their souls; and God will act upon these words. This is the line of promise. Through this line will come the Lord Jesus Christ. So, whatever Isaac says, God will take note, as will the angels. There is also an indication that the speaker will enjoy some measure of inspiration when he speaks.

**Genesis 27:13** And his mother said to him, “Your curse be upon me, my son, only obey my voice and go bring them to me.”

What Rebekah is saying is, if Isaac curses him, then she will take the curse upon herself.

As we go further in this narrative, it will become clear that Rebekah has been thinking about this for a very long time and that she has developed quite a plan. A father blessing

his son was a common thing near the end of the father's life. The father might think about this for a decade prior to speaking the words out loud. Furthermore, it would be logical that the blessing fit the man being blessed.

## Lesson 303: Genesis 27:1–28

## Isaac Blesses Jacob

So far, this is what we have studied in Genesis 27:

Genesis 27:1–4 When Isaac was old and his eyes were dim so that he could not see, he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son"; and he answered, "Here I am." He said, "Behold, I am old; I do not know the day of my death. Now then, take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me, and prepare for me delicious food, such as I love, and bring it to me so that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die."

Isaac tells his favorite son Esau to hunt some wild game, and after eating, he would give Esau his final blessing. This can be understood as a very legalistic approach to blessing.

Gen 27:5–10 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game and bring it, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, 'Bring me game and prepare for me delicious food, that I may eat it and bless you before the LORD before I die.' Now therefore, my son, obey my voice as I command you. Go to the flock and bring me two good young goats, so that I may prepare from them delicious food for your father, such as he loves. And you shall bring it to your father to eat, so that he may bless you before he dies."

Rebekah hears this and tells her favorite son, Jacob, about it. She tells him to bring two young goats that she will prepare, so that Jacob might pretend to be Esau and take the blessing intended for him.

Gen 27:11–13 But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing." His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me."

Jacob does not object to Rebekah's plan on moral grounds; but he is concerned that he cannot pull this off and his father will curse him instead.

Genesis 27:14 Therefore, Jacob went out. He took them [the 2 kids from the goats] and he brought to his mother. And his mother made delicious things such as his father loved.

This is easy for the wife to figure out. She knew what Isaac liked and she knew the right kind of spices to add. And, even though the text reads that she made this meal, it is likely that she supervised the making of this meal (which does not invalidate the text).<sup>1</sup>

There is a great deal missing from this narrative. When Jacob chooses the two kids from the flock, probably two of his servants prepare the kids for cooking. They might be shaved first, and the hair used for something else. Then they would be killed and bled dry and then skinned. None of this is mentioned in the narrative.

**Genesis 27:15** And Rebekah took the clothes of her older son Esau, the costly [lit., *desirable*] ones which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son.

The word used to describe Esau's clothes is feminine plural noun *chem<sup>e</sup>dâh* (חַמְדָּה) [pronounced *khem<sup>e</sup>-DAW*], which means, *desire, desirable; longing, yearning, delight; regret (?)* [see 2Chron. 21:20]. Strong's #2532 BDB #326. These clothes are variously described as Esau's *good, best, costly* clothes; but this is probably Esau's favorite set of clothes, and/or the clothes which he wore the most often. These would be the clothes which Rebekah *desires* to use. These clothes will be infused with Esau's scent, as Tide had few inroads with the Jewish people circa 1900 B.C. Esau and Jacob would smell differently, in part because Esau spent his time outdoors hunting, so he would smell of the great outdoors (which scent, Isaac will pick up on). Jacob, on the other hand, was mostly inside; and his scent would be less noticeable.

Both Jacob and his mother are being duplicitous here. They are both looking for Jacob to get the blessing promised by his father and meant for Esau.

**Genesis 27:16** And she put the skins from the kids of the goats on his hands, and on the smooth of his neck.

She essentially made gloves for him out of the hairy skins of the goat. This is likely from the goat which was just killed for this meal. Again, remember that she has a staff under her, and some of them would be skilled in this area of using the skin of their animals in order to make clothing. She wanted something which did not feel like clothing, but felt natural, like skin. A very thin strip of goat epidermis could be used for make Jacob's gloves and a neck band.

Because Isaac's sight was very nearly gone, he would identify his favorite son in other ways—by touch and by smell. Rebekah hoped to disguise Jacob well enough, so that Isaac would mis-identify him as Esau. Therefore, Isaac had to be virtually blind.

**Genesis 27:17** And she gave the delicious things and the bread which she had prepared into the hand of her son Jacob.

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<sup>1</sup> The same thing occurs today—an executive over a small department receives credit for what his department does, even though he, the executive, actually has very little to do with the production directly.

Rebekah knows that Isaac is waiting for a wonderful meal killed and prepared by Esau. She gives this to Jacob to present to Isaac, hoping that Isaac will be overwhelmed by the meal. Furthermore, Isaac spoke to Esau in private; so there is no reason for him to expect Jacob to suddenly show up with a meal.

**Genesis 27:18** And he came to his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “I am [right] here; who are you, my son?”

Quite obviously, the voices of the two twin sons are different, and Isaac is not sure to which son he is speaking at this point. From a distance, Isaac could smell the meal, a meal which he is expecting Esau to bring—but, from a distance, he cannot yet smell the clothing that Jacob is wearing. And, from a distance, he can hear the voice, and Jacob’s voice is obviously different than Esau’s. Therefore, Isaac is somewhat confused.

**Genesis 27:19** And Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your first-born. I have done as you asked me. Arise, I pray you, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.”

Jacob is intentionally deceiving his own father. Again, this explains Jacob’s soul. He has objectives; he has things which he wants; and he attains these things through deceit, deception and manipulation. This is how he believes that he is blessed. Jacob figures that he needs to look out after #1; and that no one else will do this for him. This may have been written nearly 4000 years ago, but it speaks to the heart of man even today.

How many times have you heard, “If you don’t take care of (or, look out for) yourself, no one else will”? This is the mantra by which Jacob lives his life. Jacob was interested in [\*how to get from where you are now to where you want to be in life\*](#). And he learned this from his mother. Using a little harmless duplicity is nothing on his ethical scale. He expresses no ethical questions and no moral outrage.

**Genesis 27:20** And Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because Jehovah your God brought it to me.”

Isaac appears to be somewhat suspicious here. He is not sure of the voice. As soon as Esau had gone, Rebekah began putting her plan into motion. So, this would have been as if Esau stepped out to the nearest field, found an animal, and killed it right off. Certainly, that is possible; but Isaac is going to be suspicious of what is going on for awhile.

Isaac asks, “How did you manage to kill wild game so quickly?” and Jacob answers, “God brought it to me.” Jacob is using God’s name in a frivolous manner. In other words, this is a blasphemous statement. Why do we find this in the Bible? This tells us Jacob’s sorry spiritual state. He uses God’s name in order to deceive his own father. This ought to be a pretty strong clue that Jacob is out of line. Obviously, Jacob is not very spiritually advanced.

The Bible does not romanticize its people. The people of Scripture are presented as true human beings, with a great many flaws. We are talking about the patriarchs of God’s

people, the Jews—and not only does Jacob lie to his father to secure his blessing, but he blasphemes God at the same time.

**Genesis 27:21** And Isaac said to Jacob, “Come near, I pray you, so that I may feel you, my son, whether you are truly my son Esau or not.”

Isaac doubts that this is really Esau. Obviously, he has a meal prepared more quickly than Isaac expected. Further, this son does not sound like Esau; he sounds like Jacob. Isaac cannot see well enough to distinguish his sons, but otherwise, he has normal sensibilities.

Isaac has a close relationship with Esau; and there was probably not a day in his life where he was unsure whether he was speaking to Esau or to Jacob—until now. Right now, Isaac is confused. In some ways, this adult male seems like Esau and in other ways, he seems to be like Jacob. It is likely that Isaac chalked this up to his old age in his own mind; but his instincts were right on the money.

**Genesis 27:22** And Jacob went near to Isaac his father. And he felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands the hands of Esau.”

The goat skin gloves were convincing, but the voice that Isaac heard was certainly Jacob's, as he believed it to be. However, the closer that Jacob moves to Isaac, the more he seems like Esau.

**Genesis 27:23** And he did not know him because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands. And he blessed him.

Isaac decided to believe what he felt. Isaac is undoubtedly questioning his own sensibilities now. Never before had he gotten his sons confused; but today, he is confused about the man before him.

The Hebrew sometimes gives us the overall description of what will happen, and then it goes into the actual details of what happens. V. 23 is the overview of the next 6 verses.

**Genesis 27:24** And he said, “Are you truly my son Esau?” And he said, “I am.”

He asks Jacob again, and Jacob says, “I am [Esau].” Isaac does not think that there would be a reason for Jacob to deceive him; so he takes this at face value that he is speaking to Esau and not to Jacob. But what he hears confuses him greatly. It is possible that Isaac asks this question just to hear this man's voice again. It is the voice that throws him.

**Genesis 27:25** And he said, “Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so that my soul may bless you.” And he brought it near to him, and he ate. And he brought him wine, and he drank.

Rebekah is far off in the background. She did the preparation; but she is not going to allow Isaac to perceive that she is in the background. He might become more suspicious if he

realizes that she is there and hovering about. Given Isaac's inability to see, Rebecca can quietly move about far enough away to escape his detection.

**Genesis 27:26** And his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son."

Isaac is still uncertain, and he asks for Jacob to come closer to him. He thinks that the closer the person is to him, the easier it will be for him to determine which son he is. However, the closer Jacob is to his father, the easier it is for him to deceive Isaac.

**Genesis 27:27** And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him, and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which Jehovah has blessed.

The odor of the clothing convinced Isaac, along with the feel of Jacob's hairy hand. Isaac is assuming that his odor is the man himself; but it is from Esau's clothing.

Esau was a man of the outdoors, and his clothing had that smell to it. So, Jacob wore Esau's clothing, and he himself smelled like a field blessed by God. That simply means a field with all kind of things growing in it.

Such a pronouncement made by a man of God, before the angels, and before God, must have tangible results. Even though angels are not mentioned, what happens in our lives occurs before a myriad of angels—particularly the lives of believers with doctrine.

God teaches the angels through mankind. There are the unbelievers who say this or that, and there is little wisdom or meaning found in the things which they say. Surely you have been to a party, and people are either talking about themselves and how great they are; or they are attempting to say clever things. There is a point at which this yammering becomes nearly insufferable and you need to get out of there. None of what they have to say is important; and very little of it is interesting. That is what most people sound like to angels.

However, there are also growing and mature believers, and what they say is meaningful and has consequence. What Isaac is saying here—even though he is being misled—has meaning which will continue for at least a generation or more. God makes these words meaningful. God will bring to pass the things which Isaac is saying, even though Isaac is very old, half-blind, and cannot even recognize his son Jacob who is before him.

Because of how Jacob smells, Isaac is inspired to say this:

**Genesis 27:28** And may God give you of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.

The key to any prosperous field is rain—here, called the dew of heaven (recall that, before the flood, plants were watered with dew rather than by rain). *Fatness* simply refers to production. It is a word generally used of an animal which is fattened up—with meat, not



necessarily with fat. The fatness of the earth simply refers to a field with a great deal of produce.

Also associated with prosperity—wine.

Since wine is mentioned in connection with prosperity, we ought to take a look at the doctrine of wine. Wine, like many things in life, can be good and bad, depending upon how it is used.

## Doctrine of Wine

### I. Vocabulary.

#### A. Hebrew:

1. The most common Hebrew noun is the masculine noun *yayin* (יַיִן) [pronounced *YAH-yin*], which means *wine*. Strong's #3196 BDB #406.
2. The masculine noun *ʿâçîyç* (עֹצִיץ) [pronounced *gaw-SEECE*], which means *sweet wine, wine, wine pressed from juice; new wine*. Strong's #6071 BDB #779. Isa.49:26 Joel.1:5 3:18 Amos.9:13
3. The masculine noun *tîyrôsh* (תִּירֹשׁ) [pronounced *tee-ROHSH*], which means *wine, fresh wine, freshly pressed wine, new wine*. Strong's #8492 BDB #440.
4. The masculine noun *mim<sup>o</sup>çâk* (מִימֹצֶאֱךָ) [pronounced *mihm-SAWK*], which means *mixed wine, mixed drink; drink offering*. Strong's #4469 BDB #587. Prov.23:30
5. The masculine noun *sh<sup>e</sup>mârîym* (שְׁמַרְיִם) [pronounced *shehm-aw-REEM*], which means *a fine aged wine; wine sentiment, lees, dregs*. Strong's #8105 BDB #1038. Its use in the Bible requires some study. Ps.75:8 and Jer.48:11

#### B. Greek:

1. The common Greek noun is *oinos* (οἶνος) [pronounced *OY-noss*], which means, *wine; metaphorically the fiery wine [of God's wrath]*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #3631.
2. The neuter noun *gleukos* (γλεῦκος) [pronounced *GLYOO-koss*], which means, *new wine; the sweet juice pressed the grape, sweet wine*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #1098. This was an alcoholic wine. Acts 2:13

### II. The first mention of wine in Scripture is that of Noah's vineyard, in Genesis 9:20–21.

- A. Noah, a mature believer, overindulged and became drunk (first record of this sin). This suggests that the bacteria needed in order to change a fruit drink into wine was more prevalent after the flood.
- B. The Scripture, however, does not support the contention that wine production is evil. Deut. 14:23 speaks of tithing from one's wine production and v. 26 speaks of the Jews spending money on whatever they choose in the Land of Promise, and lists wine as one of the things



## Doctrine of Wine

- they may purchase (Deut. 14:25–26 is all about free enterprise).
- III. The first miracle Jesus performed was turning water into wine to manifest His divine nature, John 2:1–11 4:48.
- A. I don't believe that I have ever seen the passage explained correctly, as this is an odd sort of miracle for our Lord's first miracle. Jesus did not go to a party where they ran out of wine and decide, "I know what I'll do; I'll turn water into wine and blow their collective minds."
  - B. Jesus turning water into wine, was to be put into contrast with Moses turning the water into blood, which meant judgment. Turning water into wine means blessing. **For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** (John 1:17; NIV) **Christ redeemed us [or, set us free] from the curse of the Law, having become a curse on our behalf-for it has been written, "Under a curse [fig., Condemned by God] [is] every [one] hanging upon a tree"- [Deut 21:23] (Gal. 3:13; ALT)**
  - C. As God, He honored the institution of marriage by His presence and by His generous gift of good wine (approximately 150 gallons).
  - D. While the potential for abuse was there, He still created the best wine last.
  - E. Wine is a detail of life provided by God for the enjoyment of mankind, Judges 9:13 Ps.104:15, a legitimate stimulant when not used to excess.
- IV. In Israel, an abundance of new wine was an indication of divine blessing in the land. Deut. 7:13 11:14 32:14 33:28.
- A. Israel was to tithe the new wine. Deut.12:17 14:23 18:4
  - B. Under the stages of national discipline, God cursed the vine. Deut. 28:39,51. Judges 6:11 speaks of an empty wine vat.
  - C. David had extensive wine cellars. 1Chr. 27:27
  - D. Application of doctrine assured the individual of prosperity with wine. Prov. 3:10; cp. Prov. 9:2,5
- V. Wine and the Day of the Lord.
- A. Wine (and alcohol) will be scarce in the Tribulation (Rev. 6:6), and it will not sustain anyone (Isa. 24:7,9).
  - B. Metaphorically, the nations which are against God are viewed as grapes of wrath placed in God's wine press. Rev. 19:15 cp. Rev. 14:17-20 Genesis 49:11 Isa. 63:2,3 Joel 3:13
  - C. God will bless Israel with abundant wine production in the Millennium. Joel 2:19,22,24 3:18 Amos 9:13,14 Zech. 9:17 cp. Isa.27:16
  - D. The Lord Himself will provide a continuous banquet of choice red meat and good, aged red wine for all who worship at Zion. Isa. 25:6
- VI. Wine is mentioned in connection with:
- A. Bible Doctrine, which brings happiness. Luke 5:37-39 Isa. 55:1.
  - B. Category #2 love. SOS. 1:2,4 4:10 7:9
  - C. Positional truth. John 15
  - D. Happiness. Zech. 10:7
  - E. Judgment. Lam. 1:15; Joel 3:13
  - F. False doctrine. Jer. 51:7 cp. Rev. 18:3 Deut. 32:32,33

## Doctrine of Wine

- VII. God's moral code and wine.
- A. Godliness forbids drunkenness. Eph. 5:18 cp. Rom. 13:13 1Cor. 5:11 6:10 1Peter 4:3
  - B. One might abstain from wine if drinking wine violates the law of love. Rom. 14:21
  - C. Paul warns that church leaders avoid excessive drinking. 1Tim. 3:3,8
  - D. Wine is allowed to a pastor, if consumed in moderation. 1Tim. 5:23
- VIII. The sinful trend of Adam is associated with the abuse of wine.
- A. Basic drunkenness. Genesis 9:21.
  - B. Alcoholism. Prov. 23:29-35 .
  - C. Gluttony. Prov. 23:20,21
  - D. Fornication. Genesis 19:32-38
  - E. Violence. Prov. 20:1
  - F. Dissipation (wasting time). Isa. 5:11-12; cp. v. 10. Poverty existed due to the pursuit of pleasure. Ten acres yielding ten gallons of wine is not very productive.
  - G. Degeneracy, idolatry and emotional revolt of the soul. Dan. 5:24,22,23
- IX. Some specific cases.
- A. Nazarites were forbidden to drink wine or consume any product associated with the vine. Num. 6:14,20 Judges 13:4,7,14 Amos 2:12 Luke 1:15
  - B. Kings were advised to abstain from wine when ruling. Prov. 31:4,5
  - C. Priests were not to drink before service. Lev. 10:9,11
- X. Biblical guidelines.
- A. Each believer should recognize that there is a time and a place for everything. Eccles. 3:1.
  - B. Recognize that wine is a detail of life and that you are not to pursue it.
  - C. There are inherent dangers associated with drinking, so you should do so only when all Biblical and moral obligations are safeguarded (consider the law of love, time, place, associates, etc).
  - D. Some should never drink due to physical and niche considerations. If you have alcoholism in your family, you might abstain, as there is a genetic predisposition to alcoholism.
  - E. Do not violate the laws of divine establishment.
  - F. While alcohol in moderation is a bona fide stimulant, in excess it reduces one's inhibitions. Those with strong norms and standards and who consistently stay under the filling of the Holy Spirit are less likely to abuse it.
- XI. Wine, in and of itself, is not evil. Psalm 104:14–15 **He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the labor of man, So that he may bring forth food from the earth, And wine which makes man's heart glad, So that he may make his face glisten with oil, And food which sustains man's heart.**

Taken from:

[Maranatha Church](#), accessed June 18, 2014 and  
[Bible Doctrine Resource](#), also accessed June 18, 2014.

Since these doctrines are almost identical, they were probably originally put together by R. B. Thieme, Jr.

## Lesson 304: Genesis 27:11–29

## Isaac Blesses his Son Jacob

We continue with the blessing made by Isaac concerning Jacob (whom he mistakenly thinks is Esau). Jacob sent his son Esau out to kill some wild game, and then, when he returned with this game, he would prepare it, they would eat it, and then Jacob would bless Esau. Rebekah overhears this, and gets her favorite son Jacob prepared to deceive Jacob and to steal Esau's blessing.

Gen 27:11–12 But Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man. Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be mocking him and bring a curse upon myself and not a blessing."

The idea to deceive Isaac and to take Esau's blessing came from Rebekah. But Jacob does not object to the morality of her plan; only to the possible flaws in the plan.

Gen 27:13 His mother said to him, "Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, bring them to me."

His mother says, "Look, kid, I got this. If anything goes wrong, that curse will be upon me."

Gen 27:14–17 So he went and took them and brought them to his mother, and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved. Then Rebekah took the favorite garments of Esau her older son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. And the skins of the young goats she put on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. And she put the delicious food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

Jacob is too blind to recognize or visually distinguish his sons. However, he can still hear, smell and touch. So, Jacob is now wearing Esau's clothing, and he has gloves and a neck covering made out of the skin of the young goats which had been slaughtered.

Gen 27:18 So he went in to his father and said, "My father." And he said, "Here I am. Who are you, my son?"

Isaac is confused from the beginning.

Gen 27:19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me; now sit up and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me."

Gen 27:20 But Isaac said to his son, "How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?" He answered, "Because the LORD your God granted me success."

In uttering these words, Jacob reveals that he has little respect for the God of this blessing that he intends to steal. He lies to his father and blasphemes God in order to take the blessing of the firstborn.

Gen 27:21–23 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, to know whether you are really my son Esau or not." So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, who 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.

Isaac is suspicious. He is old, but he is not daft. He can distinguish the voices of his sons, and this man sounds like Jacob and not like Esau. However, the things which his mother did win Isaac over. He is beginning to believe that this man is Esau.

Gen 27:24 He said, "Are you really my son Esau?" He answered, "I am."

This plot to steal Esau's blessing is unexpected. Isaac is just looking for simple confirmation, and the one thing that confuses him is the voice. He is probably not looking for the answer *yes* or *no*, but to hear this man's voice again.

Gen 27:25 Then he said, "Bring it near to me, that I may eat of my son's game and bless you." So he brought it near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank.

Gen 27:26–27 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed!

Jacob smells like the out-of-doors because he is wearing Esau's clothing, and Esau was principally a hunter who spent a great deal of time in the outdoors. This becomes the inspiration for what Isaac says. "You will be like a field that Y<sup>e</sup>howah has blessed."

Then Isaac continues with his blessing.

Genesis 27:28 And may God give you of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.

Isaac asks for Jacob to be given 4 things:

- 1) The dew of heaven is used here for the first time, and is analogous to blessings from God. All that grows from the earth is nourished by rain from heaven, and the dew is as if God has come down and sprinkled water on His earth. This word is closely associated with the manna from heaven, which God used to sustain the Jews when they spent 38.5 years in the desert (Ex. 16:13–14 Num. 11:9).

One could also understand the *dew of heaven* to refer to spiritual blessing from God, with which the Jews will be greatly blessed. God delivered the entire Old Testament to his people, the Jews, along with His prophets. No other people has been given so much direct blessing from God.

- 2) The fatness of the earth refers to abundant produce from the earth. In our culture, we do not view the word *fat* in a favorable way, but this is a word of blessing in Scripture. A fattened calf in Scripture is not a calf filled with fat, but a healthy calf with a lot of meat on its bones.

Wherever the Jews have congregated as a people, they are generally very blessed (the exception to this is whenever antisemitism rears its ugly head).

The Jews, as a people, are associated with the earth. In the Millennium, it is not us from the Church Age who will populate the earth, but the Jews and others who have believed in Jesus. And Jesus will rule from Mount Zion throughout the Millennium. He won't have an office in the United Nations building.

- 3) *Plenty of grain* refers to the produce of the ground, and Isaac is calling for Jacob and his descendants to be blessed with the great abundance of crops. The idea here is logistical grace, where God will see to the needs of his people.
- 4) As we saw in the previous lesson, wine is seen as a blessing, and it is associated with the enjoyment of life. So Isaac does not just call for the descendants of Jacob to merely be sustained, but to enjoy the great blessings of life.

**Genesis 27:29a** Let people serve you, and let nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you.

In some ways, Isaac is repeating the blessing which Abraham was given from God. When Abraham had offered up his uniquely-born son to God, and God withheld Abraham's hand from killing his son, God (as the Angel of Y<sup>e</sup>howah) said to him, "**By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.**" (Genesis 22:16b–18; ESV, capitalized)

At the same time, these blessings offered by Isaac are unique. Not only will other nations bow down to the son before him, but the son before him will be lord over his brothers. Isaac cannot simply give the other son this same blessing. This seems to be some sort of tradition, of passing along the family blessing to one particular son. If Jacob is lord over his brothers, then that makes him lord over Esau. So there will be a preeminence of Jacob over Esau. And these words of Isaac have been fulfilled. Do you know any Jews today?

Of course you do. Do you know any Edomites (descendants of Esau<sup>2</sup>)? No you don't. They have been relegated to the dustbin of history.

There will be a line of Jacob and there will be a line of Esau. Isaac is calling for the descendants of Esau to bow down to the descendants of Jacob.

The way that this is phrased also implies that Isaac and Rebecca had other sons.

**Genesis 27:29b** Cursed be everyone that curses you, and blessed be he that blesses you.”

The final blessing is almost exactly the one with which God blessed Abraham. One of the words is different, but it is very close to Genesis 12:3. Using these words means that the blessings promised by God to Abraham have come to Isaac, and he passes them along to Jacob and his descendants. Therefore, all the promises which God made to Abraham are given to the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. With these words, this becomes the line of promise.

For God, this has always been His plan. From eternity past, God would bless the Jewish race, which would come from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, this is where it becomes official in time; where it is announced to all the angels.

Bear in mind, there are only 3 people here: Isaac and Jacob; and Rebekah is off in the distance, overseeing everything. We know that no one else is here for this momentous time of blessing, because no one says, “Hey, that’s not Esau; it’s Jacob.” Nevertheless, this moment is recorded for all history in the Word of God.

“Cursed be everyone that curses you, and blessed be he that blesses you.” We find this general quotation only a few times in Scripture. Citations are from the ESV Bible (capitalized).

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<sup>2</sup> The descendants of Esau will live in Edom, and they take their collective name from that region.



## “Those who bless you will be blessed;...”

Scripture	Commentary
<p>Gen 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."</p>	<p>This is God's original promise to Abraham. Abraham needed to leave his father's house and his family, and go to the Land of Promise, wherein God would bless him.</p> <p>Also, those who blessed Abraham and his descendants would be blessed and those who dishonored him would be cursed.</p>
<p>Gen 27:26–27 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near and kiss me, my son." So he came near and kissed him. And Isaac smelled the smell of his garments and blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed!</p>	<p>Jacob has deceived his father, Isaac, and has made him believe that he is Esau rather than Jacob. So Isaac smells Esau's clothes that Jacob is wearing, and begins this blessing.</p>
<p>Genesis 27:28–29 May God give you of the dew of heaven and of the fatness of the earth and plenty of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, and blessed be everyone who blesses you!"</p>	<p>Isaac, believing that he is blessing his son Esau, blesses Jacob instead. Isaac blesses Jacob with both temporal and spiritual blessings, and he gives him preeminence over his brothers. Isaac also confers upon Jacob God's original blessing that He made to Abraham.</p>
<p>Ex. 23:20–22 "Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. Pay careful attention to Him and obey His voice; do not rebel against Him, for He will not pardon your transgression, for My name is in Him. But if you carefully obey His voice and do all that I say, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries."</p>	<p>God, when speaking to Moses, makes a similar statement. God's preparing a place for Moses and the children of Israel is the plan of God the Father. He will send His Angel (the preincarnate Christ) to lead and guide Moses. God promises to be an enemy to the enemies of Moses (and the enemies of Israel).</p> <p>This is not quite the blessing that we have been studying.</p>

## “Those who bless you will be blessed;...”

Scripture	Commentary
Num 24:2–5 And Balaam lifted up his eyes and saw Israel camping tribe by tribe. And the Spirit of God came upon him, and he took up his discourse and said, "The oracle of Balaam the son of Beor, the oracle of the man whose eye is opened, the oracle of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, falling down with his eyes uncovered: How lovely are your tents, O Jacob, your encampments, O Israel!	Balaam had been hired to curse Israel by Balak, the king of Moab, when Moses was leading the people of Israel up the King's Highway east of the Dead Sea.  Balak knew Balaam to be a prophet, although in Num. 22–24, Balaam appears to be a prophet for hire.
Num 24:8 God brings him [Israel] out of Egypt and is for him like the horns of the wild ox; he shall eat up the nations, his adversaries, and shall break their bones in pieces and pierce them through with his arrows.	There are so many Israelites coming through the land of Moab, that there are too many to go to war against. Therefore, Balak wants them cursed by a prophet.
Num 24:9 He crouched, he lay down like a lion and like a lioness; who will rouse him up? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you."	Instead of cursing Israel, as he had been hired to do, Balaam blesses Israel, indicating that they would defeat the nations around them (as per the books of Joshua and Samuel), and that those blessing them would be blessed and those cursing them would be cursed.

Elsewhere, God promises blessing to those associated with Israel (Genesis 18:18 22:18 26:4 28:14 39:5 Psalm 72:17 Acts 3:25 Gal. 3:8), but the blessing above is a specific blessing only found 3 times in the Word of God (the Exodus passage is close, but not the same thing).

### Lesson 305: Genesis 27:26–38

### The Whining of Esau

Isaac has ask his favorite son Esau to go out and kill some game, and after they eat this game, Isaac would give Esau the blessing of the firstborn. Rebekah overhears Isaac making this promise to Esau, and she tells her favorite son, Jacob, and then lays out a plot to steal this blessing. Jacob agrees to this plot and Isaac ends up blessing Jacob instead of Esau.

The line of promise would go through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and God knew this in eternity past. This is the line that would eventually lead to the Lord Jesus Christ. So God

allows Isaac to bless Jacob, thinking that it is his son Esau instead; and then God will honor this blessing.

Gen 27:26 And his father Yitshaq [= Isaac] said to him [Jacob], "Please come near and kiss me, my son."

Gen 27:27 And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him and said, "See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which הוהי [= Y<sup>e</sup>howah] has blessed.

This smell appears to have inspired Isaac.

Gen 27:28 And Elohim [God] give you of the dew of the heavens, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.

There is a poetry in the way that this is laid out:

And God will give you  
    from the dew of the heavens,  
        from the fatness of the earth,  
        and plenty of grain  
    and wine.

Gen 27:29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those cursing you, and blessed be those blessing you!" (Genesis 27:26–29 from *The Scriptures 1998+*, with notes of clarification by me).

There is also a parallelism in this verse:

Let peoples serve you,  
and nations bow down to you.

Be master over your brothers,  
and let your mother's sons bow down to you.

Cursed be those cursing you,  
and blessed be those blessing you!

The first two lines are repeated concepts; the second two lines are repeated concepts; and the final two lines are parallel concept.

The sheer poetry combined with the accuracy of what Isaac says gives credence to the words of Peter: **For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.** (2Peter 1:21; ESV)

So somehow, in these words spoken by Isaac—given his many imperfections and despite the deception of Rebekah his wife and Jacob his son—these words are inspired, and they tell us even today of the blessings by God bestowed upon the Jewish people.

**Genesis 27:30** And it happened, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was scarcely gone from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.

Isaac blessed Jacob (thinking that he was Esau), Jacob left, and Esau suddenly returned from hunting. He apparently had spent the last couple of hours dressing the meat and cooking it.

In a compound of several hundred people, Esau would not be confused if he smelled meat being prepared within the compound. So, he may have smelled the aroma of the meat which Rebekah had prepared, but he does not give any thought to that. There are probably a 1000 people in Isaac's compound, so Esau would take it for granted that, at almost any given time, there would waft through the compound the smells of food being prepared.

**Genesis 27:31** And he also had made tasty meat and brought to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game so that your soul may bless me."

You will notice that Esau associates his blessing with a gift. He brings his father a great venison meal, and his father blesses him. He is taught to think this way by Isaac. This is not grace; this is tit-for-tat; this is quid pro quo; in Biblical terms, this is legalism. God's blessing to Jacob through Isaac is grace—it stands to this very day, despite the sin nature activity of the family of Isaac. Quite obviously, Isaac did not earn or deserve that blessing.

**Genesis 27:32** And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your first-born, Esau."

Isaac recognizes Esau's voice and he is greatly disturbed. Recall that his biggest problem with Jacob pretending to be Esau was his voice. His voice sounded like Jacob; it did not sound like Esau. However, right now, Isaac hears and recognizes Esau's voice. At this point, there seems to be no question in Isaac's mind which son he is speaking to.

**Genesis 27:33** And Isaac trembled with a great trembling, and said, "Who then was the one who has hunted deer and brought to me, and I have eaten of all before you came, and have blessed him? Yea, he will be blessed!"

What men said in those days was important. Even when a blessing was uttered, it did not just go into the air and disappear. It would have future impact. They believed this and it was true—at least with regards to the line of promise.

Delivering such a blessing suggested that the speaker (1) may have been inspired; and (2) God would concern Himself with the blessing. These were not just empty words uttered into the air, that a wind would carry away. Such a blessing was more than a prayer that would be uttered (a prayer is often uttered regarding specific circumstances; and prayers could be answered “no”). A blessing was meaningful and important. A blessing might be given 1 or 2 times in the life of a person—and was usually spoken by the father of his son. The most common blessing—which is the one that we find the most often, is given by father when his end is near (or thought to be near). This chapter has two end-of-life blessings given by Isaac to his twin sons; and at the end of Genesis, Jacob will bless each of his 12 children.

When Isaac blessed Jacob (thinking that he was Esau), he was in part inspired by the circumstances (the smell of Esau’s clothing that Jacob was wearing). In other words, Isaac did not necessarily have a specific set of things to say that he had memorized. Some of what he said was inspired; if not all that he said. Furthermore, when speaking words like this as a blessing, the blesser expected that God would see to it that the blessee was blessed in the way that he specified. Therefore, this blessing was based upon faith in the sure providence of God.

Blessings like this, uttered by one of the patriarchs (that is, *the fathers*), became a part of the Angelic Conflict. The line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob became the line of blessing, so that God would allow blessings and privileges to that particular line. We reasonably assume that, for an occasion like a blessing, that the Holy Spirit might be involved in the inspiration of that blessing. Again, 2Peter 1:21 **For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.** (ESV)

These blessings were apparently not given but at specific times—near the end of the life of the patriarch or, as will happen soon, when Jacob leaves their compound, Isaac will bless him (this time, Isaac will know that it is Jacob).

**Genesis 27:33** And Isaac trembled with a great trembling, and said, “Who then was the one who has hunted deer and brought to me, and I have eaten of all before you came, and have blessed him? Yea, he will be blessed!”

Esau expected that he might be blessed by Jacob, and these words of his father devastate him.

Isaac has spoken the words of blessing upon his son Jacob, and God has recorded these words for all eternity and God will accordingly bless Jacob.

**Genesis 27:34** And when Esau heard the voice of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said to his father, “Bless me, me also, O my father!”

Esau was quite upset over this. He has assumed that he would get the great blessing from his father at the very end. This indicates that Esau believed in the blessings spoken by his father, and that God would bring those blessings to fruition.



However, Esau is confused about the blessing, not knowing exactly what Isaac had said concerning Jacob. He did not realize that some of what Isaac said precluded giving a nearly identical blessing to Esau.

**Genesis 27:35** And Isaac said, “Your brother came with deceit, and has taken away your blessing.”

It is likely that Isaac had been thinking of what to say to bless Esau with; and that he spoke those words on behalf of Jacob. For the receiver of the blessing to be preeminent over all his brothers is pretty much a blessing which cannot be matched. Isaac said this on behalf of Jacob; he could not very well repeat it for his son Esau.

**Genesis 27:36** And Esau said, “Is it because his name is called Jacob [= *chiseler, supplanter*]? For he has supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing [as well].” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”

For a mess of pottage, Esau had traded his birthright to Jacob. That had been a legitimate transaction. In his great hunger, Esau was willing to give up his birthright in order to live (he was famished to the point of exhaustion). This birthright spiritually referred to the blessings which God bestowed upon Abraham. This birthright often meant a double-portion of inheritance.

Jacob had stolen Esau’s birthright and now he has stolen his blessing as well. Therefore, Esau is filled with rage and he will continue to nurse this rage and encourage it.

*Reserving a blessing* would be something unique, a blessing which would belong to him alone; a blessing which had not been given to Jacob. Esau is saying, “That’s it? You are able to bless Jacob, but you have left nothing with which to bless me?”

“Have you reserved a blessing for me?” by Raphael Sanzio from [Christusrex.org](http://Christusrex.org), accessed September 3, 2014. Pope Julius II Della Rovere commissioned 25 year old Raphael Sanzio in 1508 to paint the frescos in his four room apartment on the top floor. Three of the rooms were of modest dimensions, while the fourth one was considerably larger; with the completion of the work, the rooms became known as “The Raphael Stanze.” The 52 scenes on the ceilings of the loggia are still popularly referred as “The





*Raphael Bible.*"<sup>3</sup> The primary problem here is, Esau is probably between 40 and 50 years old in the Biblical account.

**Genesis 27:37** And Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Listen [this is how it is]! I have made him your lord, and all his brothers I have given him for servants. And with grain and wine I have supported him. And what will I do now to you, my son?"

Isaac cannot give Esau the same blessing. In his blessing of Jacob, he called for Jacob to be preeminent over Esau. He cannot simply just turn that around. Isaac cannot give Esau that same blessing—it would make no sense. Once the blessing is spoken, it stands as a testimony. Isaac cannot just take it back. If Isaac could do this, then of what meaning and substance is the blessing in the first place?

**Genesis 27:38** And Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, me also, my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept.

Isaac's promise of wine for Isaac has caused Esau to whine.

Esau has a terrifically damaged soul. He feels sorry for himself; he feels angry toward his brother and cheated by him—and he will continue to encourage these feelings within himself.

## **Lesson 306: Genesis 27:30–42**

## **The Blessing of Esau**

This is what we have been studying:

**Gen 27:30–31** As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, Esau his brother came in from his hunting. He also prepared delicious food and brought it to his father. And he said to his father, "Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me." (ESV)

Jacob has already pretended to be Esau and has stolen Isaac's end-of-life blessing meant for Esau. Esau comes in after the fact with wild game which he had killed and then prepared for his father.

**Gen 27:32–33** His father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" He answered, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." Then Isaac trembled very violently and said, "Who was it then that hunted game and brought it to me, and I ate it all before you came, and I have blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed." (ESV)

Jacob recognizes the voice of Esau immediately and says that he already gave Jacob Esau's blessing.

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<sup>3</sup> From <http://www.christusrex.org/www1/stanzas/0-Raphael.html> accessed September 3, 2014.

Gen 27:34 As soon as Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me, even me also, O my father!" (ESV)

Esau cries out bitterly over this situation.

Gen 27:35 But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing." (ESV)

Gen 27:36 Esau said, "Is he not rightly named Jacob? For he has cheated me these two times. He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing." Then he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?" (ESV)

Esau is clearly overwrought with emotion.

Gen 27:37 Isaac answered and said to Esau, "Behold, I have made him lord over you, and all his brothers I have given to him for servants, and with grain and wine I have sustained him. What then can I do for you, my son?" (ESV)

Isaac cannot very well make both brothers preeminent over the other.

Gen 27:38 Esau said to his father, "Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father." And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. (ESV)

At the same time, Isaac lifts up his voice and gives Esau a blessing. However, there is a serious problem with the translation of this next verse.

### Problems with the Translation of Genesis 27:39:

Genesis 27:39 Isaac his father answered him, "Behold, of the fatness of the earth will be your dwelling, and of the dew of the sky from above. (WEB)

At this juncture, we have a problem with the translation. At this point, it is quite important to know something about the Hebrew language. Note the translations below:

*The Amplified Bible* Then Isaac his father answered, Your [blessing and] dwelling shall all come from the fruitfulness of the earth and from the dew of the heavens above;...

New King James Version Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:  
"Behold, your dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth,  
And of the dew of heaven from above.

Webster's updated Bible And Isaac his father answered, and said to him, Behold, your dwelling will be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above;...

It sounds as though Esau will dwell in the prosperity of the earth with rain from above. This suggests a outdoors, nomadic lifestyle.

But then there are other translations which read thus:

English Standard Version Then Isaac his father answered and said to him: "Behold, **away from** the fatness of the earth shall your dwelling be, and **away from** the dew of heaven on high.

The Expanded Bible Isaac his father said to him,  
"You will live far **away from** the ·best [fatness; richness; fertility of the] land,  
                  **far from** the ·rain [the dew of heaven; 27:28].  
You will live by using your sword,  
                  and you will ·be a slave to [serve] your brother.  
But when you ·struggle [or become restless],  
                  you will break ·free from him [his yoke from your neck; Heb. 11:20]."

NET Bible® So his father Isaac said to him,  
"Indeed [Heb "look."], your home will be  
**away from** the richness [Heb "from the fatness."] of the earth,  
and **away from** the dew of the sky above.  
You will live by your sword  
but you will serve your brother.  
When you grow restless,  
you will tear off his yoke  
from your neck."

New RSV Then his father Isaac answered him:  
`See, **away from** [Or See, of] the fatness of the earth shall your home be,  
                  and **away from** [Or and of] the dew of heaven on high.  
By your sword you shall live,  
                  and you shall serve your brother;  
but when you break loose [Meaning of Heb uncertain],  
                  you shall break his yoke from your neck.'

The emphasis in the previous translations is mine. Right before *fatness of the earth* and before *the dew of heaven*, we have the min preposition: min (מִן) [pronounced *mihn*], which means *from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, beyond, more than, greater than*. It is a preposition of *separation*. Strong's #4480 BDB #577.

What has happened is, in the realm of Bible translations, the King James Version looms large, even though a much smaller number of Christians use that as their standard Bible today (the NIV has been adopted by a great many believers today; with the “intellectual Christians” adopting the NASB). My guess is, most people born after 1980 have some awareness of the KJV, but do not own one (if it is on their computer, they rarely refer to it).

Nevertheless, many translations are built upon the KJV—or when they have a choice to go this way or that, they go the direction that the KJV goes. The translators of the KJV decided to ignore the primary meanings of this preposition of separation—and since they made this call, an inordinate number of modern translations make this same call. These include the generally accurate A Conservative Version, Green’s literal translation, the NKJV, the WEB translation (and many others). Of the translation which I refer to (I compare about 60 different translations), easily over half of them ignore the primary meaning of the *min* preposition (and most do that because that is what the KJV does). The translations which acknowledge and translate the *min* preposition include The Bible in Basic English, the ESV, God’s Word™, the Holman Christian Standard Bible, the New American Bible (both versions), the New RSV, and others.

The KJV is an excellent translation, and beautifully written for its day. It was such a beautiful work of literature, that it continued to be used hundreds of years after people spoke old English. So overwhelming was the influence of the KJV, even cultic literature (like the Book of Mormon) was written in KJV-type English. Who has not heard the pastor who, from time to time, seems to be speaking in old English? Certainly few of us have lately, but at one time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that was not unusual.

Like the more modern NASB, Green’s literal translation, the WEB, the ESV, and many others, there is an attempt to give a literal word-for-word translation from the original text. However, now and again, there is a misstep, which is what has occurred here in the KJV and those translations are based upon the KJV.

Therefore, based upon the Hebrew, the first promise is that Esau’s dwelling, territory or settlements would be **away from** the fertility of the earth. Nothing could better describe the Middle East today, which is where most Arabs live. Some Arab tribes have come from Esau (and others came from Ishmael and other sons of Abraham). When you think of the various Arab countries, what you think of is a lot of hot weather, desert and lots of sand; you do not think of fertility. You think of a place that is *away from fertility*. Just as we read in the Hebrew.

Bear in mind that this prophecy was made 4000 years ago, at a time when the Middle East looked much different. Recall that the name of the most famous area of the Middle East is called *the Fertile Crescent* (which is mostly included by the nation of Iraq). At one time, this was a beautiful area—well-watered and filled with both vegetation and two huge rivers. Therefore, it is given that name. But that is not what these places are today and for millenniums have been less than fertile.

It is amazing that these words of Isaac, who is clearly not a spiritual giant, describe the future of Esau and the future of most Arabic peoples.

**Genesis 27:40** By your sword you shall live, and you shall serve your brother; but when you grow restless you shall break his yoke from your neck.” (ESV)

Barnes writes: *Edom was long independent; but at length Saul was victorious over them (1Sam. 14:47), and David conquered them (2Sam. 8:14). Then followed a long struggle, until John Hyrcanus, 129 B.C., compelled them to be circumcised and incorporated into Judaism. “Break his yoke.” The history of Edom was a perpetual struggle against the supremacy of Israel. Conquered by Saul, subdued by David, repressed by Solomon, restrained after a revolt by Amaziah, they recovered their independence in the time of Ahab. They were incorporated into the Jewish state, and furnished it with the dynasty of princes beginning with Antipater.*<sup>4</sup>

Isaac said, “By your sword, you will live.” Esau’s tradition would be to always be at war. Even today, this is the case.

[Wars in the World graphic](#) from June 23, 2014 (if you are not aware of this site, you should bookmark it). Note that nearly all of the warfare is in northern and central Africa as well as in the Middle East, where many of the descendants of Esau live. They are living by the sword, just as Isaac, nearly 4000 years ago, said that they would.



This constant struggle of the Islamic peoples every day threatens to suck in the other nations of the earth into a massive world war—which war I believe we will see in our lifetimes.

**Genesis 27:41** And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had 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.”

Now, remember the various ways that v. 39 is translated. I said that the correct understanding is for Esau to live *away from richness of the earth and away from the dew of the heavens*. Note Esau’s reaction—he hates Jacob! This tells us that Isaac has given Esau a crappy blessing. This confirms the translation which I have given to you. Half of this blessing is not very good. Esau hears this, and he is none too happy about it. Jacob stole his blessing, and he hates Jacob!

Esau says to himself that, after Isaac dies, then he will kill his brother Jacob (no one realizes at this time that Isaac’s death is still quite a ways off). Esau was quite angry over

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<sup>4</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 27:39–41.

this whole blessing ordeal. And he continued to mull over this sin of hatred over and over again in his head.

**Genesis 27:42** And these words of her older son Esau were told to Rebekah. And she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, “Listen, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.

Esau did not just keep this to himself. He shared this thought with others, and what he said did get back to his mother.

The word translated *comforts himself* above is *nâcham* (נָחַם) [pronounced *naw-KHAHM*], and it is in the Hithpael stem. The **Hithpael** is the reflexive of the Piel (the intensive stem). The Hithpael conveys the idea that one places himself into the state or the action of the verb, which is an achieved state. *Seow* gives several uses; however, its primary use is reflexive—the verb describes action on or for oneself. That is, the subject of the verb is also the object of the verb. So, the word *himself* is not actually found in the Hebrew; nor is this a suffix, but it conveys the meaning of the Hithpael stem. In the Hithpael, this verb means, *being sorry, having compassion; ruing, repenting of; comforting oneself, being comforted; easing oneself*. Strong’s #5162 BDB #636. In other words, Esau hates Jacob and it gives Esau great pleasure to think of the various ways in which he might kill Jacob, by which he would gain his revenge. This is a fantasy that Esau has, and he plays it out in his thinking in a variety of ways; and this fantasy gives Esau great pleasure.

Sometimes a mental attitude sin can be very gratifying, and Esau no doubt thought about the various ways he might kill Jacob, thoughts which he engaged in for his own personal pleasure; but thoughts he also shared.

The problem with mental attitude sins is, they affect all that you are. Esau has taken the mental attitude sin of hatred and has parlayed this into a series of fantasies, all of which end in the death of his brother Jacob.

This leads us to 3 very important doctrines: the Doctrine of Hatred, the Doctrine of Emotions, and the concept of Emotional Revolt of the soul.

## **Lesson 307: Genesis 27:41–42**

## **The Doctrine of Hatred**

Jacob, pretending to be Esau, has stolen from Esau the blessing spoken by Isaac, their father. This has filled Esau with hatred toward his brother Jacob.

**Genesis 27:41** And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had 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.”

Because of the hatred in his heart, Esau now fantasizes about killing his brother Jacob.



**Genesis 27:42** And these words of her older son Esau were told to Rebekah. And she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, "Listen, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.

Esau was apparently not very discrete about his plans to kill Jacob. Not only did he think about it and fantasize about it, but he apparently told several people about what he would do. He told so many people that Rebekah, their mother, heard, and became very concerned about the situation.

Before we can move forward in this narrative, we need to examine a few doctrines. The first is the **Doctrine of Hatred**.

Martin Luther King Jr., (from *A Knock at Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.*): *Let no man pull you so low as to hate him.*<sup>5</sup>

Gena Showalter (from *Seduce the Darkness*): *I don't hate you...I just don't like that you exist.*<sup>6</sup>

Maya Angelou: *Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in the world, but has not solved one yet.*<sup>7</sup>

Dwight D. Eisenhower: *Never waste a minute thinking about people you don't like.*<sup>8</sup>

1John 4:20 **If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. (ESV)**

Matthew 5:44 **But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (ESV)**

Unless otherwise noted, verses are quoted from the ESV, capitalized. Bolded words represent my emphasis.

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Hatred

1. Definition of hatred:
  - 1) ISBE's definition: *A feeling of strong antagonism and dislike, generally malevolent and prompting to injury (the opposite of love); sometimes born of moral resentment.*
  - 2) ZPEB: *[Hatred is] an intense aversion or active hostility that is expressed in settled opposition to a person or thing.*

<sup>5</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/hatred> accessed July 17, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/hatred> accessed July 17, 2014.

<sup>7</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/hatred> accessed July 17, 2014.

<sup>8</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/hatred> accessed July 17, 2014.

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Hatred

- 3) Generally speaking, hatred is a mental attitude sin expressed by one man (or a group of men) toward another man (or group of men). John 15:18–24

### 2. Hebrew vocabulary:

- 1) The strongest Hebrew verb for *hate* is *sâṭam* (שׂוֹטֵם) [pronounced *saw-TAHM*], which means *to hate; to oppose; to bear a grudge, to retain [or, cherish] animosity, to be against; to lay snares [for someone], to lay a trap, to follow with hostility*. Strong's #7852 BDB #966.

- (1) It is found in Genesis 27:41, which reads: **Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob."** Esau nursed this hatred, and had hoped to turn it into murder.

- (2) Joseph's brothers were worried that he would hate them and take retribution on them after their father died in Genesis 50:15 (Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery due to jealousy). Their concern is that he would parlay his hatred (which they supposed he had, but he didn't) into murder as well. Related to this is this same word found in Genesis 49:23, where Jacob, in his final words to Joseph, spoke of others (archers) attacking him out of hatred. It reads: **The archers have bitterly grieved him, shot at him and carried animosity against him.** (VW)

- 2) The second verb is *sânê'* (שָׂנֵא) [pronounced *saw-NAY*], which means, *to hate, loath; to be hateful, to be filled with animosity*. Strong's #8130 BDB #971. Unless qualified, this is the weaker of the two verbs.

- (1) Isaac used this verb (the weaker verb) to refer to Abimelech, who sent Isaac away from his land. Isaac knew that Abimelech did not hate him, but he acted as if he did in order to placate his people. Genesis 26:16, 27

- (2) Leah is called the *hated* wife of Jacob (Genesis 29:31, 33). Now, since they were having sex and producing babies, this would suggest that Jacob did not actually hate her.

- (3) Jacob played favorites, and loved his son Joseph more than the others. Joseph's older brothers came to *hate* him because of this. In this situation, the emotions of the brothers were strong enough to act, to sell Joseph into slavery. Genesis 37:4–8

- (4) This word can be used for an intense hatred, as long as it is so qualified. 2Sam. 13:15

- 3) The feminine noun cognate for the verb above is *sin<sup>e</sup>âh* (שִׂנְאָה) [pronounced *sihn-AW*], which means *hate, hating, hatred*. Strong's #8135 BDB #971.

- (1) When a person is murdered because of hatred, that is first degree murder in the Bible, and it is punishable by death. When hatred is not a motivating factor, but death is caused accidentally, then it is

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Hatred

- involuntary homicide, which does not require an execution. A trial is often necessary in order to determine whether there was the motivation of hatred or not. Num. 35:20–28
- (2) Amnon, one of David's degenerate sons, lusted after his half-sister. After raping her, his sexual lust turned to hatred, and both the verb above and this noun is used to describe how he felt about her. As is found above, his new hatred for her was simply a marked contrast with his previous lust for her. 2Sam. 13:15
  - (3) King David was often made the object of hatred because of his political power. In Psalm 109:1–5, he records this hatred in such a way as to be a type of Christ.
  - (4) It is better to eat salad in a house where there is love than to eat steak in a house filled with hatred. Prov. 15:17
3. Therefore, the first Hebrew word is most closely associated with murder or extreme pain and suffering. The second Hebrew verb is associated with actions taken against the *hated* person, but this is not always seen as murderous intent. There are exceptions to this. Absalom bore hatred for Amnon for raping his sister, but kept it quiet until he had the opportunity to kill Amnon. 2Sam. 13:22
4. Greek vocabulary:
- 1) The verb *miseō* (μισέω) [pronounced *mihs-EH-oh*], which means, *to hate, pursue with hatred, detest; to be hated, detested*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #3404. All New Testament verb references will be this word.
  - 2) The feminine noun *echthra* (ἐχθρα) [pronounced *EHKH-thrah*], which means, *enmity; cause of enmity; hatred, animosity*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2189.
    - (1) This word is used once to refer to a sin in Gal. 5:20 (translated *enmity* in the ESV).
    - (2) It is used to say that love of the cosmic system is equivalent to hatred for God. James 4:4
    - (3) Similarly, the flesh is hostile towards God. Rom. 8:7
    - (4) God is hostile toward us; but His hostility is removed by the cross. Eph. 3:15–16
5. Hatred is clearly condemned in Scripture, in both Testaments.
- 1) You shall not **hate** your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. (Lev. 19:17–18; emphasis mine) This is both a condemnation of an Israelite hating another Israelite; but the underlying concept is, two people who have placed their trust in God should not hate one another.
  - 2) Paul includes hatred under the works of the flesh. **Now the works of the flesh are obvious, which are: adultery, sexual immorality, uncleanness, lustfulness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousies, outbursts of anger, rivalries, divisions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, orgies, and**

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Hatred

things like these; of which I forewarn you, even as I also forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:19–21; WEB; emphasis mine)

- 3) See also Prov. 10:12 26:24–26 Titus 3:3 1John 3:15
6. Hatred is closely associated with murder and condemned by God. Genesis 27:41 Matt. 5:21 1John 3:15
7. A killing where hatred was not involved was not considered 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder under the Israel economy, and such an accidental death may result in a pardon. Deut. 4:42 19:4–6 Joshua 20:5
8. It is a mistake to say that Jesus modified the Old Testament teaching of hatred (as suggested by ZPEB and by many other sources). Jesus lived under the Law perfectly and He taught the Law of God throughout the first half of His ministry. Doing good to those who hate you personally (Matt. 5:43 Luke 6:27) is not a modification of the Law of Moses, but a clarification of it. To give you a modern-day example, in war, we are to kill our enemies; and we should execute murderers. However, this should not prevent us from bringing the gospel and Bibles to an enemy country nor should this prevent one from witnessing to a condemned killer. The very worst person you can think of (most people think of Hitler rather than Stalin or Mao) still should hear the gospel. And, no matter how you personally feel about a person, if there is the right opening to tell them about the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, then you should.
9. Hatred can be directed toward God and the Word of God. The idea is, this is negative volition toward the truth. Prov. 1:29
10. Hatred as an anthropopathism:
  - 1) God hates idolatry. This is known as an anthropopathism, where an emotion of man is ascribed to God to explain His actions or, in this case, His disapprobation. Deut. 12:31 16:22
  - 2) God hates those who hate Israel. Psalm 139:21–22
  - 3) God hated Israel when their feasts and celebrations were false. Isa. 1:14
  - 4) God is said to love Jacob but hate Esau. This merely distinguishes between the line or promise and the genealogical line that goes nowhere. Mal. 1:3 Rom. 9:13
  - 5) ZPEB explains this in a slightly different way: *God must not be understood to act on the human plane of anger and hostility. It must likewise be recognized that the Hebrew thought-form makes no sharp distinction between the individual and his deeds. A man in Hebrew thought is the sum total of the actions of his life, so that to say God hated a man is not to say that God was maliciously disposed toward a particular personality, but to note divine opposition to evil that was registered in that life. In connection with Esau, "hate" had a very colorless sense, being almost equivalent to the acknowledgment of a divine selectivity. Jacob He chose and Esau He rejected.*
  - 6) One needs to bear in mind that Jesus died for all men—not just those who choose to believe in Him—therefore, divine love is expressed toward all

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Hatred

mankind. Recall that when Jesus said, “**Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing**”; He was speaking of those assaulting Him, cursing Him, and lying about Him so that He would be crucified. He paid for the sins of the disciple John and his mother Mary; but also for Pilate, for those who cursed Him, for the men who nailed His hands and feet to the cross, and for the thieves on the crosses on both sides of Him (one of whom believed in Him).

11. Hatred where hatred is not meant:
  - 1) This same sort of approach is applied to believers. Disciples were told to hate their mother and father and other relatives. This does not mean that we actually should hate our parents (or children, or whatever). It means that Jesus should be far higher on the scale of values to His disciples than their blood relatives. Matt. 10:37 Luke 14:26
  - 2) The father who does not discipline his child hates that child (Prov. 13:24). This does not mean that parent literally hates his child; but it means that he is bringing up his child wrong and will, in the long run, cause his child harm by not disciplining him when he needs it.
  - 3) See also Psalm 5:5 97:10 139:21–22 Prov. 13:5 15:27 28:6
  - 4) **Whoever loves his life will lose it and whoever hates his life in this world will retain it for eternal life.** (John 12:25; off the cuff translation). This does not mean that we spend every waking moment hating our lives and wishing we were dead. Mature believers, generally speaking, have wonderful lives. However, life on earth for us is temporary and important, and death is inevitable and a promotion. As Paul wrote, **To live is Christ and to die is gain** (Philip. 1:21b; NIV). Paul did not hate his life; nor was he suicidal. But, because of his relationship to God and because of his understanding of life, he was fearless in life. In his scale of values, God calling him home was better than remaining on earth, even though he enjoyed giving the gospel and teaching Bible doctrine.
12. Hating someone is not a good enough reason to not pay them back a debt. Deut. 7:10
13. Believers who are out of line and corrected by God sometimes hate God or hate the discipline given them (Psalm 50:7, 17 Prov. 5:12). People who hate reproof are stupid (Prov. 12:1).
14. Solomon, when operating outside of the spiritual life, and was involved in many building projects and other acts of human good, was frustrated by the results and hated this work, in part because he would leave it to someone else who would be a slacker. Eccles. 2:17–18
15. The world (that is, the cosmic system) hates Jesus Christ and it hates believers. Matt. 10:22 John 7:7 15:17–18 17:14 1John 3:13
16. The world hates Jesus without a cause. John 15:24–25
17. The wicked hate the light because it exposes their evil deeds. John 3:20
18. However, we are not to pay back those who have wronged us with evil, but with good. Rom. 12:17–21 **Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is**

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Hatred

honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." See also Luke 6:27

19. As an aside, when we are told to love our enemies, this does not mean that we send weapons and supplies to Muslim extremists who would kill us (like [ISIS](#)). Jesus is primarily referring to personal enemies. In war, we look to destroy our enemies until they give up; after which, we are to treat our enemies fairly and with compassion (as we did in Japan after WWII). Truman's decision to bomb Japan with atomic weapons was a sound decision; MacArthur's decision [to call for Bibles and missionaries](#) in Japan after they surrendered was also a sound decision. Liberals and confused Christians do not understand that.

Because God has entrusted the United States with great wealth and the greatest military in human history, this is a responsibility and something that we must employ from time to time. Liberals often have no understanding of our responsibility in the world as tied to our military. I have heard on so many occasions, people complaining about Iraq and saying, "What do you want us to do; leave troops in Iraq forever?" The simple answer to that question is, "Yes." Many people do not really understand that. Our military helps to maintain law and order, which allows for the teaching of the gospel and the teaching of Bible doctrine. Our troops in Korea have been there for 65 years, and their occupation has prevented a nation run by nutball dictators (North Korea) in check; and has prevented communist attacks against a noble nation (South Korea).

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ZPEB and ISBE quotations are from:

*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Hate; Hatred.

*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 3, pp. 46–47.

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### Lesson 308: Genesis 27:41–42

### The Doctrine of Emotions

We have been studying Isaac and his twin sons Jacob and Esau. Jacob has stolen Esau's birthright and, more recently, Isaac's end-of-life blessing by deceiving his own father.

You will note that both brothers did not understand how life was. Jacob believed that he could only receive blessing through conniving and stealing; Esau believed that he could somehow overcome this loss of blessing by simply by killing Jacob. Esau's thinking is illogical. If Jacob is blessed, then that blessing has to come to pass. If the blessing is real and meaningful, then Esau cannot kill Jacob because of the blessing. If the blessing is meaningless, and if Esau could kill Jacob in order to end his blessing, then Esau is upset



about nothing. If Esau, through sin, could remove Jacob's blessing; then Jacob is not really blessed by God. That would mean Esau has power over God, when he does not.

Let's lay this out in another way. The blessing uttered by Isaac on behalf of Jacob is either real and meaningful or it is not. If the blessing is real and meaningful, then there is nothing that Esau can do about it. However, if this blessing for Jacob is not real and not meaningful, then who cares what Isaac has said? It does not mean anything. Esau may be upset over the whole situation, but, there is nothing that he can do about it.

Now Jacob and Esau are both wrong in their perceptions. God blesses Jacob because, as the Bible says of God, "**Jacob I love but Esau, I have hated.**" (Rom. 9:13 Mal. 1:2–3) For God to give His blessing to Jacob, no deception or duplicity is required; but when God gives His blessing, there is nothing that can be done to short-circuit it.

Esau is so filled with anger and hatred right now, he cannot think straight. It should be obvious that, if Esau could end this blessing, then the blessing is logically meaningless. However, emotion does not think; emotion does not reason. Emotion rages. There are [political groups](#) and one religion ([Islam](#)) which are filled with rage—they even *celebrate* a [day of rage](#), now and again. These are people who celebrate mental attitude sins. Nothing could be more evil.

Much of the material developed below ultimately came from R. B. Thieme, Jr.

### The Doctrine of Emotions

1. Emotion is defined as a complex biological or physiological process. Emotion is a function of the soul that is concerned with somatic expression or feeling. Emotion can be normal or abnormal. The purpose of normal emotion is to respond to various thoughts in our souls by way of norms and standards.
2. Emotion is tied to our volition and mental attitude.
3. Emotion is what is experienced as distinguished from cognitive and volitional states of consciousness. The frame of reference, memory center, viewpoint, norms and standards, and doctrine exist in the right lobe only (the right lobe contains our thoughts, ideas, norms and standards which we have decided to believe). None of these exist in the emotions. Emotions are designed to respond to thoughts that emanate from the thinking of our right lobes.
4. Emotions can respond to thoughts, but emotions can also function without thoughts. When emotions function without thinking, it is abnormal emotional activity called emotional instability, emotions in control, or emotional revolt. This state of mind can come and go quickly and it can hang on for a long time.
5. Emotions lack thought; therefore they are not adequate guides for motives, decisions, and actions of the believer. The problem with many liberals is, they feel something, and then they build up their thinking based upon their feelings.
6. Normal emotional experience is the subordination of the emotion to the intellect. Abnormal emotional experience results in the soul subordinating the intellect to the emotion, or the emotion bypassing the norms and standards. One may have

## The Doctrine of Emotions

control of his emotions or he can be controlled by his emotions.

7. Positive response to the heart produces the spectrum of happiness in the emotions from tranquility to ecstatic. Happiness is there because of doctrine. But how do you know its there? Emotions tell you, because of all of the responses from the whole spectrum of emotions.

### Emotions in the Bible:

8. Very often, emotions are spoken of, in general, using metonyms (that is, one word stands in for another word). Often interior organs are used to refer to emotions. The womb, kidneys, bowels and/or intestines are terms often used to refer to emotions in general.
9. Examples of the Bible's use of metonym; where an interior organ stands for an emotion:

- 1) The KJV of Gen 43:30 *And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there.* The ESV modernizes this to: *Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep. And he entered his chamber and wept there.* See also 1Kings 3:26 for a similar example.

- 2) Jeremiah uses *kidneys* in the same way in Lam. 3:10–13 *He is a bear lying in wait for me, a lion in hiding; he turned aside my steps and tore me to pieces; he has made me desolate; he bent his bow and set me as a target for his arrow. He drove into my kidneys the arrows of his quiver;...* (ESV) See also Psalm 7:9 26:2 Prov. 23:16 Jer. 17:10 (bear in mind that your modern translation will probably not translate this word *reins* or *kidneys*, even though that is the actual Hebrew meaning).

- 3) We often use the word *heart* to refer to our emotional response; whereas the Bible uses heart for the thinking of the soul. The KJV of Psalm 73:21–22 *Thus my heart was grieved [that is, his thinking was thrown off kilter], and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.* This same passage in the KJ2000: *Thus my soul was grieved, and I was pierced in my heart. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before you.* In this passage, the psalmist has allowed his emotions to get the best of him. But you can see how our use of the language has changed. So, whereas we closely associate *heart* with emotions; the word for *heart*, in both the Greek and the Hebrew, often stands for the right lobe of the soul, which is the entire mental function of the soul. So, with some English translations, this gets tricky. Some of them (like the KJ2000 mentioned above) translates the Hebrew word for *reins (kidneys)* as *heart*; but they do not translate the Hebrew word for *heart* as *heart*. Because of this confusion, I may need to do the doctrine of heart in the near future.

10. Mistaken examples:

- 1) The word *belly* or *stomach* is found in the New Testament. This is not a word which is used for a person's emotions, but for a person's *appetites*;

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that is, the lust pattern of the soul. A person who puts his desires (for money, power, sex, drugs, alcohol) above everything else is to be avoided. Rom. 16:17–18 **I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites [= belly in the KJV], and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.** (ESV) The idea is, whatever their lust desires is like food to them; they believe that it is absolutely required. These people may sound very reasonable; but beneath all that they say is a desire to satiate their lusts. See Philip. 3:17–19 for a similar example.

- 2) However, this does not negate the principle of avoiding similar people who allow their emotions to guide them through life.
- 3) This brings up the concept of separation in the Christian life; and that is a very difficult concept. Obviously, we cannot separate from all people who sin and we cannot separate from all people who think too much with their emotions. So, the rule of thumb is, as believers we separate from others where the gospel or Bible doctrine is compromised. Let me offer two examples:
  - (1) This should be obvious. You avoid people involved in criminal activity. You do not ride along with criminals about to rob a convenience store so that you can witness to them. However, this does not prevent you from witnessing to someone who you know to be a criminal.
  - (2) You may have relatives in town visiting you and they may hate the teaching of the Word of God. You still attend Bible class, even though they have no interest in it. You separate from them during this time.
  - (3) We covered this doctrine back in lesson #116. The **Doctrine of Separation** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

11. None of this means that the Bible is anti-emotion. The emotion is the appreciator of the soul, and we are certainly allowed to appreciate various things, as long as our emotions do not control our soul. NT examples can be found in Philip. 1:7–8 and Philemon 12, 20 where the word *bowels* is used (in the original Greek) in association with emotional appreciation and refreshment. God gave us emotions so that we can enjoy life.

12. Many Christians believe a real spiritual experience must be an emotional one and herein lies a significant problem for Christendom. They allow how they feel to determine if they are rightly related to God or if they are filled with the Spirit or not. However, the believer in Jesus Christ cannot gauge his spiritual life based upon his emotions.

- 1) As an aside, emotions can also be artificially stimulated through psychotherapeutic drugs. Although I reject the widespread usage of such drugs, there are probably a few times when they are effective and helpful.
- 2) However, as a believer in Jesus Christ, if you are taking a psycho-

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- therapeutic drug, and it plunges you into depression or into a feeling of well being, then what you know about God through Bible doctrine has to overrule your emotional state. No matter how your emotions are brought about, your thinking should override whatever actions your emotions point you to.
- 3) The same thing is true of any emotional state, no matter how it is brought about. However you feel, it must be subordinate to the Bible doctrine in your soul. No matter how strong your emotions are and no matter what they appear to be directing you to do, you need to have Bible doctrine in your soul to go to, to apply, to ruminate upon.
13. False doctrine seems to thrive on emotion. The more a person or group of persons are led by their emotions, the more false doctrine abounds.
- 1) We can therefore see the need to beware of hyper emotional types who are led by their emotions and not by their intellects.
  - 2) There are denominations where emotion dominates worship. Often these denominations grow in numbers of bodies attending. It would seem people like to feel good emotionally. However, how you feel is not a gauge of your spiritually or of your spiritual growth.
  - 3) Common errors emanate from statements like: "I must feel saved if I am saved"; "my sin was so bad I must do some penance for forgiveness" or "if I do not feel sorry for what I did surely God will not forgive me just by naming my sin." Then there are other equally inappropriate thoughts like "true worship involves crying and rejoicing with tears while lifting my hands toward God."
  - 4) People in these types of situations often think tears of joy or tears of sorrow publicly displayed make for true worship; they often equate this phenomena with *the working of the Spirit of God* and the one who does the emoting is thought to be, *a man of God or a really spiritual person*.
  - 5) Because most people are followers, they can be moved by a charismatic person who is able to touch their emotions and manipulate their emotions. The believer with doctrine must constantly compare what he hears with the rule of doctrine.
  - 6) Your pastor-teacher might be an excellent, motivating speaker and he might be as dry as chalk dust—his personality is *never* the issue. How he makes you feel is never an issue. The only issue is, does he communicate Bible doctrine to you accurately and effectively (that is, are you actually learning the Word of God, when all is said and done).
14. It is absolutely necessary for every believer to keep his or her emotions under control. For to do otherwise can result in demonic influence.
15. However, there are times when one's emotions act (or should act) in conjunction with the doctrine in your soul.
- 1) I personally have an emotional response to a [presentation](#) done by the Liberated Wailing Wall.
  - 2) There are some hymns which provoke an emotional response within us

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- (like *A Mighty Fortress*). There is a benediction that we sang at a church; the first church that I attended as a Christian. I find that benediction moving ([Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow](#)). You may find that other hymns touch you.
- 3) When you see another believer in need, you should not ignore his earthly needs; particularly if God has blessed you. 1John 3:17 **But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?** (KJV) *Shutting off one's bowels* means turning off a normal emotional response of compassion toward that person in need. The ESV modernizes this verse to: **But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?** There are things which you see which should stir your emotions; Bible doctrine in your soul gives you the wisdom to appropriately respond.
  - 4) The fact that you, as a believer, live by doctrine, does not mean that you ignore or suppress your emotions. There are times when you will face the needs of another person—and this may also provoke an emotional response. You deal with the situation as according to doctrine, which sometimes means that you will render aid and comfort.
16. There is no divine power in emotions. The power is in thinking like God thinks; the power is, what is going on in your (dare I say it?) heart (the Biblical understanding of the *heart*). Therefore, your thinking must be based upon Bible doctrine. Emotion has no spiritual connotation. Emotions are a stimuli for action, and therefore must be regarded as a form of human energy.
- 1) Emotional stress, for example, causes people to act on impulse. The emotion of fear, also a sin, causes flight. The emotion of disgust causes repulsion. The emotion of anger causes violence.
  - 2) Instincts are reflex behavior based on emotion rather than thought. Emotion does not contain thought. Therefore, emotion is physiological and not thinking.
  - 3) A soldier in an intense situation will experience some normal fear; however, he must function according to what he has learned, and not let his fear control him. A soldier who responds to his fear will die and probably get many of his fellow soldiers killed. A soldier who responds to what he has learned will be a great soldier, and the man that you want to fight along side with. This is a wonderful parallel to the spiritual life.
17. Emotion does not contain the ability to reason. It does not contain common sense. It does not contain vocabulary as a tool for mental function. It has no doctrinal content. Emotion is related to human power and influence, but never to divine power and the mystery doctrine of the church.
- 1) Emotion hinders spiritual growth and application of Bible doctrine. 2Cor.6:11-12 tells us that the Corinthians were given sound teaching, but their emotional response (*bowels* in the original Greek) restricted their



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understanding. In studying the epistles to the Corinthians, it is clear that many of them were controlled by their emotions and got into various tiffs with one another because of their emotions.

- 2) Such believers' unrestrained or uncontrolled emotional patterns are the basis for criminality, violence, hatred, anger, total involvement in the arrogance complex, which means bitterness, vindictiveness, jealousy, implacability, and self-pity.
18. Ignorance of Bible doctrine causes people to say things like, *You are not saved unless you feel saved; you are not spiritual unless you feel spiritual*. Under some conditions, the use of doctrine in recall or application often causes an emotional response, and that is normal, but not necessary.

Addendum: Let me use a political example of how emotions have guided our actions in a wrong direction. There is nothing more heart-wrenching than the iconic photo from the Vietnam war, with the children running and crying. No parent can see a picture like that without it reaching deep into their emotions.

Picture is from the [London Glossy Post](#), accessed September 1, 2014.

No doubt that millions of people who saw this picture said to themselves, "I just want this horror to stop." And no doubt, this photo-journalism changed the hearts of many Americans about the war.



When Congress de-funded the war in Vietnam, partially as a response to many of their constituents, it did not mean that scenes like this no longer occurred. It simply meant that we no longer saw scenes like this, because there is no such thing as photojournalism when a communist takeover occurs. You no longer see the horror and the slaughter by communist armies, because they do not allow this to happen.

After the fall of Saigon (the capitol of South Vietnam), as many as [7.5 million people](#) have been killed by the North Vietnamese and their proxies. When we left Vietnam, the killing and slaughter increased. War for the Vietnamese did not end; it became far, far worse. But, we in the United States no longer had to see pictures like the one above; and some liberals to this day blame these murders, committed by a vicious communist



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army, on the United States. We are to blame for these deaths, only because we left Vietnam, but not because we went there in the first place. We are in part to blame, but because we de-funded our military, pulled out of troops and deserted our allies, thereby allowing millions to be slaughtered.

Most people do not grasp large numbers (anything over 100 or 1000), so they have no frame of reference for the number of people killed in Vietnam. If memory serves, we lost about 58,000 American soldiers in Vietnam. For every 1 American soldier who lost his life, before we pulled out of Vietnam, over 100 civilians lost their lives *after* we left Vietnam. Communism requires adherents, either emotionally or verbal compliance. Their solution for the millions who oppose them is to kill them. So the horror that the Vietnamese faced was 100x worse *after* we left Vietnam.

Although there have been [apocryphal statements](#) attributed to General Giap (the commander-in-chief of the North Vietnamese army) and his memoirs, there was, in 1995, a Wall Street Journal interview with Bui Tin, a former colonel who served on the general staff of the North Vietnamese army, that included the following exchange:

Q: How did Hanoi intend to defeat the Americans?

A: By fighting a long war which would break their will to help South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh said, "We don't need to win military victories, we only need to hit them until they give up and get out."

Q: Was the American antiwar movement important to Hanoi's victory?

A: It was essential to our strategy. Support for the war from our rear was completely secure while the American rear was vulnerable. Every day our leadership would listen to world news over the radio at 9 a.m. to follow the growth of the American antiwar movement. Visits to Hanoi by people like Jane Fonda and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark and ministers gave us confidence that we should hold on in the face of battlefield reverses. We were elated when Jane Fonda, wearing a red Vietnamese dress, said at a press conference that she was ashamed of American actions in the war and that she would struggle along with us.

Q: Did the Politburo pay attention to these visits?

A: Keenly

Q: Why?

A: Those people represented the conscience of America. The conscience of America was part of its war-making capability, and we were turning that power in our favor. America lost because of its democracy; through dissent and protest it lost the ability to mobilize a will to win.

Q: What else?

A: We had the impression that American commanders had their hands tied by political

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factors. Your generals could never deploy a maximum force for greatest military effect.

Now, [Snopes](#) attributes his remarks to becoming disillusioned with what the communists did in Vietnam; but, since he was living in freedom when he gave this interview, it is more likely that he expressed what he believed to be the truth.

My point in that tangent is, our national response to Vietnam should not have been based upon the great emotions which many of us had in that era, but upon what was the right thing to do, for the world and for the South Vietnamese. Pulling out suddenly and letting millions of them be slaughtered was not the right thing to do.

From Cherreguine Bible Doctrine Ministries at [dikaiosune.com](http://dikaiosune.com), accessed August 5, 2014. Also material from the Westbank Bible Church, [Emotions of the Soul](#); accessed August 5, 2014. Considerably edited and appended.

### Lessons 309–310: Genesis 27:41

### The Doctrine of the Heart

Jacob has stolen the blessing which Isaac had for Esau. Jacob false believed that one might gain honor and riches through deception and manipulation. As a result, his brother Esau was extremely angry.

Gen. 27:41 [And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had 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. \(MKJV\)](#)

This has led us to study a plethora of doctrines. However, before we get to the concept of emotional revolt of the soul, we need to understand what the Bible means when it speaks of the *heart*.

Much of the doctrine below was taken directly from the sources cited in the [Bibliography](#) without editing. The bulk of this doctrine came from [Bible Doctrine Resources](#), which posts mostly doctrines from R. B. Thieme, Jr. However, some of what is found below is original, as all 4 sources failed to deal with modern translations, which confuses the issue by their translation.

There are a great many technical terms found in this study—some of which we have studies and many of which we have not. Their definitions can be found at **Doctrinal Terms and Definitions** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This is now about 30 pages long.

### The Doctrine of the Heart

#### 1. Definition and Description of the Heart.

- 1) The physiological heart is rarely used in the Bible. However, it makes for a great analogy; therefore, let's spend some time examining the physiological heart.
  - (1) The physiological heart is an intricately woven muscle which by rhythmic contraction circulates the blood.
  - (2) It is estimated that the heart pumps five quarts of blood every minute, 75 gallons an hour, and 70 barrels a day, and about 18 million barrels in seventy years.
  - (3) The heart's anatomy and relation to the circulatory system includes a double pump: two atriums and two ventricles. The ventricles have a four ounce volume and the atria a five ounce volume.
  - (4) The thick muscular walls of the ventricles are primarily responsible to pump the blood. Used blood is low in oxygen and high in CO<sub>2</sub>. To be cleansed, the used blood enters the right atrium through the superior and inferior vena cava. Used blood is like false ideas we pick up in life.
  - (5) The right ventricle pumps blood through the pulmonary artery to the lungs where it discharges CO<sub>2</sub> and picks up oxygen from the alveoli. Then the blood travels through the pulmonary veins to the left atrium which in turns pumps the oxygen in the refreshed blood out through the aorta to the entire body.
    - i So with **metabolized doctrine** (Bible doctrine that you believe): it is pumped through various valves and circulates through the brain, giving you a dynamic mental attitude.
    - ii Likewise, the CO<sub>2</sub> of the soul, i.e., all the false and erroneous ideas we've learned, must be replaced by the oxygen of Bible doctrine. All that is accomplished in the heart or **right lobe**.
    - iii Just as breathing and the replenishing of oxygen is a day-by-day operation, so is the taking in of Bible doctrine, so that we might *breathe out* false doctrine.
  - (6) The function of the blood is to bathe tissues with fluid, preserving their slight alkaline condition, supplying tissues with food and oxygen, to provide building material for their growth and repair, distribute heat generated by cells and equalizes body temperature, carry hormones which coordinate and stimulate the activities of various organs, and convey antibodies and white blood cells which fight infection. Blood cannot support life unless it keeps circulating. Each day that we take in Bible doctrine, it is pumped throughout our soul (the doctrine which we believe) and it renews the thinking of the soul. Bible doctrine circulating in the soul as a result of the function of the **Grace Apparatus for Perception (GAP)** provides these same functions. This begins and is accomplished in the heart, or what we call the right lobe of your soul. When we do not take in Bible doctrine, then this is analogous to breathing in air which lacks oxygen.
  - (7) If blood flow is cut off to the brain, the person loses consciousness in three to five seconds; after fifteen to twenty seconds the body

twitches convulsively; if more than nine minutes, the mental powers of the brain are irrevocably destroyed. The muscles of the heart can only survive loss of blood flow for thirty minutes. These facts emphasize the vital importance of the heart to our life. The energy used by the heart is fantastic.

- (8) Many tissues of the body use as little as one-fourth of the oxygen brought to them by the blood. The heart uses eighty percent of the oxygen brought to it by the blood. Therefore, the amount of blood supplied to the heart is extremely important, especially when its activity raises its demand for oxygen. That is analogous to positive volition.
- (9) Blood is piped into the heart muscle through two large coronary arteries which curl around the surface of the heart. The heart transforms chemical energy into the mechanical energy of contraction very similar to the conversion of energy in the automobile engine.
  - i In both cases, the human heart and the combustion engine, the fuel is suddenly exploded in exactly the same way, by electrical spark.
  - ii In both the human heart and the combustion engine, fuel is complex, and the explosions involve a series of chemical reactions.
  - iii In fact, in the human heart and the combustion engine, the explosion occurs in the cylinders. The cylinders of the human heart are muscle cells which not only contain fuel, but are able to replenish it themselves. The replenishment comes from products supplied by the blood.
  - iv Likewise, our spiritual heart transfers academic thought into spiritual energy.
- (10) The mechanical efficiency of the cells, i.e., the fraction of the total energy that can be converted into mechanical energy, has not been equaled by anything made by man up to the pre-atomic age. Seventy-two times a minute your heart's pacemaker, the S-A node, generates electricity.
- (11) All of these statements provide fantastic analogies to the heart or right lobe of the soul as the circulator of Bible doctrine into the thinking part of the soul. When Bible doctrine reaches the heart, Bible doctrine is converted into spiritual energy, i.e., the **ten problem solving devices, divine viewpoint**, and the momentum of the spiritual life. No one can grow spiritually except through perception of Bible doctrine. 2Peter 3:18a **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** (NIV). That is a command, not a suggestion!
- (12) Until the atomic age, nothing man made ever came close to the efficiency of energy transfer compared to the heart.
- (13) Psalm 139:13-14 **For You formed my inward parts; You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise You, for I am fearfully and**

wonderfully made. Wonderful are Your works; my soul knows it very well. (ESV; capitalized)

- i This passage recognizes what God has done in grace in providing the human body. The human body is a grace asset; we don't earn or deserve it. No matter what kind of person we are, we all can metabolize food and breathe air. Health is not determined by merit.
- ii Health can be impacted by volition, however. Our daily decisions can impact what happens to our body.
- iii The psalmist recognizes the wonder of the human body, which he understands from the right lobe of his soul.

2. **The Great Analogy.** Just as the physical heart is the pump that circulates blood throughout the body and thereby supports physical life, so the right lobe of the soul circulates Bible doctrine supporting the spiritual life of the believer. Bible Doctrine is actually perceived and understood in the left lobe of the soul, but it is in the right lobe where it is actually circulated and utilized.

- 1) The mentality of the soul is divided into two lobes: The left lobe, called the *noús* (νοῦς) [pronounced *noose*], meaning *mind* or *thought*; and the right lobe, called *kardia* (καρδία) [pronounced *kahr-DEE-uh*], meaning *heart*. This is noted in Job 38:36 "[Who endowed the heart with wisdom, or who gave understanding to the mind?](#)"
- 2) The right lobe is the dominant lobe designed by God to dominate the entire soul. Whenever you are logical, analytical, or categorical in your thinking, you are using your heart. 1Sam. 16:7 [But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.](#)
- 3) Proverbs 23:7 [As a man thinks in his right lobe \[heart\], so he is.](#) The verb *to think* is *shâ'ar* (שָׂאָר) [pronounced *shaw-GAHR*], which means *to split open; to reason [out], to calculate, to reckon, to estimate*. Strong's #8176 BDB #1045.
- 4) The mind is the staging area, where information is received; it is believed and then it is pumped throughout the soul. This can be truth, but this can also be false information.
- 5) This is the dichotomous action of the heart choosing for or against the ways of God through discernment based on what he has received in his heart, cosmic system thinking (demon influence) or the Word of God.
- 6) What we breathe into our heart circulates throughout our entire soul.

3. **The Biblical Vocabulary.** The Biblical nouns for heart always refer to the right lobe of the soul; they do not refer to the physiological heart.

- (1) The Hebrew *lêb* (לֵב) [pronounced *lay<sup>b</sup>v*] and the Greek *kardia* (καρδία) [pronounced *kahr-DEE-uh*] are both translated *heart*. Both are used outside the Bible for the literal heart, but never so used in the Bible.

- (2) The usage of the words for heart is based on analogy. Just as the physical heart is the pump that circulates blood throughout the body and thereby supports physical life, so the right lobe of the soul circulates doctrine supporting the spiritual life of the believer. The doctrine is actually understood in the left lobe, but it is in the right lobe where it is actually circulated and utilized.
- (3) The word "heart" connotes many things in English.
  - i The core of something.
  - ii In cards, it is a suit; also the game "hearts."
  - iii It is used for emotion, "He is all heart."
  - iv There is the false statement, "He has a head belief and not a heart belief." The implication here is, the person did not involve his emotions when believing in Jesus Christ. However, there is a proper way to understand this—the gospel is heard by the mind, it is considered; and if it is believed, then it is transferred to the heart (and to the human spirit) where it becomes the most fundamental piece of spiritual information. Rom. 10:10 **...for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.** (NASB)
- (4) The Bible never uses the heart for emotion (in the original languages). Faith comes from the heart because faith is thinking, not emotion. However, in some modern translations, words which do not mean *heart* are sometimes translated *heart*. This will be discussed in greater detail later on.
- (5) The mentality of the soul is divided into two lobes: the left lobe, called the *noús* (νοῦς) [pronounced *noose*], meaning mind, thought; and the right lobe, called *kardia*, meaning heart.
- (6) The left lobe is the reception area. It is the perception—you hear things and consider them in your left lobe. However, when you hear something and believe it, then it is transferred to the right lobe of the soul.
- (7) The right lobe is the dominant lobe designed by God to dominate the entire soul. Whenever you are logical, analytical, or categorical in your thinking, you are using your heart. 1Sam. 16:7.
- 2) *Kardia* was used in secular Greek in both a literal and metaphorical sense.
  - (1) Among the Greeks, the noun *kardia* was primarily used literally in a physiological sense as the central organ of the body of man or beast (Homer Iliad, 10, 94).
  - (2) It also appears in the figurative sense, especially in the poets, infrequently in prose, for the heart as the seat of moral and intellectual life.
  - (3) The word was used to denote the seat of emotions and passions like anger (Homer, Iliad, 9, 646).
  - (4) Aristotle for whom the heart is primarily the center of the blood-stream, and hence the center of physical life in general, locates the



emotions in the neighborhood of the kardia on the basis of his physiology of the senses.

- (5) In Stoicism the heart is in some sense the central organ of intellectual life, the seat of reason, from which feeling, willing and thinking proceed (cf. Chrysippus).
  - (6) The noun kardia was also used figuratively of nature, the “inward part,” the “core” of a plant or “kernel” of a tree.
- 3) However, the Bible does not use the word *heart* to mean *emotion*.
- (1) Emotions are designed to respond to thinking that comes from the heart of your soul, never the other way around. Faith too comes from the heart because faith is thinking, not emotion. **Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God** (Rom. 10:17; NASB). The truth of Scripture is heard, evaluated by the mind, and then, ideally speaking, believed.
  - (2) 2Corinthians 6:11–12 **Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections (emotions).** (translation probably by R. B. Thieme, Jr.) Notice that emotions and heart are in contrast in this passage. Therefore, emotions are not a part of the function of the heart/right lobe of the soul.
  - (3) Romans 1:21 **For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.** This is a reference to the person who is negatively influenced and led by their emotions.
  - (4) Romans 6:17–18 **But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** This is a reference to the person who has rejected emotional control of the soul and is instead led by the Word of God circulating in their soul which causes them to build upon their souls with more and more Bible Doctrine.
  - (5) However, bear in mind, in more modern translations, words for emotions (*not heart*) are translated *heart* from time to time.

#### 4. **First Mentions of Heart in the Bible.**

- 1) Gen 6:5–6 **Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.**
  - (1) This tells us that in the days leading up to the flood man stopped taking in and applying the Word of God. He was not cycling the Word within his soul. As a result, God's heart was grieved by man's predicament.
  - (2) Here the word heart is used of both man and God. As for God this is both an **anthropomorphism** and an **anthropopathism**, as we know

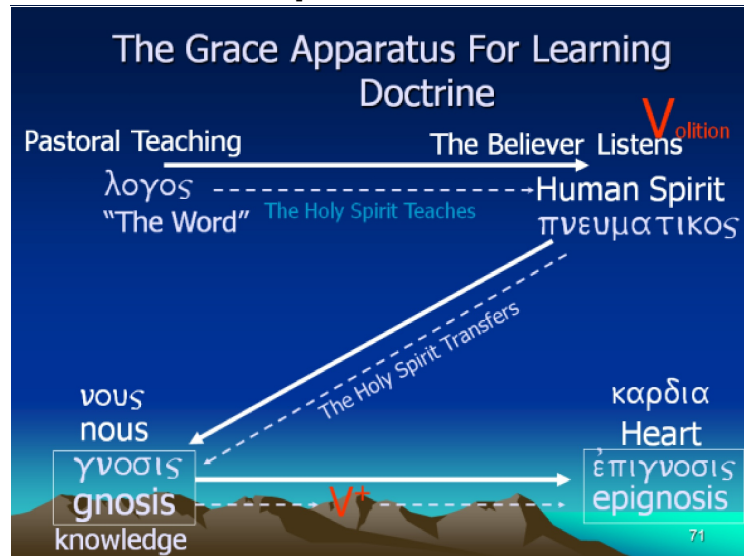
God is not built like man and is instead a spiritual being without the blood pumping organ or brain as we have, nor does He think the way we do, or have the emotions we have.

- (3) Anthropomorphism is a physical attribute of man ascribed to God, which He does not literally possess in order for man to understand something about God and His policy toward man by the use of language of accommodation. Likewise an anthropopathism ascribes to God mental characteristics found in man to describe God's thinking and God's planning in human terms.
  - 2) The First Mention in the New Testament, Matthew 5:8 "**Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.**"
    - (1) This verse tells us that when we have the cleansing of our soul through the circulation of the Word of God through our heart, we will come to have knowledge and understanding of who and what God is and our relationship with Him.
    - (2) Hebrews 10:22 **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.** (HCSB)
  - 3) The Second Mention is in Matthew 5:28 "**But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**" The second mention tells us that our heart can also be a place of sin influence over our soul when we allow temptation from our Sin Nature to circulate through our heart/soul.
  - 4) Just as the first two mentions of *heart* in the Old Testament had the meaning of sinfulness verses the thinking of God, the New Testament's first two mentions show the same potential dichotomy in man's heart but in reverse order.
5. **The Heart is a Part of the Essence of the Soul.** In Scripture, the heart is used for the right lobe of the soul. This distributes all knowledge, thinking, wisdom, and divine viewpoint throughout the entire mentality, just as the physiological heart distributes nourishment throughout the entire body.
- 1) The heart is used in the Bible for the place of thinking, the location of your vocabulary and categories of thought. Therefore, the heart is the thinking function of the soul. The Lord's evaluation of you is what you think. 1Sam. 16:7 **The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his outward appearance or how tall he is, because I have rejected him. God sees not as man sees, for man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."** Compare Prov. 23:7 **As a man thinks in his right lobe [heart], so he is.** (Translation probably from R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
  - 2) The Lord looks in your heart and sees how much doctrine is circulating through the component parts of your right lobe.
  - 3) The soul is composed of at least four invisible but real parts: self-consciousness (Acts 20:10), mentality (Prov. 19:2), volition (Acts 3:23), and emotion (Luke 12:19).

- 4) The mentality of the soul is divided into two parts: the left and right lobes. The right lobe is where you do your thinking, analyzing, applying of knowledge, and is the seat of common sense. The left lobe is your place of assimilating information and the area where your talent functions. R. B. Thieme, Jr. often calls this the staging area. It can be seen as the waiting room or the entry hall. This is where information comes first and is evaluated.
- 5) Brain scientists indicate that two persons inhabit our heads, each residing in the two separate hemispheres of our brain.
- 6) According to scientists, one is verbal, analytical, and dominant, while the other is mute and mysterious.
- 7) Scientists classify the non-speaking side as the right hemisphere (we call it the left lobe).
- 8) In the Bible we classify the mute side as the left lobe and the verbal hemisphere as the right
- 9) The two half brains are linked together by millions of nerves forming a thick cable called the corpus callosum.
- 10) In cases of severe epilepsy, this cable sometimes has to be cut. This results in some strange occurrences. The left side of the brain no longer knows what the right side is doing, yet the speaking half of the patient is controlled by left lobe. The person still insists on finding excuses for whatever the left side has done. His thinking part is severed from his non-thinking part and still operates under the illusion that he is one person, and that his lobes are combined. The two halves of the brain are integrated into a single mentality with the speaking half called the "heart" by the Bible.
- 11) Scientists say that the left hemisphere has a language ability and is analytical; and the right hemisphere is artistic and talented. Talented people tend to live using mostly the non-thinking part of their brain.
- 12) A child is about two years old before the link between his two hemispheres is completed. And it doesn't become completely functional until he is about ten years old. After age ten, one side of the brain is used for synthesis, spacial perception and music, while the other side performs sequential, verbal, analytical, and computer-like activities.
- 13) Scientists contend that excellence in one hemisphere tends to interfere with top level performance in the other. The conclusion is that most talented people aren't smart or analytical.

- 14) What does the Bible say? The heart is part of the essence of the soul; it is the thinking, reasoning part. It is designed to dominate the soul. Therefore, it must be the target for doctrinal teaching, 1Kings 3:9,12 Psalm 119:11 19:14. To reach the target, Bible doctrine must pass through two staging areas: the left lobe and the human spirit. (See

## Operation Z



(See the [Doctrine of Operation Z](#).) **Graphic of Operation Z**, taken from Bible Doctrine Resources, but it is not original with them. R. B. Thieme, Jr. developed this concept and did the first graphics for it. This particular graphic may have come from [Jim Oliver](#). See [Country Bible Church](#) for a similar graphic. All of these are accessed September 29, 2014.

6. **Summary of the Compartments of the Heart.** Throughout this doctrine we have been utilizing the analogy of a "filing cabinet" to explain how the kardia/heart of the soul works. Basically the Heart is the overall filing cabinet. It is the central resource center of your soul, the place where information is entered, stored, and available for recall and application. As we have noted in this doctrine, there are 6–8 compartments in the heart of your soul so we will use the "filing cabinet" analogy to describe these compartments.
- 1) The Frame of Reference is analogous to the various drawers within the filing cabinet. The drawers provide initial access to the central resource center for storing and finding information within our souls.
  - 2) The Memory Center is the actual files you place within the filing cabinet. It is the actual storage of information within your soul.
  - 3) Vocabulary Storage is analogous to the tabs or headings we put on files as a technical reference to the information within the files providing us easy access and recall.
  - 4) Categorical Storage is the order and arrangement of files, the systematic grouping of reference material for application.
  - 5) The Conscience is the scanning of information within a file to use as a basis of reference, establishing guidelines regarding the situations of life.
  - 6) Finally, we arrive at the Launching Pad. The Launching Pad is the place where the things stored in the filing cabinet are gathered together for use and

application. It is the animated process of removing a file and utilizing what is in that file. For example, you are faced with a disastrous situation in life. The Frame of Reference sends initial general reference points that are related to the situation. Then the Memory Center sends in recalled details and data regarding those reference points. This is followed by the Vocabulary sending technical specifications that can be used for the situation. Next, the Categorical Storage compartment sends supporting data from multiple reference points. Then the Conscience brings forth reasoning based on all the norms and standards built in your soul from accumulated Bible Doctrine that has flowed through it. Finally the Launching Pad gathers together all supporting materials, stages them for launch, and thrusts them forward within your soul so that the Wisdom of God flows throughout your soul and can be applied to the situation you are faced with. This all occurs under the function of your very own **Royal Priesthood** through the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit working within your soul.

7. **Spiritual Growth is the Result of Building Up Your Heart with the Word of God.**
- 1) As a result of having Bible doctrine in the Frame of Reference, moving it into the Memory Center, Vocabulary and Categorical storage, developing Norms and Standards in the Conscience coupled with faith application from the Launching Pad, we then have a growth factor from metabolized Bible doctrine which moves us to spiritual maturity.
  - 2) Although the entire process can be quite complex, our involvement is quite simple.
    - (1) When we eat and breathe, our contribution is fairly simple. Breathing is automatic; and eating is according to our taste (although most of us realize that some foods are better for us than other foods).
    - (2) The process by which air taken into our lungs and then is sent throughout our bodies, refreshing and replenishing, is rather complex. No one knows the entire process and all that is involved. Most people don't know much beyond the breathing in of oxygen and the breathing out of CO<sub>2</sub>. But, even though our knowledge of this function which sustains and renews our bodies is fairly difficult to understand, all we do is breathe. The body which God has designed takes care of the rest.
    - (3) The same thing is true of Bible doctrine in the soul. All we do is listen and believe. God has designed our human spirit to take care of the rest. We may understand that we take in doctrine in our perceptive lobe (the left lobe), believe it, and it become imprinted on our heart (the right lobe); but even if we don't know this, it still occurs.
    - (4) Our contribution is simple. We need only have positive volition toward the Word of God. We listen, we believe, and God handles the rest.
  - 3) This is the status in which spiritual growth is obtained as a result of momentum inside God's power system for your spiritual walk. This is accomplished through the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit and momentum from the Word of God metabolized within your soul. Learning

God's Word provides momentum and motivation to learn more of God's Word. This is the momentum factor of spiritual phenomenon resulting in God's wisdom applied to your life.

- 4) There are two categories of spiritual growth.
- (1) Normal spiritual growth that comes from the renewing of your mind post-salvation. Ephesians 4:23–24 **And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.** Romans 12:2 **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.** This is accomplished through the Grace Apparatus for Perception (GAP) which includes the three R's by means of the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit.
    - i Receptive comprehension, faith upon hearing.
    - ii Retention, the metabolization of Bible doctrine, converting gnosis into epignosis doctrine and storing it within the Heart of your soul.
    - iii Recall, the application of the Word resident within your soul from the Launching Pad of the Heart resulting in Wisdom.
  - (2) Accelerated spiritual growth as a result of suffering for blessing. The acceleration of your spiritual growth comes from the application of metabolized Bible doctrine and the function of the Problem Solving Devices when you are faced with pressure and adversity in life.
    - i As is the general rule, we tend to learn at an accelerated rate when we are faced with difficulties or perceived failures within our lives. This is in contrast to the times of success and prosperity when we are comfortable, think we are all set and "have it all down pat". In the latter the trend is to not turn to God, His wisdom or power.
    - ii But in times of difficulty and pressure, we find ourselves in a position of hopelessness and helplessness when it comes to human solutions and our human resources. In these times, like no other, we are narrowed in our application to utilize the power of God, His Word and Spirit.
    - iii This is called Suffering for Blessing, which is facing difficulties, disasters, or pressure when we are walking with God. This is in contrast to divine discipline, when due to our negative volition, God allows discipline to come into our lives to wake us up.
    - iv You can learn from divine discipline, punitive suffering, the law of volitional responsibility, and self-induced misery. But that is a slow process and does not necessarily advance you to Spiritual Self-Esteem. In those instances, if you wake up and get back in fellowship with God, the discipline is turned into Suffering for Blessing.



- v Suffering for Blessing has three categories related to three stages of spiritual adulthood, which moves us forward and provides momentum to achieve further spiritual growth in spiritual adulthood.
- vi 1Corinthians 9:24–27 *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

## 8. Happiness is related to the heart.

- 1) Prov. 17:22 *A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.* Having a joyful heart means you share God's happiness (+H) in your right lobe.
- 2) Prov. 15:13-15 *A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken. The heart of the intelligent seeks knowledge, but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly. All the days of the oppressed are wretched, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.*
  - (1) God's +H in the right lobe makes for a cheerful face, a marvelous life, and animation. But the spirit is broken when the heart is sad, down, or complaining.
  - (2) But the *spirit is broken* meaning the heart is sad, down, or complaining when you do not have the Word in your right lobe.
  - (3) *The heart of the intelligent seeks knowledge*, means that your motivation for learning more Bible doctrine comes from the Bible doctrine you already have in your right lobe.
  - (4) Eventually your motivation for learning more doctrine comes from the doctrine you already have in your right lobe.
  - (5) *The mouth of a fool feeds on folly* refers to the believer or unbeliever who fills his heart with false doctrine.
  - (6) *The continual feast* means continuous circulation of Bible doctrine in the heart with never ending supply and sustenance.
- 3) 2Cor. 6:11-12 *O you Corinthians, our mouth has been opened face to face with you [in teaching], because our hearts [right lobes] have been enlarged [by maximum doctrine in the right lobe of the soul]. Therefore, you have not been hindered by us [in your spiritual life]; you have been hindered by your own emotions [= bowels in the Greek].* (translation probably R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
  - (1) The Corinthians had receptive comprehension but no retention.
  - (2) Notice that emotions and heart are in contrast in this passage. Therefore, emotions are not a part of the function of the right lobe of the soul.

- (3) You have may have made the mistake of arguing with a liberal and then quoted some bit of information, survey, scientific study, etc. Then, you wonder why you have not won the argument. They hear this in their left lobe (the mind), but, whatever consideration is given it still rejects the information due to the emotions controlling the soul. Therefore, it is never transferred over to the right lobe. The heart never accepts that information because they do not believe it. They may say, "Well, you heard that on Fox News" (which they may call *Faux News*); or they may say, "You can make a scientific survey (or poll, or whatever) say anything." Their emotional understanding of the topic at hand prevents them from believing what you say. This is the problem of the Corinthians when hearing doctrine taught by Paul. Paul presented the absolute truth to them, but they rejected this truth because it did not line up with their thinking that was controlled by their emotions.

9. **The heart is related to perception and thinking.**

- 1) The heart is related to perception of Bible doctrine. Deut. 29:4 "Yet to this day the Lord has not given you a heart to know."
- 2) The heart is related to thinking in terms of reversionism in Psalm 10:6, 11, 13 reveals the human viewpoint thinking of the reversionist related to the heart. He says in his heart, "I shall not be moved to all generations, I shall not be in adversity." He says in his heart, "God has forgotten me, He has hidden His face from me. He will never see it. Why has the wicked [believer] spurned God?" He has said in his heart, "You will not hold me responsible."
- 3) The thinking of the atheist is related to the heart. Psalm 14:1 The fool has thought in his heart, "There is no God."
- 4) The heart is related to rationalizing mental attitudes. The rationalizing **maladjustment to the justice of God** is found in Isa. 47:10 "And you felt secure in your evil, and you said to yourself, 'No one sees me.' Your evil wisdom and your human viewpoint knowledge has deluded you, for you have thought in your heart, 'I am, and there is no one as good as I am.'"
- 5) False teachers communicate false doctrine from the deceit of their heart. Jer. 14:14
- 6) The heart is the place where people think they are superior to others. Luke 9:46-47 **Now a controversy entered among them as to which of the disciples was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the thinking in their hearts...**
- 7) The heart is used for meditation on Bible doctrine. Luke 2:19 **But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.**

10. **Negative Functions of the Heart or Right Lobe.** We have primarily studied the heart as related to the growth of a believer. However, that is not always the way *heart* is used. The *heart* is the right lobe for the souls of unbelievers and reversionistic believers as well.

- 1) The heart can reject Bible teaching, as in Prov. 5:12-14. The heart negative to Bible doctrine refuses to concentrate. When you don't like what you hear,

then you are unteachable and a candidate for reversionism. How I have hated instruction of doctrine, and my heart has spurned reproof, and I have not listened to the voice of my teacher nor inclined my ear to the instructor. I almost came to ruin in the middle of the assembly of the congregation.

- 2) When doctrine (or, *establishment truth*, in the case of the unbeliever) is rejected, then there is a vacuum which sucks in that which is false. When this is the case, *the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked*. (Jer. 17:9)
- 3) Negative volition toward the standards of God, will result in a man's thinking being filled with sin. Matt. 15:15–20 *But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us." And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."*
- 4) The heart is the source of discord and troublemaking, which leads to strife and conspiracy. Prov. 6:14, 18 *The one who by distortion or perversity in his heart devises evil continually, he is the one who is the spreader of strife. A heart that devises wicked conspiracy, feet run rapidly to evil.* (Translation probably by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
- 5) The woman uses heart thinking to entice the male for personal gain without love.
  - (1) The heart of the prostitute is subtle. Prov. 7:10 *And behold a woman comes to meet him dressed magnificently like a prostitute and very cunning of heart.* (Translation probably by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
  - (2) Eccles. 7:26 *I have discovered more bitter than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and in her hands she has chains. However, the person who is pleasing God [doctrine in the right lobe] will escape from her. But the sinning one [arrogant male] will be captured by her.* (Translation probably by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
  - (3) A woman can often do a lot of thinking, but it's not objective, doctrinal, professional or academic thinking; it is thinking used to bring attention to herself in whatever way she wants attention. This is thinking in terms of "snares and nets", and in her hands she has chains. She will be very flattering and conniving, and once she catches you by your arrogance, your arrogance will chain you to her.
  - (4) One thing that will destroy wisdom, I.Q., and ability to look at life from the divine viewpoint is the dumb arrogant male succumbing to the flattery of a woman, using him for her own advancement or pleasure.
- 6) The heart suffers disappointment from broken promises, Prov. 13:12. The heart is the source of frustrations. Frustration is a thought. *Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is a tree of life.*
- 7) The heart is the environment for mental attitude sins.
  - (1) 2Sam. 6:16 *Now when it came to pass that the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, then Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out the window and she saw David dancing before the Lord; consequently*

- she despised him in her heart. You hate and love in your right lobe. Both love and hate are a system and function of thinking.
- (2) Prov. 14:10 **The heart knows its own bitterness.** Bitterness is one of the greatest of all sins of arrogance. It infiltrates the right lobe and neutralizes whatever doctrine is there. **And a stranger does not share its joy.**
  - (3) Sorrow and disappointment (Prov. 14:13).
  - (4) Pride (Prov. 21:4; Obad. 3).
  - (5) Arrogance is found in Prov. 21:4 **Haughty eyes and an arrogant heart, the lamp of the wicked is sin.** In other words, once you have arrogance in your right lobe, whatever its manifestation, this becomes your lamp for life and it sets aside all doctrine.
  - (6) In Obad. 3, arrogance deceives you and causes you to make a fool of yourself. **The arrogance of your heart has deceived you.**
  - (7) Worry is found in Eccles. 2:23.
  - (8) Deceitfulness is found in Jer. 17:9 **The heart is more deceitful than anything else and becomes a source of desperate wickedness.**
  - (9) Women use the heart to trap men (Eccl. 7:26).
  - 8) The **frantic search for happiness** is related to the heart in Eccles. 1:13.
  - 9) Revolution and insubordination are described as being a part of the thinking of the heart. 2Sam. 15:6 **So Absalom stole away the hearts of the men of Israel.** Jer. 5:23 **But this people have a stubborn and a rebellious heart. They have turned aside and departed from Me.** See also Ezek 6:9.
  - 10) Hypocrisy is related to thinking in the heart, for you can think one thing and express another thing overtly. Psalm 55:21 **His speech was smoother than butter, but his heart was at war with me. His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords, ready to stab me.**
  - 11) Superficial gaiety doesn't indicate the true state of the individual's heart or right lobe. Prov. 14:13 **Even in times of laughter, the heart may be in pain, and the end of the party may be grief.**
  - 12) Reversionism is described in terms of the heart, Jer. 17:5 **So says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who depends on mankind and makes flesh his strength. His heart has turned away from the Lord [negative volition to Bible doctrine]."** Jer. 17:9 **The heart is more deceitful than anything else and becomes a source of desperate wickedness.**
  - 13) The heart related to negative thinking:
    - (1) Thinking of reversionism (Psalm 10:6, 11, 13).
    - (2) Thinking of atheism (Psalm 14:1).
    - (3) Rationalization of education (Eccles. 1:13-18).
    - (4) Rationalization of mental attitude sins (Isa. 47:10).
    - (5) Communication of false teachers from the deceit of their hearts (Jer. 14:14).
    - (6) Meditation on doctrine (Luke 2:19).
    - (7) Ambitious thinking (Luke 9:46, 47).
    - (8) Reversionism in the heart results in national disaster (Deut. 28:47-48).

- (9) Revenge is a malfunction of the heart (Prov. 24:1, 2 Ezek. 25:15-17).
- (10) The heart is related to psychosis (Isa. 13:7, 8).
- (11) Mental attitude sins relate the old sin nature to the heart (Psalm 66:18 101:5 Prov. 6:18 Matt. 12:35 15:18, 19 Luke 6:45 24:25).
- 14) So the heart is related to any kind of failure in life. In other words, the real you is what you think. Your life is not what others see overtly, though it may reflect good or bad thoughts, right or wrong priorities.

A more complete **Doctrine of the Heart** (which is 40 pages long) is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

## Lesson 311: Genesis 27:41

## The Doctrine of Emotional Revolt

We have been studying Isaac and Jacob and Esau; and Jacob has stolen Esau's end-of-life blessing from their father Isaac. Esau is so upset with this, he is comforting himself with the fantasy of killing Jacob. [Now Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him, and Esau said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are approaching; then I will kill my brother Jacob."](#) (Genesis 27:41; ESV) Not only does he incessantly think about this, but he talks about it as well, to the point where, even their mother Rebecca hears about it. Esau is allowing his emotions to dominate his soul. He is in *emotional revolt of the soul*.

How Esau feels cannot be changed by anyone but him. If he acts on this basis of his hatred against Jacob, then Jacob can only respond with a greater force. My guess is, based upon the fact that Esau is an outdoors man and Jacob is a man of the tents, that Esau is stronger and more fit than Jacob.

**Application:** There are foolish people who believe that they can establish some kind of a lasting peace between modern-day Israel and the Palestinians. That cannot occur. The people of Palestine suffer from *emotional revolt* in their souls. The only peace that they will agree to is peace that will allow them to rearm in order to prepare for war again. Their rage remains, and you cannot reason with rage. You cannot bring rage to a peace accord. You can control rage with one thing only—a greater force.

**Application:** Some people think that the bitterness between Jews and Palestinians goes back many centuries. Wrong! There have been periods of time when there was relative peace between the peoples; and there have been Palestinians who live in peace in Israel throughout the history of the new Israel since inception. Hatred and emotional revolt of the soul come from the teaching of one generation to the next; and the acceptance of the new generation of the hatred which they are taught. Every individual with hatred in his soul develops and nurtures that hatred on their own (although many have been taught this way from their youth).

Our study has taken us to the Doctrine of Hatred, the Doctrine of Emotions, the Doctrine of the Heart; and these doctrines lead us to study:



## The Emotional Revolt of the Soul

1. The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt: who can know it? I, Yahweh, search the mind, I try the heart, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings. (Jer. 17:9–10; WEB)
  - 1) The *heart* is the thinking of the soul. In the English language, we have a close relationship between emotions and the word *heart*. That is not how it is used in the Greek and Hebrew. Just as the heart is grand central station for your blood, and your blood goes throughout your body and nourishes your entire system; so the thinking of the soul oversees everything else in one's mentality. This thinking can be controlled by the human spirit and doctrine in the soul, or it can be controlled by the sin nature, the distorter of the soul.
  - 2) The word translated *deceitful* is 'âqôb (בִּקְעָב) [pronounced *gaw-KOHB'*], which means *deceitful, sly, insidious; slippery; foot-tracked; steep, hilly*. Strong's #6121 BDB #784. When this word is used in Isa. 40:4, it refers to the uneven grade of a hill. It is a road that is hard to travel along, because it is going up and down, and because there are potholes and such. That is your life being controlled by your emotion. In the KJV, the word is translated *polluted, slippery* in Hosea 6:8 (*Gilead is a city of those who work iniquity, slippery with blood marks*.—Green's literal translation), the idea being, everywhere you looked in that city, there was blood. So there is a control factor and a saturation factor in this word. When the heart (the thinking part of the soul) is controlled by emotion, it is like traveling along an uneven, pock-marked road. It is saturated with emotion, meaning that the emotions are in control. That is *emotional revolt*.
  - 3) Above, the heart is also described as *exceedingly corrupt*, which is the Qal passive participle of the Hebrew verb 'ânash (אָנַשׁ) [pronounced *aw-NASH*], which means *being weak (sick, frail); being incurable; being desperate or incurable, being desperately wicked, woeful, being very sick (metaphorically)*. Strong's #605 BDB #60. When controlled by emotion, the heart is *weak, incurable, desperate, desperately wicked*.
  - 4) God is able to look into our souls and evaluate our thinking and our motivations. He is able to accurately remunerate us according to our works.
  - 5) For both believers out of fellowship (and who are controlled by the sin nature) and unbelievers, they can allow their thinking to be controlled by their emotions. That is *emotional revolt of the soul*.
2. The soul has an essence; the soul can be defined. It is not this ethereal thing that we do not understand or cannot define. The soul is composed of self-consciousness (that is, you aware of your own existence), faith (the primary way that we perceive information), mentality (which includes your vocabulary your memory, your ability to reason, your ability to interpret what you sense), volition, emotion, conscience (which includes your frame of reference and your norms and standards). The soul is the real you, which is housed within your physical body. No matter how attractive you are on the outside, when someone gets to know



## The Emotional Revolt of the Soul

your soul, they might find you to be repellant (or, vice versa). Every man has known this exquisitely beautiful woman, and has thought, "I wish she would not speak." When she speaks, she reveals her soul; and her soul might not be nearly as attractive as she is physically. Whereas, some women can be capable of exhibiting great empathy (I think greater than most men); there are those women whose world revolves around them, and they think about nothing other than themselves. Those are the women whom you just wish would never speak.

3. The soul has two lobes: the perceptive lobe (sometimes called the *mind*) and the dominant lobe (often called the *heart*). There is a parallel to the body. We breathe and we eat food. This is taken into our bodies and distributed throughout our bodies, ideally making us healthy or functioning to maintain our health. This stuff from the outside is taken in and becomes a part of us. That which we perceive from the outside comes in (through the perceptive lobe), is evaluated, and becomes a part of our thinking (if we believe it, then it takes up residence in our dominant lobe). R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the perceptive lobe the left lobe and the dominant lobe the right lobe.
4. Just as when you eat junk, it pollutes your body; the same thing occurs with what is taken into your left lobe. If all you do is take in junk, then that becomes a part of your thinking. Prov. 23:7a **For as he thinks inside himself, so he is** (UPDV). Or, **...for as he thinks in his heart, so is he...** (MKJV) What you think is the real you. The word here is not actually *heart*, but it is *nephesh* (נֶפֶשׁ) [pronounced *NEH-fesh*], which means, *soul, life, living being; breath; mind; desire, volition; will*. Strong's #5315 BDB #659. What you think in your *soul* is the real you. The soul includes what you take in (your perception of what is around you) and then what you do with that. Furthermore, what you think is a matter of your volition; you choose what you take into your soul.
5. Another characteristic of the soul is volition. This means that you are capable of making decisions, and you are responsible for these decisions. Furthermore, it is your volition which chooses who and what you believe.
6. The soul also has emotions. We will be examining the emotions in this study.
7. Every soul, since the fall of Adam, has an old sin nature, or the Adamic nature, designated in Scripture by the terms *flesh* (Rom. 8:3–4) and *old self* (Eph. 4:22). The sin nature has an area of weakness which produces personal sins, an area of strength which produces human good, morality and sentiment, a lust pattern, and trends toward asceticism and/or lasciviousness. It is the distorter of the soul.
8. The believer (not the unbeliever) also has a human spirit, in which spiritual information is stored. Accurate information finds its way into the human spirit, and, ideally speaking, we allow our lives to be controlled by this information. This is truth and this is the truth that sets us free. The first bit of truth stored in the human spirit is the gospel. When we believe in Jesus Christ, then, ideally speaking, we build upon Him. **According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.** (1Cor. 3:10–11; NASB)

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- Obviously, some believers never build upon that because they do not pursue the truth.
9. The believer can be controlled by the sin nature or by the Holy Spirit working through the human spirit. When we sin, we are under the control of the sin nature. When we name our sins to God, we are under the control of the Holy Spirit.
  10. If you are controlled by the sin nature, that does not mean that you go sin-crazy and begin committing every sin that you can think of. That is true for some; but most believers adhere to certain moral standards, whether controlled by the Holy Spirit or by the sin nature. You can be very moral and still controlled by your sin nature.
  11. When controlled by the sin nature, we simply imitate the unbeliever (1Cor. 3:3 Eph. 2:3). Not all unbelievers are out of control with sin. We have historical examples of unbelievers being out of control with their sin (the civilization before the flood; the people of Sodom); and we have contemporary examples as well (those who are addicted to drugs; many [homosexuals](#); the radical elements of Islam—today, those who are in [ISIS](#)). However, there are also moral unbelievers, and most believers out of fellowship imitate the moral unbeliever. In fact, many believers, spend most of their lives out of fellowship, yet they adhere to a set of moral standards (partially learned in church and partially learned when growing up). As Paul said to the Corinthians, **Do you not walk as men?** (1Cor. 3:3b)
  12. The right lobe (or the heart) has many components: a frame of reference, memory center, vocabulary storage, categorical storage, conscience, momentum, and wisdom. All people—believers and unbelievers, moral and immoral have a heart.
  13. The right lobe is the place where you store your attitude toward country, toward life, toward your job, etc. When you began to think, you began to develop norms and standards. You have norms and standards about what is right and wrong, what things are proper, and so on. Some of your norms and standards may be compatible with God's and some may not. Truth (that is, Bible doctrine) provides us with information whereby you can develop God's norms and standards.
  14. Our soul has a viewpoint --- it is human viewpoint or God's viewpoint; or a mix of both. Your viewpoint on life and on right and wrong, is a combination of what you have in your frame of reference plus your norms and standards (conscience). You have a viewpoint about everything in life—art, music, sports, country, God, church, to name a few. Your viewpoint determines your attitude toward life and your capacity for life.
  15. In order for the believer to think like God thinks and to see things as God sees them, he needs to have divine viewpoint. Divine viewpoint comes from the teaching of truth and believing that truth. 1Cor. 2:16 **"For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.** (ESV; Isa. 40:13). The Apostles *have* the mind of Christ; that is what they were teaching the early church; they taught the early church the thinking of Jesus Christ. Paul could say that he and the other Apostles had the mind of Christ

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- because they were filled with divine viewpoint and the communicated that viewpoint.
16. Let's return to the deceitful heart of Jer 17:10: A "deceitful heart" is the right lobe of the mentality filled up with mental attitude sins from the old sin nature. The mental attitude sins travel in the soul — from the sin nature to the right lobe. The deceitful factor is that mental attitude sins completely deceive you in your relationship with God. You are kidding yourself if you think that you have fellowship with God when you are involved in mental attitude sins (Isa. 55:7). The worst sinning in the world never gets outside the soul, though obviously the repercussions do. You can be jealous and bitter and yearn for revenge (this describes Esau in our study). Revenge becomes overt when you malign or gossip or when you attempt to harm the person you are angry with; but the mental attitude sin itself doesn't leave the soul — apart from rebound (1John 1:9—naming your sins to God), of course.
17. "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind..." (Jer. 17:10) These two verbs, "search" and "test" are actually participles in the Hebrew text, and denote continuous action. In this case, there is never a time when God isn't constantly searching the thinking—if it is human false reality; or God's Reality; thinking as He thinks—in order to provide maximum companionship and blessing (Job 7:17–18). The primary meaning of "search" means "to explore." God is an Explorer. In eternity past God explored every right lobe; therefore, He knew how each one would operate. Because He is the Explorer of your soul. He provided salvation for your soul through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross (2Thess. 2:13).
- 1) Note that the exploration site is said to be the "heart." This means that God is exploring the thinking of your right lobe in three areas: first, the frame of reference with its memory center; is being explored to see whether you have God's frame of reference.
  - 2) Secondly, God explores your conscience to determine whether your norms and standards are compatible with His absolute norms and standards. Having God's absolute norms and standards rather than human norms and standards is also known as **Human Viewpoint Versus Divine Viewpoint** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
  - 3) Therefore, your viewpoint is searched by God. Does your right lobe contain the necessary Divine Thinking that will give you a Divine Viewpoint about everything in life? **But when that One comes, the Spirit of Truth, He will guide you into all Truth, for He will not speak from Himself, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will announce the coming things to you.** (John 16:13, Green's literal translation)
18. How do you fill your right lobe with God's thinking and reality? Truth is communicated by a pastor-teacher through, isagogical, categorical, exegetical teaching ([ICE teaching](#)). It then enters the left (perceptive) lobe as a staging area. From there it must be transferred *by faith* to the human spirit. It is then cycled into the seven areas of the right lobe. With a maximum amount of

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"tested" truth and time filled with God the Holy Spirit—your heart is not only non-deceitful, but *it will be blameless*. See Acts 24:16 Eph. 1:4 Philip. 2:15 2Peter 3:14. Paul had to learn truth and build an edification complex, (ECS; or the temple in the soul). See the **edification complex structure** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

19. Once Paul had doctrine in his soul, then he could communicate absolute truth. The more truth he knew, the more he was able to teach. Thus his right lobe was enlarged or increased with knowledge of truth. Our right lobes are increased in the same way, and the result is spiritual maturity through an edification complex structure.
20. Emotions are designed to enjoy life; but they are not designed to control your life.
21. Emotional control: the Christian soul should be filled with the Holy Spirit, which means operating under the control of the Holy Spirit. When a person sins, the filling of the Holy Spirit is lost and the emotion may rise up to fill the void. The emotion has no allegiance. It has no thought content. It amplifies the good, the bad, and the ugly. It energizes the lust, sin, and greed of the old sin nature. It welcomes the evil and darkness of the cosmic system, and it greets Satan and his demons.
22. The emotion is only held in check when the soul is covered. The heart must be covered by faith—not thinking about faith in the mentality, but faith that has been believed. Emotion is tied to beliefs—not thoughts. When Bible doctrine is believed, it is transferred to the right lobe, where it is understood spiritually. Knowledge (Greek gnosis) becomes spiritual understanding (epignosis). Epignosis becomes the building blocks for the edification complex of the soul. The faith that covers the heart is the edification complex of the soul. **"Whatever is not from faith is sin"** (Rom 14:23b).
23. Emotional Revolt of Soul:
  - 1) Thinking about fear is not a problem; but when fear is believed, it is a sin in the heart. The sin creates a hole in the covering of the heart through which the emotion erupts. The emotion amplifies the fear, and the adrenal glands pump out more adrenaline to exacerbate the crisis. The heart is overcome by emotion. Love and happiness are lost and fear takes over. The heart is like a ship with a hole in it. As it sinks, it takes the mentality down with it. The mentality falls into darkness. The soul is enslaved to sin. It becomes irrational and stupid (Psalm 73:21-22).
  - 2) The flooding of the Heart with emotion following the breakdown of authority in the soul is called emotional revolt of the soul. Sin breaks down the authority and integrity of the soul. Sin has affinity for the cosmic system, the old sin nature, and the emotion. Sin opens the door for emotional revolt of the soul.
  - 3) Hardness of the heart (a.k.a., scar tissue of the soul, Eph 4:19) sets the stage for emotional revolt of the soul by blocking the relationship with God. God's love, light, and grace are rejected. The heart is left in darkness with a hole in the covering, and with affinity to the old sin nature and to the

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- cosmic system (John 3:19 Rom 1:21 Eph 4:18). Therefore, the heart responds to the sin nature (Jer 17:9). The emotion amplifies the response to the sin nature. The heart fills with emotion, and the mentality with darkness. The person walks (operates) in darkness (reversionism, carnality) (John 3:20 Eph 5:11 2 Pet 2:20).
- 4) God's Thinking should dominate the soul; but when the emotions revolt and start to dominate, the entire system is thrown out of kilter. For example, the heart should initiate viewpoints such as, patriotism, laws of divine establishment and divine institutions; but when the emotions are dictating, you have cowardice, support for gay marriage, socialism and even revolution. God's thoughts should initiate virtue-love; but when the emotions revolt, then jealousy, lust, fear, worry, bitterness and implacability come into play.
  - 5) The heart with truth in the frame of reference initiates to the emotions and they respond with appreciation for truth, for who and what Christ is, for what God has given us; but when the emotions revolt and become the initiators, people get into the tongues movement, the "new age" movement, legalism, and many other weird activities where the emphasis is on how you *feel* rather than on thinking with truth. This is emotional revolt of the soul!
  - 6) The more apostate Christianity becomes, the more emphasis there is on emotional activities — the emotions dictating to the right lobe. As a result we have people singing "Just as I am, was or hope to be" around a campfire, dedicating and rededicating, trying to get "the rosy glow" through some emotional experience. God wants us to get the greatest thing in the world; capacity for life, death, adversity, prosperity, love and happiness; but that capacity comes from truth, not from the emotions!
24. When we sin and get out of fellowship and quit thinking with God's reality, (singular = only one) the old sin nature sends out its mental attitude sins and realities, (plural = many) then the emotion takes those false thoughts and starts to dictate to the right lobe. What we have then, is: emotional revolt in the soul. This is a "deceitful heart"; THAT IS "desperately sick"! (Jer. 17:9) We are ALL born in this condition; and have to change our thinking (Rom. 3:10–12 6:17–18 12:2).

We have been studying several doctrines which are related to Esau's mental attitude sins driving him to a point where he wants to murder his twin brother Jacob.

We have mentioned the term reversionism on several occasions; particularly in the past two doctrines. Therefore, this ought to be defined.



*Reversionism* is a state of being as well as a set of actions where a believer reverts back to a former state, habit, belief, or practice of sinning. Reversionism is the status of the believer who fails to execute the plan of God for the Church Age. He returns to his pre-salvation *modus operandi* and *modus vivendi*. Reversionism can also refer to the unbeliever who once embraced the laws of divine establishment and now rejects it.

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1. **Reaction and distraction.** The believer goes negative toward the teaching of the Word of God. In reaction, something the pastor-teacher does or says throws you off, and you reject the teaching of Bible doctrine. You may be fine with the pastor's teaching of the Bible, but then he suddenly expresses some strong conservative viewpoint in the realm of politics, and that throws you off. Maybe he seems mean, and that causes you to react. You choose to reject his teaching for some reason which is not related to his teaching—you have figured out that you really don't like this guy (most people who attend church find it really important to like their pastor-teacher—liking your pastor ought to be a non-issue). You may catch him in a sin or doing something you don't think he should be doing (which action on his part may or may not be legitimate). Or he may say something that you do not yet believe. As a result, you react to what he does or to who he is. *Distraction* is a more subtle form of negative volition. Distraction from Bible doctrine can be caused by apathy, indifference, wrong priorities, and the arrogance complex of sins. So your pastor does not necessarily do anything; you are simply distracted from the teaching of the Word of God. Something else caught your attention and became the priority (your work, a member of the opposite sex, your family, your social life).
  - 1) Rom 12:2-3 **Stop being conformed to this world** [peer pressure; thinking as the world thinks], **but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, that you may prove what the will of God is; namely, the good of intrinsic value achievement** [advance to spiritual maturity], **the well-pleasing to God, the mature status quo** [manufacture of invisible hero]. For I say through the grace which has been given to me to every one who is among you, **stop thinking of self in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity [absolute truth] for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.**
  - 2) 1Tim. 4:1 **But the same Holy Spirit explicitly communicates that in latter periods of time** [between first and Second Advents of Christ], **some believers will become apostate from doctrine, paying attention to deceitful spirits and concentrating [instead] on doctrines of demons.**
  - 3) 1Tim. 6:3-4 **If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not concur with sound doctrine, even doctrines pertaining to godliness, he has received arrogance, understanding nothing. Furthermore, he has a morbid obsession about controversies and verbal conflicts from which originate jealousy, discord, evil speculation.** These translations have essentially originated from R. B. Thieme, Jr.



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2. **Frantic search for happiness.** When you reject doctrine, then you have to replace it with something else. A *frantic search for happiness* does not mean that you give yourself over to lasciviousness. You may simply find another church where the pastor is nicer or does not express political opinions or appears to be much more loving. But if this pastor does not teach Bible doctrine, then you no longer grow spiritually. You are trying to find happiness where there is none. The believer in Jesus Christ can also go down a path of lasciviousness as well—which can include wine, women and song; or whatever. You may even try to find happiness in the realm of cuisine. So, on the outside, you don't appear to be a lot different, but on the inside, you are searching for happiness apart from the intake of Bible doctrine.
  - 1) Prosperity, success, power, approbation, status symbols, money, sex, pleasure, social life, or material things are really not a source of happiness. They are enjoyed by people with capacity for happiness and life, but they are a distraction to believers without capacity for life and love from doctrine.
  - 2) The only true source of happiness for the believer in Jesus Christ is metabolized doctrine in the soul, which develops +H in the soul (+H is God's happiness in you as a result of knowing the Word of God).
  - 3) Heb. 13:5 *Let your lifestyle be free from the love for money; be content with what you have, for He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'*
  - 4) 1Tim. 6:6-7 *But godliness is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment [+H]. For we brought nothing into this world, with the result that we can take nothing out of it. And if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content.*
  - 5) Philip. 4:11 *Not that we speak on the basis of want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am.*
  - 6) Rom. 16:17–18 *Now I urge you fellow members of the family of God, be alert for those who are causing dissensions and apostasies [false, reversionistic teaching] contrary to Bible doctrine which you have learned, for such believers do not obey our Lord Jesus Christ, but they obey their own personal desires, serving themselves; and by smooth and flattering speech [the manipulation of others], they deceive the right lobes of the stupid [reversionists]. Also ultimately R. B. Thieme, Jr. translations.*
  - 7) The frantic search for happiness follows the trends of the sin nature in polarized [fragmentation](#).
    - (1) The trend toward legalism results in moral degeneracy and no happiness.
    - (2) The trend toward antinomianism results in immoral degeneracy and no happiness.
    - (3) The trend toward legalism includes crusader activism, self-righteous arrogance, personality arrogance, the arrogance of Christian service, irrational (emotional) arrogance, the arrogance of

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- unhappiness (subjective preoccupation with self), iconoclastic arrogance (role model arrogance, the feet of clay syndrome), so-called "victorious living," the arrogance of asceticism, using Christian service as a means of spirituality.
- (4) The trend toward antinomianism is related to multifarious sexual sins, drug addiction, violence, criminality, total self-indulgence, or debauchery.
  - (5) Others seek their happiness in a false emphasis on experience, the so-called "victorious life commitment," holy rollers speaking in tongues, fundamentalist flagellation and self-denial, or in giving gimmicks like tithing for blessing.
3. **Operation boomerang.** The boomerang, an Australian weapon used by the aborigines of Australia, is a missile-type weapon, shaped like an elbow. When thrown with accuracy, it can hit the target and kill the animal on the spot. But if they miss, the boomerang comes back to them so they can try again.
- 1) Christians who miss the target and fail to execute the plan of God experience the boomerang effect of the frantic search for happiness.
  - 2) In this stage, the frantic search for happiness boomerangs and returns to the believer in reversionism, intensifying the original reactor factors and his unhappiness, so that the believer loses control of his life.
  - 3) When the frantic search for happiness boomerangs, frustration becomes greater frustration, misery becomes greater misery, and unhappiness becomes intensified unhappiness.
  - 4) Every search for happiness makes happiness more elusive. Therefore, the believer is bored, disillusioned, frustrated, and miserable—and unhappy.
  - 5) Pleasure, social and sexual distractions, and drug addiction only intensifies his problem in life. The same intensification of problems occurs with the distractions of the morally degenerate believer. All these only remove the believer farther away from happiness.
  - 6) So the pursuit of happiness results in bad decisions from a position of weakness, and intensifies the unhappiness of the believer. This results in intensified frustration.
  - 7) So operation boomerang means loss of control of your life and the intensification of fragmentation and reversionism.
4. **Emotional revolt of the soul** (which is what we have been studying).
- 1) The mentality is the male part of the soul. Emotion is the female part of the soul. God's design is the mentality dominate the soul, including the emotion. But when the emotion dominates the soul and takes over, the person becomes irrational and cannot think.
  - 2) Emotion has no doctrinal content, no mentality, no rationality, and no virtue. Emotion is in its proper place only when it is under the control of the mentality of the soul, where doctrine resides.
  - 3) As an appreciator, emotion is wonderful. But as the controller, emotion is a monster. Emotion takes control of the soul by controlling the soul.

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- 4) In the spiritual life of the believer, emotion is designed to respond to metabolized doctrine in the right lobe. But once emotion revolts, it becomes the aggressor and loses all normal function, becoming distorted.
  - 5) 2Cor. 6:11–12 **O you Corinthians! Our mouths** [which is the communication of Bible doctrine by Paul, Apollos, and Timothy] **have been opened face to face with you; our right lobes have been enlarged** [we were prepared]. **Therefore, you have not been hindered by us** [Paul, Apollos, Timothy], **but you have been hindered by your own emotions.** Translation by R. B. Thieme, Jr.
5. **Persistent and nearly permanent negative volition.** As a result of the reactor factors, the frantic search for happiness, operation boomerang, and an emotional revolt of the soul, the believer suffers loss of Biblical priorities, Biblical norms, and Biblical standards resulting in bad decisions from a position of weakness. This means the believer loses control of his life and a personal sense of destiny (if the believer ever had it). The believer can no longer be distinguished from an unbeliever.
- 1) So stage five is the malfunction of post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation. It is the beginning of Christian degeneracy.
  - 2) Negative volition toward doctrine means that the believer can never understand God's will, plan, and purpose for his life. Therefore, he cannot grow spiritually. As a result, all his works are dead works and human good, totally unacceptable to God. He is operating in the energy of the flesh rather than in the power of God the Holy Spirit.
  - 3) The believer in stage five has lost complete control of his life. He has replaced any doctrine he ever had with false doctrine and human viewpoint. In his thinking, he cannot be distinguished from his unbeliever counterpart.
  - 4) This does not mean that the believer is on some kind of a sin-tirade. Very moral believers can suffer from persistent negative volition. A huge number of believers think that human morality is the spiritual life. They have a set of standards which they conform to, and to them, they are living the spiritual life.
  - 5) 1Cor. 3:1–3 **Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as spiritual people but as people of the flesh, as babies in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food, because you were not yet able to receive it. In fact, you are still not able, because you are still fleshly. For since there is envy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and living like ordinary people?** (HCSB) You are fleshly because (1) you are *not* filled with the Holy Spirit and (2) your thinking is not Bible doctrine. This leads to...
6. **Blackout of the soul.** When the soul rejects doctrine, and has turned from God (such a believer might still attend a church), then his soul becomes a vacuum which sucks in false doctrine, human viewpoint, the thinking of the cosmic system.
- 1) Eph. 4:17 **Therefore, I communicate this, and because of the Lord, I insist**

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- that you no longer walk as Gentiles [unbelievers] walk in the vacuum of their mind. (Translation by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
- 2) Through this vacuum comes the doctrine of demons, including religionism (man seeks God, man impresses God, man works for God's approbation), liberalism, crusader arrogance, and anti-establishment thinking. 1Tim. 4:1.
  - 3) The false doctrine passing through the vacuum of the soul is called demon influence (or doctrines of demons), or being influenced by evil. This is not the same as demon possession. The believer cannot be demon possessed because he is indwelt by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But demon influence comes through false teaching. The believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit whether he's in or out of fellowship. So although the believer cannot be demon possessed, he is vulnerable to demon influence which comes from permanent negative volition, stage six of reversionism.
  - 4) 1John 1:6 **If we contend that we have fellowship with Him and we keep on walking in darkness, we are lying and we do not live the truth.** John is writing to believers. He is not talking about unbelievers walking in darkness; he is talking about believers walking in darkness.
  - 5) 1John 2:11 **When anyone hates his fellow believer, he is in darkness and he walks in darkness, and he does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.**
  - 6) In order for the believer to have light, he needs two things: the filling of the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine in his soul (which must ultimately come from an outside source—the accurate teaching of a pastor-teacher). The believer walking in darkness lacks the Holy Spirit and he either lacks doctrine in his soul or he has rejected the Bible doctrine which he has heard.
  - 7) As an aside, you get little or no spiritual growth from reading your Bible. You grow by placing yourself under the authority of God's man, who is a pastor-teacher. Authority is very much a part of the plan of God.
7. **Scar tissue of the soul.** Scar tissue of the soul is prolonged residence in the [cosmic system](#). It is prolonged [fragmentation](#) unchecked. It is a reaction to any form of accurate Bible teaching, and strong reaction to those who communicate accurately the mystery doctrine of the Church Age.
- 1) This is tantamount to freezing the valves of the heart or right lobe, so that there is no more circulation of doctrine in the frame of reference, memory center, vocabulary storage, categorical storage, conscience, momentum department, wisdom department, and subconscious mind. In other words, divine viewpoint is no longer circulating throughout the soul, providing us day-to-day guidance. Sometimes an air conditioning system will stop functioning correctly because the coils will become covered in dirt and dust—so there is no longer the proper circulation of air. In other words, your AC has scar tissue of the coils.
  - 2) The Scripture calls scar tissue of the soul "hardness of heart," "hardening

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- of the neck," or "hardening of the face.
- 3) "Hardening the heart" is found in John 14:20; and the emphasis is on one's thinking. "Hardening the neck" is found in Neh. 9:16-18; and the emphasis is upon one's volition. The believer becomes insubordinate to God's plan to the point of revolt. It is failure to be authority oriented in spiritual things (Jer 7:25-27). "Hardening the face" is found in Prov. 21:29-31.
  - 4) Eph. 4:18 *They are darkened in their way of thinking; they have been alienated from the life of God because of ignorance which is in them, because of the scar tissue of their right lobes.*
  - 5) 2Thess. 2:10-12 *And with every deception of evil for those who perish [unbelievers], because they did not receive the love for the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason, God sends to them a deluding influence so that they might believe a lie, in order that they all might be condemned in judgment who do not believe the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness.* (Translation by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)
8. **Reverse process reversionism.** This is the final stage of reversionism, a combination of the sixth and seventh stages.
- 1) Everything that is worthwhile and valuable in life is rejected; everything that is useless and nonsensical is accepted. Prolonged residence in the [cosmic system](#) causes a complete reversal of all mandates, all priorities, and all norms and standards related to the plan of God.
  - 2) Christian degeneracy reaches its peak in reverse process reversionism. The believer in reverse process reversionism cannot be distinguished in any way from an unbeliever, although he cannot lose his salvation. 1Cor. 3:1
  - 3) In reverse process reversionism, degeneracy is defined as decline from the normal standards of the plan of God. Therefore, the believer retrogresses into below normal stages of reversionism, and totally reverts from the divine standards found in the Word of God.
  - 4) This is described in the Bible as the *dog returning to his vomit*. The believer learned, either through the laws of divine establishment or through Bible doctrine to believe A but to reject B. However, in reverse process reversionism, the believer first rejects A (some divine truth) and then he takes another look at B (which he was right to reject), and he changes his mind about it. These can be theological matters related to the plan of God; or these can be matters related to the laws of divine establishment. For instance, the believer might walk into a church when everyone is speaking in tongues and think, "This is crazy; I am getting out of here." But, under reverse process reversionism, he goes back to that church (or to a similar one) and accepts speaking in tongues as a legitimate gift of the Spirit. A person originally recognizes that the food stamp program (and most systems of welfare) are evil; but, in reverse process reversionism, decides that the government is not giving enough assistance in the realm

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- of food and other welfare programs.
- 5) 1John 2:15-16 **Stop loving the cosmic system or anything related to it. If anyone keeps loving the cosmic system, the love of the Father [personal love for God, spiritual self-esteem] is not in Him. Because all that is in the cosmos [cosmic one], the lust of the flesh [the old sin nature controlling soul], and the lust of the eyes [motivational arrogance], and the arrogant pattern of life [functional arrogance], is not from the Father but from the cosmos.**
  - 6) Rev. 2:4-5 **But I hold this against you [believers], for you have abandoned your first love. Therefore, recall to mind from where you have fallen, and change your mind [rebound], and execute the most important production [execution of the plan of God]. Otherwise, I am coming to you, and I will remove your lamp stand [dying discipline].** (translation by R. B. Thieme, Jr.)

From the [Dictionary of Doctrine](#), accessed August 19, 2014; from the [Dictionary of Doctrine](#) accessed August 5, 2014, both of which were originally written by R. B. Thieme, Jr. The steps of reversionism come from [Grace Bible Notes](#), which goes into much greater detail and is an excellent follow-up study. Accessed September 30, 2014. Also some information was gleaned from [Bible News 1](#), accessed August 5, 2014.

### Lesson 313: Genesis 27:41–46 26:34–35

### Rebekah's Cover Story

This is where we last left off in our exegetical study of Genesis 27: Jacob has stolen from Esau the end-of-life blessing spoken by Isaac at the urging of their mother, Rebekah. Their father gives this end-of-life blessing (even though Isaac will actually not die for a long time) to Jacob, thinking that he is blessing Esau. When Esau finds out, then he is filled with hatred and rage toward his brother Jacob. His soul is controlled by the emotion of hatred.

**Genesis 27:41** And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had 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."

Because of the hatred in his heart, Esau now fantasizes about killing his brother Jacob. When his father dies (and everyone expects that to occur relatively soon), then Esau will kill Jacob. And then he not only relishes this fantasy within his own soul, but he shares this fantasy with anyone who will listen. Because he shares this fantasy of fratricide, his mother hears about it, and seeks to save her favorite son, Jacob.

It was Esau's emotion of hatred and his fantasy of killing Jacob, that took us off on a doctrinal detour for 4 lessons.



**Genesis 27:42** And these words of her older son Esau were told to Rebekah. And she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, “Listen, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you.

Esau spends so much time talking about his desire to kill Jacob, that their mother, Rebekah, finally hears about it, and she speaks to Jacob and warns him.

Esau is not simply thinking about killing Jacob; he is thinking of all the ways that he might kill Jacob. He is developing plans by which this might be done. These thoughts give him so much pleasure that he is sharing them with others. So his heart is filled with hatred and thoughts of revenge.

**Genesis 27:43–44** And now, my son, obey my voice and arise. Flee for yourself to my brother Laban, to Haran, and stay with him a few days until your brother's fury turns away,...

Rebekah tells her son Isaac to flee to the east, and to go to live with her brother Laban who lives in Haran (Charan). *A few days* appears to be euphemistic for a long time—it will take a *few days* to get anywhere near the border of the Land of Promise. Quite obviously, Rebekah did not want to lose her son for many years, so she speaks of this time as being just a few days. However, she will never see him again. Rebekah’s plot to steal the final blessing from Isaac was a serious mistake for both her and Jacob (Jacob is an adult male, so he has no excuse for his actions). This plan of Rebekah’s will result in her never being able to see her favorite son again.

Rebekah favored Jacob and she helped him plot to take Isaac’s end-of-life blessing meant for Esau. Neither of them really thought this through, and did not realize just how angry Esau would become.

We know in retrospect that such blessings from God as spoken by a man of God are not completely from the soul of the man of God, but often emanate from the Holy Spirit speaking through the man. Deception was not necessary; God has everything under control.

There is an extreme example of this in Num. 22–24, where a prophet of God was hired by the King of Moab to curse Israel, but he ended up blessing Israel instead. These cursings and blessings have meaning, and God overrules the intentions of man when it is necessary.

Therefore, we know that, when Isaac blesses Jacob, it will be the correct blessing, no matter what. However, what happened here is somewhat of a mess. All of these people are in the plan of God, and yet they have managed to screw everything up. Isaac and Rebekah are both playing favorites; and therefore, their sons are pitted against one another. Jacob believes that it is necessary to deceive his own father; and Esau believes that it is necessary to kill his own brother. God is able to take such family dysfunction and work it out to His Own glory.

Genesis 27:43–44 [Rebekah is speaking to Jacob]: “And now, my son, obey my voice and arise. Flee for yourself to my brother Laban, to Haran, and stay with him a few days until your brother’s fury subsides,...

Since Jacob is heir to the promise, we might think that God would step in at this point, and say, “No, Jacob, you are in the Land of Promise right now; this is the land I am giving you. You should not leave it.” But God does not do that. God wants the biggest con-man west of Charan to meet his uncle Laban, the greatest con-man of their extended family. God wants Jacob to come face to face with someone who behaves just as he does; and to (ideally speaking) make judgments about his own behavior based upon the actions of his Uncle Laban. Jacob needs to know what it is like to have someone you trust lie and deceive you; and use your own good intentions in order to manipulate you.

Jacob and his mother pulled a *switcheroo* for this blessing; and not too far in the future, Leah and her father (Rebekah’s brother Laban) will pull a *switcheroo* on Jacob. We will find out that deception is both a family trait and an art form for Rebekah’s side of the family.

Genesis 27:45 ...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 also be bereaved of both of you in one day?”

Rebekah speaks of losing Esau and losing Jacob. If Esau killed Jacob, then Esau would either flee for his own life; or he would be executed for killing another man. Either way, Rebekah would lose both of her sons. With the few words that Rebekah has said, it is not clear whether she realizes that Esau will wait for the death of his father before killing Jacob. However, at this point in time, Isaac was not expected to live very long.

Now, let’s go back one chapter and read:

Gen. 26:34–35 When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah. (ESV)

There are times that we have this or that passage (like the one above), and it is difficult to determine, why is this passage here? What does this have to do with my own spiritual advance? What do I get out of this?

First of all, not everything is about you. Secondly, this passage is integral to our exegesis. There is a problem which has plagued Isaac and Rebekah’s family for some time, and that is, the wives of Esau. We know nothing about these women individually except that they made life bitter of Isaac and Rebekah. So, even though Isaac favors Esau, he still has problems with the wives of Esau. We do not know the exact nature of these problems.

In v. 35, we have the 3<sup>rd</sup> person feminine plural, Qal imperfect of *hâyâh* (הָיָה) [pronounced *haw-YAW*], which usually means *to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to*

come to pass. Strong's #1961 BDB #224. This tells us that the wives of Esau initiate the action of the verb. Sometimes the verb *to be* can mean *to have*. What these two women *have* or *are* is, the feminine singular construct of *môrâh* (מֶרָם) [pronounced *moh-RAW*], which means *bitterness, grief, sadness*. This is the noun cognate for a verb which means *to rebel, to resist, to oppose; to be bitter*. Strong's #4786 BDB #601. This is affixed to the feminine singular noun *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], which means, *wind, breath, spirit, apparition*. Strong's #7307 BDB #924. So these women *are* (or, *these women have; or, these women exhibit*) **a bitterness of spirit toward Isaac and Rebekah**.

If you know anything about in-laws, you know that they come in all categories. Some in-laws just blend right into the family and they become a part of your family. Some in-laws are not very close and have to be coaxed into family affairs. Some in-laws are stand-offish, and, although they may not exhibit any sort of overt hostility, they avoid all family gatherings. They have headaches, other engagements, work-conflicts; and they can never seem to be a part of the family, even though, in person, they do not appear to want to avoid the family. But then, there are those who are actively hostile to their new family. They look down on this new set of family members; and at family get-togethers, they may start fights, arguments; they might get exceedingly drunk; they may show up high. When they are at a family gathering, they manage to turn a festive gathering into a series of hostile and antagonistic confrontations. This latter description probably applies to the wives of Esau. They were opening hostile toward Isaac and Rebekah. We don't know how, but my guess is, they disparaged their faith in the Revealed God. They either rejected the idea of God, or, to them, every sort of deity was the same. Maybe they were good at pointing out shortcomings and deficiencies in this family. Such things were abundant in Isaac and Rebekah's family.

If a person clearly declares that he believes in the Revealed God, that is not something that they can just let go. Have you ever been with a childhood friend, and they know that you believe in Jesus Christ, and they pepper their speech with various profanities (quite obviously, I have). They use the royal name of *Jesus Christ* as an exclamation; they use *God* in a trivial way, using His essence title to damn this or that. Then they look at you, just to see how you react. Whatever these wives of Esau did, it was to establish a wall of bitter separation between themselves and Isaac and Rebecca.

Now we will see just how deceptive Rebekah can be. She will mix in truth with lies; so that she is never associated with the stolen blessing incident.

**Genesis 27:46** 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 of the daughters of the land, what good is my life to me?"

Rebekah describes to Isaac how she feels. She uses the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular, Qal perfect of *qûwts* (קִוֵּץ) [pronounced *koots*], which means *to loath, to abhor [due to an undercurrent of dread], to feel a sickening dread; to be weary*. Strong's #6973 BDB #880. She then uses the *bêyth* preposition, which means *in*; followed by the masculine plural adjective (which is used as a substantive here) *chayyîym* (חַיִּים) [pronounced *khay-YEEM*], which

means, *life, lives; a life of long duration, immortality; living, sustenance; refreshment; prosperity, welfare, happiness*. Strong's #2416 BDB #311. “I am weary of my life;” or, “I abhor my life;” or “I feel a sickening dread in my life” and this weariness is based upon these *daughters of Heth* (that is, these Hittite women). These women are a bitterness of spirit to Isaac and Rebekah, to the point where Rebekah is *weary of or sickened of* her own life.

This is not coming out of nowhere. Rebekah is not saying this, and Isaac says, “Now, how long have you felt like this?” He knows all about it. It was mentioned in the previous chapter, indicating that this is an ongoing problem in their family.

Now, let's try to put all of this dysfunction together.

### Dysfunction in the Family of Isaac

1. Jacob has deceived his father Isaac, and Rebekah, Jacob's mother, orchestrated this deception; but Esau and Isaac don't know that Rebekah is in on it. Obviously, they know that Jacob deceived Isaac.
2. Rebekah knows about the deception, since she initiated it, and she knows about Esau's murderous hatred because he has been telling his homicidal fantasies to everyone—therefore, she must get Jacob away from the family compound.
3. In order to save Jacob's life, he must be moved to a different locale, and maybe for a significant period of time.
4. However, moving Jacob away cannot be tied directly to Jacob's deception of his father, or Rebekah would be implicated in the whole affair. She cannot say, “Esau wants to kill Jacob; so Jacob is going to leave town for awhile.” If she says that, then that means that she knows all about the stolen blessing—and there is no reason for her to know about it (except that she caused it).
5. If Rebekah is implicated in this scheme, then her son Esau will hate her and Isaac, her husband, will never trust her again. That was not a part of her plan.
6. Therefore, in order to send Jacob away, Rebekah needs a *cover story*. Despite the size of their compound, there is every indication that Isaac spoke to Jacob and Esau privately; that this was not a well-attended ceremony, but a one-on-one meeting (with Rebekah in the background). We know this because, when Jacob presented himself as Esau, no one spoke up saying, “Hey, Isaac, that's not Esau; that's his twin brother. Don't be fooled.”
7. While all this was going on, Rebekah would have been hovering in the background, providing the food and probably listening in; but no one else was there when Isaac blessed Jacob. Jacob knows that Rebekah is there, but Isaac does not and Esau does not.
8. Esau has no idea that his own mother plotted against him. Therefore, this is a private family affair; and only Jacob knows that Rebekah, his mother, encouraged him to deceive his father.
9. The reason that Rebekah needs a cover story is, she will live with Isaac for the rest of their days. She cannot have him know that she was a part of this deception. If she starts talking about Esau wanting to kill Jacob, her involvement

## Dysfunction in the Family of Isaac

in this situation might all come out. It is better that she seem as if she knows nothing about this latest problem between the two brothers. Yet, she needs to get Jacob out of there.

10. Fortuitously, she has the perfect excuse to remove Jacob without implicating herself in all of this deception: Esau married these heathen women that Rebekah cannot get along with; and she does not want her son Jacob to do the same thing. So what could seem more logical than to send Jacob back east to meet those of his own tribe to marry? After all, he is about 40–45 at this time. So it is about time that he got married.

Although Rebekah will pull this off, she will never see her son Jacob again.

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 27:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Isaac has very little of his life recorded. Even here, the narrative is much more about Jacob and Esau than it is about Isaac (even though he plays a prominent part in the narrative).

Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Esau are all prominent in this chapter, so it is difficult to determine who presented it originally. I see this as Jacob's story, primarily, even though it makes him look bad.

Isaac and Rebekah are the parents of twin sons Esau and Jacob. Isaac has preferred the company of Esau for most of his life, and Rebekah has favored Jacob. Isaac chooses whom to bless, and he will choose to bless Esau as the firstborn and as his favorite son.

Genesis 27:1 And it came to be, when Yitshaq [= Isaac] was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called Ėsaw [= Esau] his elder son and said to him, “My son.” And he answered him, “Here I am.”

As you may recall, Esau was the firstborn son (they are twins) and Isaac clearly prefers Esau’s company. He apparently taught Esau how to hunt (or has simply been the beneficiary of many hunting trips).

Genesis 27:2 And he said, “See now, I am old, I do not know the day of my death.

Isaac recognizes that he is growing old and that he has no idea how long he might live. So he believes that it is time to bless his son Esau for his end-of-life blessing (Isaac’s end-of-life). Isaac is going to live a much longer life. He will die at the age of 180 in Genesis 35:27–29. Both of his sons will bury him.

Genesis 27:3 “Now then, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt wild game for me.

Isaac does not simply bless Esau. He chooses to flood the zone with legalism. If he is going to bless his son—the son whom he certainly loves—then he wants a benefit for himself. He wants a tasty dish of wild game.

This is not grace. Had his son suggested this—that he would go out and kill some fresh game and they would share it—that would not violate the concept of grace. But for Isaac to suggest this up front is wrong.

Genesis 27:4 “And make me a tasty dish, such as I love, and bring it to me to eat, in order that my being does bless you before I die.”

Isaac wants some fresh game killed and made into a tasty dish. “You go out and get the wild game, kill it and prepare it for me; then I will give you a blessing.”

Genesis 27:5 And Ribqah [= Rebekah] heard when Yitshaq spoke to Ėsaw his son. And Ėsaw went to the field to hunt wild game and to bring it.

Rebekah, the mother, overhears what Isaac is planning (or perhaps a servant tells her). Isaac wants Esau to go out hunting and bring back some fresh game, after which, he will bless Esau. Rebekah knows that now it is the time to act, and she has a plot developed in her mind.

Genesis 27:6 And Ribqah spoke to Ya'aqob [= Jacob] her son, saying, “See, I heard your father speak to Ėsaw your brother, saying,



Rebekah goes to her favorite son, Jacob, and tells him what his father plans to do.

Genesis 27:7 'Bring me wild game and make me a tasty dish to eat, and bless you in the presence of הויה before my death.'

Isaac told Esau to bring him a fresh dish of wild game. Rebekah tells this to Jacob, to indicate that they have a very limited amount of time during which to act.

Rebekah has a plan. Jacob had no plan.

Genesis 27:8 "And now my son, listen to my voice according to what I command you.

Rebekah then tells Jacob what he is to do. It will be Rebekah's plan to have Isaac steal this blessing.

Why is Rebekah such a busybody? Why would she do this? Two reasons, at least: (1) she favors Jacob and Jacob favors her; and (2) Rebekah is at odds with Esau's wives (Genesis 26:34–35 27:46). If Esau receives all of the blessings, where will this leave Rebekah? His wives would work against her all of the time, and Esau, like any man, might not even notice it.

Genesis 27:9 "Please go to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, and I make a tasty dish from them for your father, such as he loves.

"Here's the plan," Rebekah tells her favorite son: "First select two choice young goats and I will make the meal that your father wants." She is going to make this meat taste like wild game.

Genesis 27:10 "And you shall take it to your father, and he shall eat it, so that he might bless you before his death."

"Part 2 of my plan," Rebekah continues, "is you will take this food to your father and he will bless you."

Genesis 27:11 And Ya'aqob [= Jacob] said to Ribqah [= Rebekah] his mother, "See, Ĕsau [= Esau] my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man.

Jacob understands what his mother is telling him to do. He is going to pretend to be Esau. But there is the problem that Esau is a very hairy man while Jacob is not. No doubt, Isaac will reach out to touch his son to make certain he is speaking to the right one.

Genesis 27:12 "What if my father touches me? Then I shall be like a deceiver in his eyes, and shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing."

"If my father touches me," Isaac warns, "then he will know I am not Esau and he will curse me as a result."

Genesis 27:13 But his mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son. Only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.”

“Don’t worry about it. Just do what I tell you to do.”

Genesis 27:14 And he went and fetched them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made a tasty dish, such as his father loved.

Rebekah sees to the cooking of these two goats. She seasons them to taste like wild game.

Genesis 27:15 And Ribqah took the best garments of her elder son Ėsau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Ya’aqob her younger son.

Rebekah is going to dress Jacob in Esau’s clothing. His clothes will smell like the out-of-doors.

Genesis 27:16 And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.

First thing that she does with the goats is to clip them and then to skin them. She will take a thin piece of goat skin for Jacob’s neck and what will amount to gloves as well. There will be some goat hair in this goat skin.

Rebekah is careful to use really thin sheets of skin and puts this skin on Isaac’s neck and hands. If this skin is thin enough, the natural warmth of Jacob’s body will seep through.

Genesis 27:17 Then she gave the tasty dish and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Ya’aqob.

Rebekah gives the prepared dish to Jacob. Jacob is dressed in Esau’s clothing so that he smells like Esau. He has a very thin goat skin on his neck and hands which will make him seem hairy. He has food prepared to taste like wild game.

Genesis 27:18 And he went to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?”

Jacob goes to his father with the food, and the skin is on his neck and hands. Isaac is confused. He expects Esau, but he is not sure which son is before him.

Genesis 27:19 And Ya’aqob said to his father, “I am Ėsau your first-born, I have done as you said to me. Please rise, sit and eat of my wild game, so that your being might bless me.”

Jacob lies and claims to be Esau. He presents the lamb made by his mother as if this is the wild game that he killed.

Genesis 27:20 But Yitshaq said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because יהוה your Elohim brought it to me.”

Isaac asks how was he able to find and kill the game so quickly, and Jacob lies and said that God brought it to him. God has nothing to do with this narrative.

Genesis 27:21 Then Yitshaq [= Isaac] said to Ya'aqob [= Jacob], “Please come near, so that I feel you, my son, whether you truly are my son Ėsaw or not.”

Isaac is still suspicious so he calls Jacob to come closer to him. Isaac voices aloud his own concerns.

Genesis 27:22 And Ya'aqob went near to Yitshaq his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is the voice of Ya'aqob, but the hands are the hands of Ėsaw.”

Isaac, who can barely see, observes, “Your hands are hairy like Esau’s, but you sound like Jacob.”

Genesis 27:23 And he did not recognise him, for his hands were hairy like his brother Ėsaw’s hands, and he blessed him.

Isaac gives in. Most of the evidence which he is able to perceive indicates that he is speaking to Esau. Therefore, Isaac blesses this son Jacob, thinking that he is Esau.

Genesis 27:24 And he said, “Are you truly my son Ėsaw?” And he said, “I am.”

Isaac asks directly, “Are you truly my son, Esau?” Again, Jacob lies and tells him that he is.

Genesis 27:25 And he said, “Bring it near to me, and let me eat of my son’s wild game, so that my being might bless you.” So he brought it near to him, and he ate. And he brought him wine, and he drank.

Isaac asks for the wild game to be brought near, which Jacob did, along with some wine.

Genesis 27:26 And his father Yitshaq said to him, “Please come near and kiss me, my son.”

Isaac is still not convinced. He asks for Jacob to kiss him.

Genesis 27:27 And he came near and kissed him. And he smelled the smell of his garments, and blessed him and said, “See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which יהוה has blessed.

Jacob kisses him, and Isaac takes note of the smell of the clothing that he is wearing. It has the smell of an open field.

Genesis 27:28 And Elohim give you of the dew of the heavens, of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of grain and wine.

This is the actual blessing which Isaac gives to Jacob, thinking that he is Esau. He asks for there to be rain for this son, meaning that whatever he plants will be prospered. Isaac asks for him to be blessed from all the earth has to offer, by way of food and wine.

Genesis 27:29 Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be master over your brothers, and let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those cursing you, and blessed be those blessing you!"

Isaac calls for Jacob to be master over his brothers, which suggests that there may be more in the family than just these four. Isaac also repeats the blessing which God first gave to Abraham. "[May God] Bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you."

Genesis 27:30 And it came to be, as soon as Yitshaq had finished blessing Ya'aqob, and Ya'aqob had hardly left the presence of Yitshaq his father, that Ĕsaw his brother came in from his hunting.

Just after Jacob leaves, having been blessed by his father, and then Esau shows up. Esau has enjoyed a successful hunt and he had this dish made up for his father.

Genesis 27:31 And he too had made a tasty dish and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father rise and eat of his son's wild game, so that your being might bless me."

Esau has made a tasty dish from his wild game. He brings it to his father, that they might eat it together and that his father might bless him.

Genesis 27:32 And his father Yitshaq said to him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am your son, your first-born, Ĕsaw."

Isaac is thrown off balance. "Who are you?" he asks, and Esau tells him. As far as Isaac is concerned, he has already eaten wild game with his son Esau, and given him a blessing. It will dawn on Isaac that he had actually done this with Jacob.

Genesis 27:33 Then Yitshaq trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who was it then who hunted wild game and brought it to me? And I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him. Yes, he is blessed."

Isaac trembles because he is coming to the conclusion that he has blessed the wrong son.

Genesis 27:34 When Ĕsaw heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me, me too, O my father!"

Esau starts crying and calling for Isaac to bless him as well. Bear in mind, all the sons of Isaac are called to be subservient to Jacob, based upon the blessing given him. Isaac cannot change this, or his blessings mean nothing.

Genesis 27:35 And he said, “Your brother came with deceit and took your blessing.”

Isaac tells Jacob what happened. Your brother came and stole your blessing!

Genesis 27:36 And Ěsaw said, “Was his name, then, called Ya‘aqob? For he has caught me by the heel these two times. He took my birthright, and see, now he has taken my blessing!” And he said, “Have you not reserved a blessing for me?”

Esau is very upset, to the point of being pitiful.

Genesis 27:37 Then Yitřaq answered and said to Ěsaw, “See, I have made him your master, and all his brothers I have given to him as servants. And I have sustained him with grain and wine. And what, then, shall I do for you, my son?”

“Listen,” Isaac says, “I made him your master. You and your brothers are given to him as servants. God will provide him with grain and wine. What can I possibly do for you?”

Genesis 27:38 And Ěsaw said to his father, “Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me, me too, O my father!” And Ěsaw lifted up his voice and wept.

Esau is so upset that he is crying. He cannot believe this turn of events. His sorrow will turn to anger.

Genesis 27:39 And Yitřaq his father answered and said to him, “See, your dwelling is of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of the heavens from above.

Isaac gives Esau a much weaker blessing, but a blessing nonetheless.

Genesis 27:40 And by your sword you are to live, and serve your brother. And it shall be, when you grow restless, that you shall break his yoke from your neck.”

He says that, as Esau (and his tribe) become restless, that they may break the yoke that Jacob has with them. That is, Esau would establish himself and his family as a separate tribe.

Genesis 27:41 And Ěsaw hated Ya‘aqob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Ěsaw said in his heart, “The days of mourning for my father draw near, then I am going to kill my brother Ya‘aqob.”

Esau is filled with mental attitude sins toward Jacob. He threatens to kill him.

Genesis 27:42 And the words of Ĕsaw her older son were reported to Ribqah, and she sent and called Ya'aqob her younger son, and said to him, "See, your brother Ĕsaw comforts himself concerning you, to kill you.

Rebekah hears about these words from a third party, and warns Jacob.

Genesis 27:43 "And now, my son, listen to my voice, and rise, flee to my brother Laban in Haran.

Rebekah advises Jacob some more. "You need to get out of here. You need to go to my brother Laban in Haran." As the old saying goes, *you need to get out of Dodge!*

Genesis 27:44–45 "And stay with him a few days, until your brother's wrath turns away, until your brother's displeasure turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him. And I shall send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?"

Although Rebekah says, "Stay with him for a few days," I think it is clear to all involved that this is going to go on for years. She promises to contact him and give him the all-clear. She does not want to lose both sons on the same day.

Genesis 27:46 And Ribqah said to Yitshaq, "I am disgusted with my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Ya'aqob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what is my life to me?"

Rebekah continues to be upset with Esau's wives. We do not know the circumstance, but let me suggest that this is a massive cultural difference.

Now that we have nearly completed our study, allow me to repeat the preface statement: Genesis 27 is all about the words that Isaac will say as a blessing at the end of his life. 4 people—Isaac, Jacob, Esau and Rebekah—all have their own ideas how this should all go, each one of them acting from the selfish motivation of his (or her) sin nature. God's purposes, which are much greater than their family dysfunction, will come to pass, even while allowing each person to express his own free will.

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**Lesson 314: Genesis 27:42–45 28:1–4****Isaac Blesses Jacob for Real**

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**Genesis 28 Prologue:**

Although Genesis 28 is a literary unit in itself, it is dependent upon the previous chapter to understand all that is going on. In the previous chapter, Jacob stole the final blessing that his father Isaac meant for Esau, and this caused Esau to be mad enough to kill Jacob. Rebekah, their mother, was in on this deception, but did not want anyone else to know this. So she had to get Jacob out of town, but without seeming as if she was saving him from



Esau. There is no reason for her to know about this dispute between Jacob and Esau; because it all took place in private. Despite the fact that Isaac was quite wealthy and had many men under him, when he blessed Jacob (thinking him to be Esau), they were alone (except that Rebekah was in the background all this time).

Because Rebekah instigated all this, the worst case scenario is, Jacob her husband hates her, if he finds out; and Esau, her son, kills Jacob and hates her as well. Through her own manipulation, Rebekah has set herself up for great potential harm. Therefore, she must get her son, Jacob, out of town so that Esau does not kill him, but without associating any of this with the stolen blessing.

Gen. 27:42–45 **But the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah [where Esau has expressed a great desire to kill Jacob]. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son and said to him, "Behold, your brother Esau comforts himself about you by planning to kill you. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice. Arise, flee to Laban my brother in Haran and stay with him a while, 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 bereft of you both in one day?"** (ESV)

Rebekah needs to get Jacob away from the family compound in order to preserve his life. She herself orchestrated his great deception of Isaac, and now, there is fallout that she was not expecting. The son who was deceived, Esau, wants to kill Jacob. She knows this, but her husband Isaac does not; and she cannot reveal that she knows this to him without revealing that she was a party to the deception—something which would have destroyed their marriage. However, she has come up with another plan.

Gen 27:46 **Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I loathe my life because of the Hittite women. If Jacob marries one of the Hittite women like these, one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me?"**

When you become older and your children are grown, you want your name, your traditions, your faith carried on—which is particularly important in this case as these are the very promises of God. Rebekah does not see any of this happening with Esau and his family because of the women he has married. This is a real problem for Rebekah, not something that she is just making up.

Clearly, Isaac does not know that Rebekah was in on this deception. He knows that he was deceived, but he does not know that Rebekah was behind it. Rather than tell Isaac, "Look, I persuaded Jacob to deceive you; and now, he has left the compound because Esau wants to kill him." Instead, she says, "I cannot stand my daughters-in-law. Jacob is going to get a good woman from Charan. I am going to send him to my brother's home." Then, suddenly, Jacob is gone and therefore he is safe from Esau.

Isaac does not know that Esau has threatened to kill Jacob; and Rebekah knows, but really should not know. She has simply kept her ear to the ground, so to speak, to know this.

Rebekah speaks to Isaac and tells him what is going on; so Isaac will send his son Jacob away. Essentially, Rebekah says, "Listen, Isaac, I do not want Jacob to marry heathen women like his brother Esau has. That would be awful! I am going to send him to my brother's ranch so that he can meet a decent woman from my brother's family. That way, he will not marry some Hittite hussy."

So, the cover story is, Esau married Hittite women, which both Isaac and Rebekah object to; and therefore, at this age, Jacob needs to go back east and marry a woman whose God is the LORD. All of this is legitimate; all of this is known to Isaac; so sending Jacob from the land of promise to Haran to marry a near relative is acceptable and understandable. Rebekah, Isaac's wife, came from Haran and from this family. Therefore, Isaac would agree to this departure and he would not associate this with Jacob's deception.

Esau married two Hittite women, which apparently were the bane of Rebekah's existence. She is tired of living simply because of her daughters-in-law, which is a strong indictment of them. We are not told exactly what the problem is with Esau's wives, apart from these wives being heathen. Going back one more chapter, we have Gen 26:34–35 [When Esau was 40 years old, he took as his wives Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. They made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.](#) That verse tells us that Rebekah's complaint did not come out of nowhere. She is not suddenly springing this on Isaac, "You know, I cannot stand Esau's wives." "No, honey, I did not know that!" This is already well-known and documented.

The plan is for Jacob should take a wife from the family of Laban. What the problem is exactly, is never told to us; but I would guess that these Hittite women never accepted the God of Abraham and Isaac. They do not believe in this Revealed God; and they might even make fun of Isaac and Rebekah for their faith. Even though Abraham was instructed to leave his family behind, that does not mean that he comes from a heathen family or that his family did not trust in Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim. God simply needed for him to separate from his family—and there could be a variety of reasons for that.

So, the cover story is, "Jacob is taking off for Charan, because I want him to get a decent wife." This is what Rebekah tells Isaac, and this is fine with Isaac. Isaac also has problems with Esau's wives. This approach will get Jacob away from Esau, who would have possibly killed him, and Rebekah is never implicated in the great deception.

[Gen 27:45b](#) Then I will send and bring you from there.

The fact that Rebekah is confident that she can send a message to Jacob when he is 100+ miles away indicates that there has probably been some communication between the families over these past few decades. For her to say this indicates that communication between families did take place; and likely were sent along with traders who were going to cover this or that route. This all suggests that they have knowledge of the genealogies of their family to the east.

There is another simple principle at work here—*out of sight and out of mind*. If every day, Esau looks and there is Jacob—that lousy SOB who stole his birthright and then his blessing—Esau would continue to seethe with anger. However, with Jacob gone and out of the picture completely, this is something that Esau will adjust to. At some point, his animosity will subside and disappear completely. He cannot be jealous and angry at someone who is not there.

So, despite the deception, Isaac calls for Jacob to send him away. As the head of the family, it would be Isaac's responsibility to call Jacob in and tell him to do this, and then send him away.

**Genesis 28:1** And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and commanded him. And he said to him, "You will not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

When Isaac makes this pronouncement, all of it appears to be his idea. No doubt Isaac will tell Esau this at a later time. He won't tell Esau, "Your mother had this great idea about getting Jacob a wife from our relatives;" he will say, "I have sent your brother Jacob to get a wife from our relatives." So, when this decision is made, it is going to appear as if Isaac made the decision, even though it is actually Rebekah trying to save her son Jacob from her other son Esau.

Esau and Jacob are the same age. Esau married around or before turning 40. However, here, it is clear that Jacob has not yet married, and Rebekah has convinced Isaac that he should not marry a woman of Canaan. There were many different groups of people who lived in Canaan, but the key was, they did not participate in Y<sup>e</sup>howah worship (although, as we have studied, there were believers in Y<sup>e</sup>howah throughout Canaan—and some because of Abraham).

Bear in mind that this is a cover story, to separate Jacob and Esau, so that Esau does not kill him—but there is a real concern here as well. For a plan that had to be developed on the fly, this is actually quite brilliant. Even Isaac and Esau will both think that the decision for Jacob to leave is Isaac's decision. Rebekah barely leaves a fingerprint behind.

As an aside, I am not really certain that their relatives from the east were involved in Y<sup>e</sup>howah worship either, at this point in time. Later in Genesis, we will find out that some of them have little *deity statues* (Genesis 31:19–35 35:1–5). So the worship of heathen gods was widespread among them. This might explain why God wanted Abraham to separate from his immediate family (Genesis 12:1).

Isaac continues to speak to his son Jacob.

**Genesis 28:2** Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father. And take a wife from there of the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Interestingly enough, although a servant went to the east to select a wife for Isaac, Isaac has told Jacob to do this personally. Perhaps it is this new generation that Jacob

represents, where he himself chooses his wife. Whether there is influence from Rebekah here or not, we don't know. "We shouldn't leave choosing a wife up to a servant. Jacob needs to do this on his own." I am speculating on discussion that may have taken place between Isaac and Rebekah.

As we have observed, Rebekah and Jacob both tend to be rather deceptive and manipulative. It is likely that Jacob gets this from his mother. This will turn out to be a family trait. Laban, Rebekah's brother, will also turn out to be deceptive and manipulative. He will try to get things to work out to his own benefit. No matter what the circumstance or situation, Laban will figure out how to make that work to his own profit, and then he will move things in that direction. He is the kind of businessman who believes that, he needs to win every deal, he needs to come out on top every time—and if things are not working out for him, cheating and conning are legitimate. This is the man to whom Isaac is sending Jacob. Con-man Jacob will be sent to his Uncle Laban, who is even a greater con-man.

Now, Isaac will give Jacob a legitimate blessing, where Isaac knows that this is Jacob, and he knows that Jacob may be gone for awhile. Isaac has no idea if he will see his son again.

**Genesis 28:3** And may God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, so that you may be a multitude of peoples.

Despite all that has happened and despite the sinful characteristics which Jacob has revealed of himself, Isaac apparently recognizes that the blessing of God will go to Jacob and not to Esau. This represents a great change in Isaac's attitude toward Jacob.

These blessings are very similar to prayers, and God hears these blessings as do those in the periphery of Isaac (which is possibly just Jacob and Rebekah). Furthermore, whatever angels are watching, they also hear these prayers. Therefore, God would make an effort to fulfill such blessings. We may think of these blessings as being innocuous statements like, "Have a good time" when someone goes on vacation, but they are more than that. God specifically is named; a man of God is saying this; and he is saying this to the one who is next in line to receive the blessings of God. Therefore, God will take these words seriously. God hears these blessings and He acts upon them. Part of the reason is, there is this great angelic audience for all human activity. The angels learn about God's character by observing us and how God interacts with us.

Let's go backward in time to illustrate this. When God created the heavens and the earth, it was instantaneous. Genesis 1:1 lines up with the Big Bang theory quite nicely. The Qal perfect tense refers to a completed event or to an instantaneous event. The Qal imperfect would be used for a series of event or for a process. **In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.** The verb is a Qal perfect. However, when God restores the earth, many of the verbs are imperfect, and the process occurs over a period of time (the 6 days of creation). Why didn't God simply snap His fingers and restore the earth? Because He had an audience at this point—all of angelic creation were now in existence, so God reveals His power and intelligence by the restoration of the earth.

Angels are created beings, and therefore, they have a beginning. When God tells them, “I created you for a purpose;” they either accept what God says as true or they doubt Him. Part of what indicates that God is Who He says He is, is the fact that He knows the future as if it were the present. Angels are subject to time and the sequencing of events, as are we.

So, these blessings which are given from generation to generation are done in front of an audience, even though there might only be 2 or 3 people actually involved. When Isaac blessed Jacob previously, no one else was there (except for Rebekah). Otherwise, someone would have blurted out, “That’s not Esau; that’s Jacob!” However, the audience was invisible, and they observe both the actions of man and the actions of God. God reveals His character as well as His great plan. God is able to bring His plan to fruition, despite the dysfunctions of this family.

We greatly enjoy movies and television shows (despite how distorted these things are as compared to real life). Human history is like that for angels. They are in the midst of a great morality play, as it were, with a cast of billions—observing. In many cases, God directs them to a particular place and time, just as we have been directed to studying the family of this semi-nomad Abraham.

There is no reason for you or I to know anything about Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These are obscure shepherds from 4000 years ago. However, we know these men because these are the men upon whom God wants us to focus. At this time, there are great power struggles in the east; there are a series of fascinating dynasties in Egypt—but God is concerned with Abraham and his seed. Therefore, we are concerned with him as well.

We know very little about the great events of history from this era. Who is in power and where? And over what plot of ground does he rule? There are countries and kings and wars and great struggles occurring all over this area, but our focus is upon this nomadic shepherd family and their impact upon history and upon the plan of God.

Just as God literally gathers the angels to this place and says, “Watch this;” so we have been gathered to view this line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and to study them and their relationship with God. We are to examine these lives because this is where God wants us to focus.

Isaac continues with his blessing to Jacob. This blessing is no longer marred by deception. Isaac knows who is before him; and his blessing is designed specifically for Jacob. And Jacob really is going away to the east to find a suitable wife.

**Genesis 28:4** And may He give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your seed with you, so that you may inherit the land in which you are a stranger, which God gave to Abraham.”

At this point, Isaac is giving Jacob a blessing where there is no duplicity. It is Jacob who stands before Isaac; and Isaac knows this.

Isaac is still speaking to Jacob, and he seems to understand, at this point, that the blessings promised to Abraham would flow through him to Jacob. So, at this point, there is no favoritism. Isaac knows who Jacob is, and he passes along the covenantal blessing of God to him. God's blessings will flow through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jacob is leaving the Land of Promise, but Isaac says that he and his seed would inherit this land—the land that God gave to Abraham.

### **Lesson 315: Genesis 28:1–9**

### **Esau takes another wife; Isaac blesses Jacob**

So far we have studied the first four verses of Genesis 28:

**Genesis 28:1–2** Isaac called for Jacob and he blessed him and gave him a stern command, saying, “Do you marry a Canaanite woman. Instead, rise up and go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel, your mother’s father, and take from the daughters of Laban a wife (Laban is your mother’s brother).

This all came about because Rebekah, Jacob’s mother, surreptitiously guided Jacob to deceive his father and receive the end-of-life blessing meant for Esau, Jacob’s twin brother. Esau became so angry over this, he wanted to kill Jacob. So Rebekah needed to get Jacob out of their periphery without revealing that she knew all about this. She would have lost the love and respect of both her husband Isaac (whom she had Jacob deceive) and her other son Esau.

Esau had married some Hittite women, and they were the bane of Rebekah’s existence. Isaac did not like them either. So Jacob was sent eastward to marry someone from their family, just as Isaac had done some 60 years previously. This plot would get Jacob out of town, but without compromising Rebekah’s involvement in the deception of Isaac.

**Genesis 28:3–4** And God the Almighty will bless you, make you fruitful and multiply you into a great assembly of peoples. He will give all of the blessings of Abraham to you and to your own descendants. All this ground which you have traveled on will be yours—just as God had promised to Abraham.”

This time, the blessing given to Abraham is passed down through Isaac to Jacob. This time, there is no deception. Isaac says these words with Jacob before him, knowing that this son is Jacob. Jacob would have many sons (in the Hebrew, this means *descendants*); God would make him fruitful and God will multiply his seed so that he would have many descendants. All of the land that Jacob has traveled over—and much more—is hereby deeded to him, from God to Abraham to Isaac and now to Jacob. It is his line that God will bless.

This is not at all what we would have expected. Jacob had just deceived his father Isaac, and one might think that Isaac would hold back on this blessing—but he does not. The very blessing that God gave to Abraham, Isaac now passes along to Jacob.



Was there a divine influence at this time? Probably. In the book of Numbers, Balaam is hired to curse Israel. God appears to override Balaam's original intent, and he blesses the children of Israel (all descendants of Jacob, by the way). Num. 24:1–9

Isaac may have simply realized that it is God's will to pass this blessing along to Jacob, and that is what he does.

**Genesis 28:5** And Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Padan-aram, to Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

With this, the active role of Isaac ends and the active role of Jacob begins. Although Isaac will be mentioned again, it will only be incidentally at the end of Genesis 35. Even though Isaac and Jacob are both alive at this point, our focus will now be upon Jacob.

Padan-aram is in the northeastern Mesopotamian area, and this is where a part of Abraham's family has lived for some time now.

God told Abraham to separate from his family and go to the land of Canaan. Well, Abraham did not separate from his family—he brought them with—and he only got halfway to Canaan. We don't know if everyone from Abraham's family traveled with him at this time, or whether they came later. In any case, when Abraham eventually went to the land of Canaan, a portion of his family remained in Padan-aram.



**Map of Padan-aram** is from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com) and accessed February 26, 2014. The area marked Mesopotamia is also known as the Fertile Crescent. It was at this point where Abraham had to leave the Euphrates River to travel eastward to Canaan, which is where God had originally sent him. Jacob is in southern Canaan and he will move northward through Syria toward Paddan Aram.

Because Bethuel has lived in this area for a long time, he is called a Syrian. Laban, Bethuel's son, is Rebekah's brother and Jacob's uncle. Many times in Scripture (and this fixes a great many so-called contradictions), people are referred to by the land where they live. I may be called a Texan by some and a Californian by others; however, I was not born in either state. Yet I feel a much greater affinity for Texas and California than I do for where I was born.

If a particular family is prominent in an area, then that area takes on the family name (Aram, Assyria, Canaan). But after the name has been clearly established, then other families who move to that area become associated with the name of that area.

V. 5 is again picked up by v. 10:

**Gen 28:5** Thus Isaac sent Jacob away. And he went to Paddan-aram, to Laban, the son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. (ESV)

**Gen 28:10** And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. (Green's literal translation)

vv. 6–9 deal with what Esau observes and what Esau does as a result. It would not be inaccurate to put parentheses around these 4 verses or to set them off in their own paragraph. Everything is framed by Esau's perception (*and Esau saw* in v. 6a and v. 8a; followed by *and Esau went* in v. 9a).

Although it is possible that Esau hears about this blessing later on, the text suggests that Esau observes the blessing as it occurs. As a result, he will be motivated to make a change in his life.

**Genesis 28:6** **And Esau saw** that Isaac had blessed Jacob and had sent him away to Padan-aram in order to take a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, "You will not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." (WEB; emphasis mine)

Isaac's blessing to Jacob was given in public and Esau observed it, recognizing that this blessing is given without coercion or deception. Jacob is also warned not to take a Canaanite woman for a wife, as Esau had done. Again, this is what Isaac believes this to be about. He is unaware that Esau wants to kill Jacob; and he does not realize that it is his wife who is getting Jacob out of town to save him.

Esau is either there, at this time, listening; or he will find out Jacob was sent east to find a proper wife; and therefore, Esau takes this to heart. He knows about Jacob being sent to find a wife—and this is because his parents have problems with his Hittite wives. As has been discussed, Isaac and Rebekah both showed favoritism toward Esau and Isaac, respectively; and this resulted in a great deal of sibling rivalry, competition and insecurity.

Esau will take all of this to heart. In the past couple days, Esau had been sent out to hunt for a deer, and he fully expect to enjoy a wonderful meal with his father and to receive the great blessing of Abraham. At this point, it is clear that this blessing will not be his. First, Isaac blessed Jacob because he had been deceived; but now Isaac blessed Jacob with his eyes fully opened, so to speak.

Esau hears that Jacob is being sent back east to take a wife from their family and Esau takes this to heart. He can not really obsess about killing Jacob, because Jacob is about to be gone—but this does cause Esau to become somewhat introspective. Esau knows that Isaac blessed Jacob in a unique way and without deception, so Esau will actually think about this and try to deal with it while Jacob is gone.

**Genesis 28:7** And Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and he went to Padan-aram.

Isaac and Rebekah did agree that Jacob should find a wife from their clan, and Jacob obeyed them. Now, bear in mind, Jacob is 40+ years old.

Jacob is leaving home for the first time, and this is the will of God, even though Jacob is obeying his parents and not God. God had not yet appeared to Jacob.

We will pick up with Jacob's trip in v. 10. We are still in the parenthetical portion, where this is what Esau is observing. Isaac obeys his parents and goes to Padan-aram.

**Genesis 28:8–9** And when Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac his father; then Esau went to Ishmael, and took Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to the wives which he had for his wife.

V. 8 begins exactly as v. 6 began: *and so Esau sees that...* In v. 8, Esau takes what he knows about his parents' feelings about his wives (or statements which they have made) and he adds this to Isaac being blessed with the blessing Esau believed was his and he adds to this that Jacob is being sent east to find a wife from their family, Esau draws the conclusion that *the daughters of Canaan did not please Isaac*.

Esau got moderately introspective and he realized that his parents strongly disapproved of his wives, he added another wife, a daughter of Ishmael. The blessing which Isaac gave to Jacob in the previous chapter—that was all based upon Jacob's deception so Esau felt only anger because of that. However, this time the blessing given by Isaac was significant and not based upon deception. This time the great blessing of Abraham is passed along to Jacob, and all of this is related to the fact that Isaac and Rebekah do not want Jacob to marry a Hittite woman. Esau decides to fix this problem with his parents by marrying someone from their tribe.

Now, recall that there is no animosity between half-brothers Isaac and Ishmael at this point in time. They consider one another to be family, as they are. Their mothers had differences because Abraham was the father of these two boys; and when Isaac and Ishmael were young, there was some animosity on the part of Ishmael. However, at this point in time, there are no ill feelings between the half-brothers. There was no reason for any anger to exist between them. They had gotten together for Abraham's funeral and it appears that things were patched up between them (as their mothers would have been dead by this time).

Esau marries Mahalath, whose name is actually Machälath (מַחֲלָת) [pronounced *mahkh-al-AHTH*], which means *stringed instrument* (quite a beautiful name). Strong's #4258 BDB #563.

Mahalath is said to be the sister of Nebaioth, who is the oldest of Ishmael's sons (Genesis 25:13). Nebaioth (also spelled *Nebajoth*) is likely the head of a famous people mentioned in Isa. 60:7. ISBE: *Josephus, followed by Jerome, regarded Nebaioth as identical with the*

*Nabateans, the great trading community and ally of Rome, whose capital and stronghold was Petra.*<sup>9</sup> ISBE qualifies this, suggesting that there are reasons to discount this widely held theory. Assuming this connection, Fausset goes into much greater detail about this people at [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com).

Esau has felt that Jacob has swindled him out of everything; but, at this point, Jacob is gone. Jacob gets this final blessing from Isaac, and it is given without any deception being involved. So he now realizes that his wives have not made life pleasant for his parents.

However, the line of promise goes through Jacob. Therefore, we will follow Jacob closely and Esau less so.

God's special promises to Abraham do not go through Ishmael or through Esau. This does not make either of these men evil. They likely believed in the Revealed God; but the covenant blessings of God to Abraham will not go to them. They will be blessed, and their family lines will be followed out briefly (we have seen some cluster genealogies of Ishmael; we will see cluster genealogies of Esau); but we will not view a linear genealogy of either man. Their lines are not going anywhere. Their lines will eventually produce the Arab peoples, who, in general, do not believe in the Revealed God; and who do not today believe in Jesus Christ (with brave and notable exceptions).

The illustration is, God's promises go to those who have believed in Him; and His greater blessing goes to those who follow His will (which can only be done if you know God's will and thinking).

## **Lesson 316: Genesis 28:10–12 Job 1:6–7**

## **Jacob's Dream**

Jacob has been given the blessing of Abraham from Isaac; and is now heading east to take a wife from his extended family.

**Genesis 28:10** And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran.

So Jacob is heading northeast for two reasons: to save himself from Esau and to find a wife. *To find a wife* was the cover story that Rebekah used to save Jacob from Esau; but this is a real consideration.

God has Jacob going east for two reasons as well: to realize that he does not better himself or his situation by being a con-man; and to find a wife, through whom his seed would be perpetuated. God blesses Jacob as one in the promised line. God blesses Jacob out of grace. God does not bless Jacob because he is clever and conniving.

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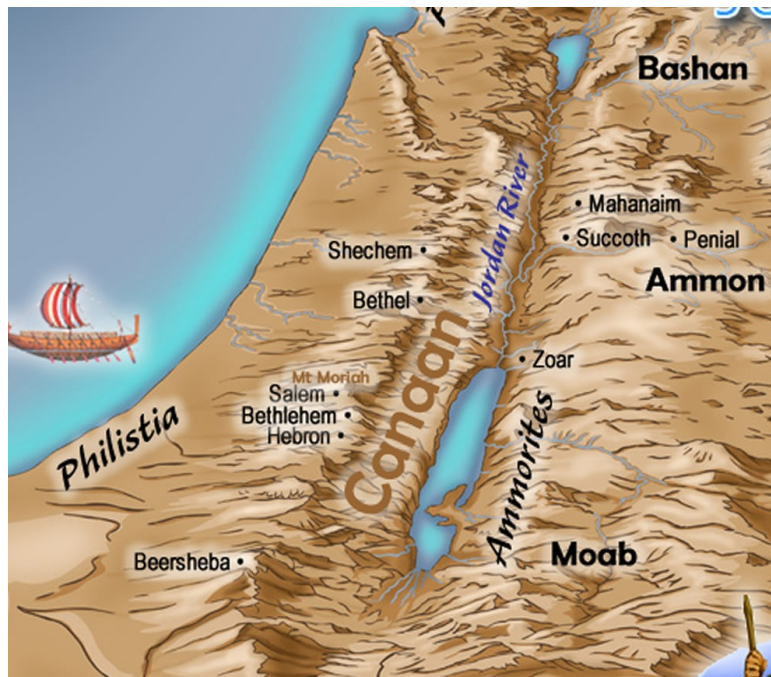
<sup>9</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Nebaioth.

**Genesis 28:11** And he [Jacob] came on a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took of the stones of that place, and placed them at his head. And he lay down in that place to sleep.

Jacob is moving both north and east, and, when night fell, he lays down to sleep. Jacob would be walking for many days and many nights. However, this is a very significant night in his life. At this point, he is still in Canaan.

The certain place where Jacob is, is Bethel, which means *House of God*.

**Map of Canaan (Bethel)** from [Bible-History.com](http://Bible-History.com), accessed November 17, 2014. Jacob was in Beersheba, he traveled up towards Haran (Genesis 28:10), and here, he is stopped



at Bethel (Genesis 28:19; formerly called Luz). He has not traveled very far; but no doubt, the long trip ahead of him is weighing heavily on his mind.

**Genesis 28:12** And he dreamed. And behold! A ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven! And behold! The angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

Twice we have the word *behold*. This is the demonstrative particle hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*], which means, *lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out*. Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243. When this is a part of the narrative, but not a part of what a person is saying, the intent of this word appears to be something which is observed by those in the narrative. Understood in this way, this might be reasonably translated *I see, he sees*.

I should point out that, on occasion, when explaining something from the Hebrew, I don't always take this from a particular Hebrew source (although I have many reference books on the Hebrew language and its usage). Sometimes my observations are from seeing this or that word used over and over again in a particular way. In this case, what we are doing, in part, is looking at an updated way of understanding this particle. After all, who in your acquaintance, when they want you to know something important that they saw, says, *and behold!*? Therefore, I attempt to update some words into a current vocabulary, and yet still maintain the word's intent and/or meaning. Jacob saw these things in his dream; they struck him as being rather dramatic. In conveying this dream, he tries to put the reader into



the midst of this vision. Jacob wants us to be able to see what he saw; but this is not some place at sunset that he can drag us to and say, "Whoa, check this out!" Instead, he says *and behold!* But, all Jacob is doing is telling us what he saw, with an emphasis upon the *wow factor* of it. I realize that translating this *and he sees* loses the wow factor of it all; but it is the best I can come up with so far (apart from, *and suddenly he saw*). This gives us:

**Genesis 28:12** And he dreamed. And he sees a ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven! And he [also] sees the angels of God ascending and descending on it!

As a part of divine revelation, God allowed men to see some forms of reality in their dreams. God spoke to some men in their dreams. In a previous lesson, I alluded to angels who observe us. These are the angels who are constantly going between heaven and earth. We read in Job 1:6–7 *Now there was a day when the sons of God [= angels] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."* (ESV). So angels, fallen and elect, have the ability to go between heaven and earth. Angels have the ability to go about the earth, traveling as they so choose, as God has allowed.

On some isolated occasions, God allows these angels to be seen (we have the example of the two angels who went to Sodom and rescued Lot in Genesis 19—they were seen by everyone, but not perceived to be angels).

Here, Jacob is seeing a bit of this reality—something which most people will never see during their lives on earth. However, there is no need for such revelation in this era, because we have the complete Living Word of God. We do not need to see visions of angels; we have been informed in Scripture of their existence and their purpose.

As believers, we are indwelt by God the Holy Spirit. We all have the same assets that Jesus Christ had in His humanity. Therefore, we do not need God whispering in our ears, "Up ahead, I want you to make a left turn, and then at the stop light, make a right." This is *why* Peter tells us to *follow in His steps* (1Peter 2:21; see also John 13:15 1Cor. 11:1). What we do is based upon understanding the Word of God and not upon constant direction from on high.

Jesus Christ accomplished many things when He walked this earth. He fulfilled both the Law and the Prophets. Then He died for our sins, redeeming us. But he also *test-drove* the spiritual life for believers today. The life that He led, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, is the same life that we Christians live today. In His humanity, He grew spiritually. The Bible tells us that He did (Luke 2:52). He relied upon God the Holy Spirit; the Bible tells us that He did (Isa. 11:1–3). He accomplished the plan of God for His life without constantly requiring from God the Father whether he should make a left or a right turn up ahead.



As His children, we have received His spiritual life as our blessing. When we believe in Jesus Christ, we are given a full set of spiritual blessings. Therefore, we do not require dreams or visions to move us along. Such things are not needed to accomplish the will of God; such things are not necessary to grow spiritually.

Back to our verse:

**Genesis 28:12a** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator?] stationary on the earth;...

There are two unusual words found here. The first is *çullâm* (סֻלָּם) [pronounced *sool-LAWM*]. We really do not know what this word means, as it occurs only here. This is similar to the Jewish word for *highway, raised way, public road*. Jacob is describing the best that he can see what it is that he sees (like the Apostle John in the book of Revelation). It is possible that what he sees is different than what we know technologically today (although, it is also possible that *staircase* or *ramp* may be good translations of this word).

The next unusual verb is the Hophal participle of *nâtsab* (בִּצַן) [pronounced *naw-TSAH<sup>B</sup>V*], which means, *being fixed [in one place]; being stationary; having been determined; standing in place*. These are meanings specific to the Hophal participle. Here, the participle functions as an adjective. Strong's #5324 BDB #662.

Jacob, with a vocabulary out of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C., describes the best way that he can see what it is that he is seeing here. There is a way for angels to go from earth to God in the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven. Whether this is a wormhole, an elevator or a DeLorean fitted with a flux capacitor, we do not know. We do know that angels are constantly moving between heaven and earth. We don't know if what Jacob sees is representative of this movement, or if he actually observed the means by which angels move between heaven and earth.

**Genesis 28:12a** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens.

The word for *top* is a very common Hebrew word: *rô'sh* (רֹאשׁ or שָׂרָא) [pronounced *rohsh*]; and it means, *head [of a man, city, state, nation, place, family, priest], top [of a mountain]; chief, prince, officer; front, choicest, best; height [of stars]; sum*. Strong's #7218 BDB #910. The verb here is *nâga'* (עָגַג) [pronounced *naw-GAHÇ*], which is a Hiphil participle that means, *being caused to touch, caused to reach [to anything]; coming to, attaining*. Again, these meanings are particular to this stem and verbal type. Strong's #5060 BDB #619. So, whatever it is the Jacob sees, the top of it reaches into the heavens, into the domain of God.

A question which occurs to me: *why this particular vision? Why does God let Jacob see the passage of angels between the earth and the heavens?* Let me suggest that God is exposing Jacob to the fact that there is a lot more going on in life than his simple life. There is a lot more at stake than what Jacob gets or doesn't get.

Jacob is a man who is completely out for himself; he will deceive his own father, if it is in his own best interest. God is telling Jacob that there is more going on than the blessings which he desires.

Furthermore, once Jacob arrives in Padan-aram, he will meet his uncle who will be every bit the con man that Jacob is—but to what purpose? What does his uncle receive by conning Jacob that he would not receive from the hand of God?

Jesus explained it in this way: "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? (Luke 12:22b–26) Jesus told the disciples, "What exactly are you going to accomplish for yourselves by worrying or by being anxious? Doesn't God know about your needs?"

Jacob was making his way through life by lying and deceiving in or to better his station in life. Not only is this inappropriate for a man of God, but God could and would take care of blessing Jacob. God did not need Jacob's help.

So Jacob is getting many things from this field trip:

### What Jacob Gets from this Field Trip

1. He will find out that being dishonest and conning other people does not necessarily improve your own station in life.
2. He finds out here that there is much more going on in life than what he actually sees. There is a whole other thing going on (the Angelic Conflict) which is significant.
3. And Jacob will meet the love of his life have sire the children who will make up the Jewish people.
4. He will see that God can bless him greatly, no matter what his station in life, and without Jacob being a con-man.
5. None of what occurs will require Jacob to be dishonest.

**Genesis 28:12** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., *behold*] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.

So, in his dream, Jacob sees some kind of a vertical passageway starting here on earth and going up into the heavens. That vertical passageway is populated by angels.

Angels observe what is going on, on this earth; and they also interact with God. And they travel from one place to the other, according to God's plan. We may think about this angel or that; or this or that incident that is recorded in the Bible (like the two angels that rescued Lot and his family and then destroyed Sodom in Genesis 19); but there is a lot more going on with the angels than that.

Part of what they do—and I am referring to fallen and elect angels both—is they observe us. Sometimes a live play, where the theater venue is small, will place you into the middle of the action, from time to time. I saw the play *Marat-Sade* many years ago in a small theater, and underneath the raised seats where we sat was a passageway for the actors, that we could see. So, for those in the middle rows, there were actors in costume, in character—inmates of the asylum—wandering about behind you in this passageway, as well as acting on the stage in front of you. So, you felt as if you were right in the middle of the everything. That is what is going on with the angels who observe us. It is as if they are in the middle of this great morality play—one which reveals clearly the character and essence of God—and they are able to view our actions and reactions; our relationship to the Word of God and the plan of God; and there are some believers who live a life that has great impact and there are others who are simply marking time between now and eternity.

And just in case these angels do not get it, they have access to God, where the things that they observe are discussed. Think of it as you and a group of friends discussing the morality of a movie that you have just seen.

The angels that Jacob is observing continually travel between the throne room of God and to this earth; and they observe us on this earth in our day-to-day existence. In many ways, we bring the Word of God to life in what we do.

We find this exact same thing in the book of Job.

Job 1:6–7 Now there was a day when the sons of God [= *angels*] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. The LORD said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." (ESV)

There are regular meetings in heaven between the angels (fallen and elect) and God, and there is interaction between them. What is discussed, is often the behavior of individuals. In the example above, Job will be discussed. Job is a man of God, one who has believed in God and one who tries to obey the will of God. And Satan asks God, "Give Job over to me—I'll make him squeal and I will make him reject You."

You may recall that Jesus told Simon Peter: "**Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;...**" (Luke 22:31; NASB) Satan asked for permission to wreak havoc in the life of Job; and 2000 or so years later, he asks to do the same to Peter. Fallen angels do not want to simply observe what is going on; they want to interact with mankind (Genesis 6 Job 1–2 Jude 1:6).

We have already studied Genesis 6 and how angels were allowed to cohabit with man; and the result was a corrupted race of men, who were the product of fallen angels and fallen man—whose exploits have been recorded in nearly every people's mythology.

Jude describes the fate of these angels in Jude 1:6 **And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, He [God] has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day—** (ESV)

The angels of Genesis 6 were removed by God and placed in chains under gloomy darkness until the day of judgment.

In Job 1–2, Satan is given the opportunity to harm Job, and Satan unloads both barrels, wreaking as much damage and devastation to Job's life as we could imagine.

So Jacob, in his sleep, has this vision, and he sees angels being conveyed from earth to heaven and from heaven to earth—a concept which is consistent with what we have already studied as the Angelic Conflict. The Angelic Conflict is an invisible war which is taking place which involves God, the elect angels and the fallen angels. Man was created to resolve the Angelic Conflict. See the **Angelic Conflict** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

## Lessons 317–318: Genesis 28:11–12

## Contradictions in the Bible

Because this is a very long lesson, with a great many references to outside material, this will count as 3 lessons.

We have been studying Jacob's dream in Bethel, where he observes angels going between heaven and earth.

There is a remarkable consistency throughout Scripture regarding the nature and function of angelic creatures. If the Scriptures are simply the recorded thoughts and actions and myths of men, collected over a period of 2000 years, with some arbitrary council deciding, what stays in and what is thrown out, the idea that there is a prehistoric race of creatures who are far superior to man, whose existence and function can be studied and conclusions drawn, how exactly did this happen? How do you have 40 or so authors writing over a period of 3000<sup>10</sup> years come up with a fairly consistent view of creatures that so few men have ever seen? The Bible critic would allege that angels do not even exist and that no one has ever seen an angel (except someone who has hallucinated). So that makes a consistent description in narrative form even more difficult to achieve. The Bible critic would say, *it is all made up*. How do a dozen or more authors just make up the concept of angels and somehow come up with a consistent function and understanding of these made-up creatures? After all, if there are contradictions in the Harry Potter series, the notion of one author (or in the Buffy the Vampire Slayer series; the creation of primarily one

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<sup>10</sup> This is my opinion; most scholars believe the Bible to be written over a period of 1500 years. In include the oral tradition of Genesis to be a part of the composition of the Bible.

person), how do a dozen or so authors—most of whom have never interacted with one another—manage to keep their story straight on created beings that 99.99% of us have never seen?

This will be an extensive tangent, but we learn a great deal about Christian doctrine from a study like this.

The Bible critic alleges that, “The Bible is filled with contradictions.” The contradictions which follow are the first 20 listed on the website [evilbible.com](http://evilbible.com). We have already studied the first 5 in a previous lesson. Since this website groups and classified these contradictions, we will also look at the first 5 or so from each classification (in the next lesson).

One would hope that they will have given their best in the first 10 *contradictions*, in order to engage the reader.

<b>So-Called Bible Contradictions</b>	
<b>Contradictions</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b><i>Theological Doctrines:</i></b>	
<p>God is satisfied with his works. Gen 1:31</p>	<p>What God has designed is good; but God also created man and angels with free will. This free will is allowed by God to have real effects on His creation.</p>
<p>God is dissatisfied with his works. Genesis 6:6</p>	<p>Here’s an analogous situation. A builder builds a house and it looks great; and he is very satisfied with his work. However, some night, a bunch of kids break into this newly-built house and cause all kinds of damage to it. The damage might be so great that he is even unhappy that he built this house in the first place. So, the builder on one day is very satisfied with his work; on the next day, he is unhappy that he built the house in the first place. There is no contradiction in this illustration.</p>
<p>God dwells in chosen temples. 2Chron. 7:12,16</p>	<p>God can choose to manifest Himself in specific places for specific reasons. The incarnation of Jesus Christ is an example of this. Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, living among mankind (John 1:1–3, 14). However, God’s actual essence is spirit, which we cannot see, hear, feel or touch. Just as our souls are immaterial, so is God. But God is able to make Himself manifest. If God is able to create the universe, then it reasonably follows that He can interact with His creatures in this universe. That requires an infinite God to manifest Himself in a specific place and time.</p>
<p>God dwells not in temples. Acts 7:48</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>The Temple is of particular interest, because the original Tabernacle (a very large tent which could be moved) represents Jesus Christ in the flesh in His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent; and the later Temple represents Jesus Christ on earth when He will rule over the earth in the Millennium. Therefore, we would expect God to specially manifest Himself both within the Tabernacle and later within the Temple. God voluntarily localized His Presence in both.</p>	
<p>God dwells in light. 1Tim. 6:16</p> <p>God dwells in darkness. 1Kings 8:12 Psalm 18:11 97:2</p>	<p>God is light and in Him is no darkness. However, because God is omniscient and omnipresent, he is able to be everywhere simultaneously.</p> <p>Would you allege that it is a contradiction for God to be able to see in the dark?</p>
<p>God is seen and heard. Ex. 33:23, 11 Genesis 3:9–10 32:30 Isa. 6:1 Ex. 24:9-11</p> <p>God is invisible and cannot be heard. John 1:18 5:37 Ex. 33:20 1Tim 6:16</p>	<p>As already discussed, God is a spirit, which cannot be apprehended by the 5 senses. However, as God, He can choose make Himself manifest; He can choose to make Himself visible.</p> <p>Many new parents have a baby monitor, so that they are in one room of the house, and, through the living room, and down the hall is the baby's room. The parents may be sleeping and the baby wakes up and begins to cry. Immediately, one of the parents—who was previously unseen and could not be heard by the baby—suddenly appears and sees to the needs of the baby. For a few hours, the baby cannot see or hear his parents; and, suddenly, he can both hear and see his parents. There is no contradiction in this.</p>
<p>God is tired and rests. Ex. 31:17</p> <p>God is never tired and never rests. Isa. 40:28</p>	<p>Many of the <i>contradictions</i> are based upon anthropopathisms and anthropomorphisms. An anthropopathism is the assignment of human feelings, passions or characteristics to God, attributing to Him feelings or characteristics which He does not actually possess. This often helps to explain God's actions in human terms. For more information, see <a href="#">Bible Doctrine Resource</a> on this topic.</p>



## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Let's look at Ex. 31:17, where God is speaking to Moses: "It is a sign forever between Me and the people of Israel that in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed." (ESV; capitalized) The Hebrew word for <i>to rest</i> is shâbath (שָׁבַת) [pronounced <i>shaw-BAHTH</i>], and it means, <i>to rest, to keep a day of rest, to celebrate the Sabbath; to sit down [still]; to cease, to desist, to leave off, to discontinue</i>. You may recognize this word as related to the word for <i>Sabbath</i>. God did not <i>rest</i> because He was tired; He <i>ceased</i> because He was finished.</p>	
<p>The second word in question is nâphash (נָפַשׁ) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHSH</i>], which means, <i>to breath, to take a breath, to refresh oneself; to cease from working</i>. Now, God does not take a breath. Again, He stopped working because He was finished.</p>	
<p>God is everywhere present, sees and knows all things. Prov. 15:3 Psalm 139:7-10 Job 34:22,21</p>	<p>God is omniscient (He sees everything); He is omnipresent (He is everywhere). Generally speaking, when God appears not to be omniscient and He has to suddenly leave His throne and go down to earth and find out what is going on and then sort things out—that is an anthropopathism—assigning to God thoughts, feelings and characteristics which He does not actually have in order to better explain His actions and/or policies.</p>
<p>God is not everywhere present, neither sees nor knows all things. Genesis 3:8 11:5 18:20–21</p>	<p>God can bring to pass any policy, punishment, correction or reward with a snap of His fingers. However, there is an audience for the progression of the human race—and that is the audience of fallen and elect angels. They watch us; they see our sins, failures and successes; and they see how God works in us, through us, and often <i>against</i> us (with divine discipline).</p>
<p>I have misstated two things here. God does not actually have fingers; He does not snap His fingers. That is an anthropomorphism. God's divine discipline actually works in our favor, much the same way that we spank our own children. We don't spank them to get our anger out; we spank them to correct them and guide them in the right way. From the child's point of view, it may appear as if we are working against him; and when we are disciplined, it may appear to us as if God is working against us.</p>	
<p>Have you ever had a child say, "Dad is mad at me" after receiving a whipping? His father delivers the whipping not because the father is mad but because the father loves his son. Saying, "Dad is mad at me" is somewhat of an anthropopathism. It assigns to the boy's father emotions which he may not possess, but emotions which explain the father's behavior to the boy.</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

### Contradictions

### Explanation

Let's look at these 3 references specifically which suggest that *God is not everywhere present, neither sees nor knows all things* (although we have already studied them).  
Genesis 3:8 11:5 18:20–21

Gen. 3:7–9 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" (ESV) Believe it or not, God actually knew where Adam and the woman were. They are on earth and hiding from God in the Garden of Eden. God knew where to be to call out to them so that they could hear Him. This becomes a consistent occurrence in Scripture where people sin, and then God first speaks to them with a question—often a question which requires them to name the sin that they committed. God localizes His presence in order to interact with His creatures.

Gen 11:4–7 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech." (ESV). In this example, God will actually do something miraculous among the people. They have been told to spread out across the earth, and yet they refuse to do so. The narrative here explains to angels what is going on and why God is doing this thing. Angels are not omniscient; so, from time to time, God will gather most angels to one particular place, to one particular person or incident, so that they can all view with their own eyes what is going on and what God will do about it.

Genesis 18:20–21 Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." (ESV) This refers to Sodom and Gomorrah. God knows what is going on there. However, He brings with Him many angels in order for them to see and understand what He is doing and why He is doing that. As before, this is an anthropathism. The cry of the victims reaches heaven (which simply means, God hears their cries); and therefore, God must go down there and sort it all out. God could snap His fingers and destroy Sodom in an instant. However, like the Tower of Babel above, God uses man's sin and His Own actions in order to teach divine truth. This is being observed by angels and what will happen to Sodom will be a spiritual lesson for all time. See **Genesis 18** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God knows the hearts of men. Acts 1:24 Psalm 139:2–3</p>	<p>The first assertion is accurate. God knows the hearts of minds of all men. We have recently studied the emotions of man and emotional revolt of the soul. As we progress spiritually, God is constantly observing us, noting our spiritual growth and even touting it to the angels (see Job 1).</p>
<p>God tries [= tests] men to find out what is in their heart. Deut. 13:3 8:2 Genesis 22:12</p>	<p>God knows what we are capable of individually. We do not know this nor do angels. Therefore, this is shown—our growth or lack thereof is put to the test.</p> <p>The testing which we receive is for our benefit. This is also a testimony to the angels as well.</p>
<p>As a teacher, I pushed my students as much as I possibly could. Some of them learned and achieved things that they themselves did not realize that they were capable of. Testing as well as one-on-one interaction helped to facilitate this. The testing allowed the student to see for himself what he was capable of doing. This is analogous to God's interaction with us in the spiritual life.</p>	
<p>God is all powerful. Jer. 32:27 Matt. 19:26</p>	<p>God is all powerful (omnipotent), and yet we read in Judges 1:19 <i>And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.</i> (ESV). God is with Judah, but that does not mean that God would drive out all of their enemies. Judges 2:19–22 gives the general explanation as to why God did not remove all of Israel's enemies from the land: <i>But whenever the judge died, they turned back and were more corrupt than their fathers, going after other gods, serving them and bowing down to them. They did not drop any of their practices or their stubborn ways. So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he said, "Because this people has transgressed my covenant that I commanded their fathers and have not obeyed my voice, I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations that Joshua left when he died, in order to test Israel by them, whether they will take care to walk in the way of the LORD as their fathers did, or not."</i> It was not that God was not powerful enough to destroy Judah's enemies; God simply allowed for Judah's enemies to remain in the land, to be used to discipline the Jews when they needed it.</p>
<p>God is not all powerful. Judges 1:19</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God is unchangeable. James 1:17 Mal. 3:6 Ezek. 24:14 Num. 23:19</p>	<p>God's essence is immutable (unchangeable). However, God is said to change because He is responding to various actions of man. Again, this is an anthropopathism, something you would think these atheist webpage gurus would, at some point, figure out (I am sure that they receive emails and comments).</p>
<p>God is changeable. Gen 6:6 Jonah 3:10 1Sam 2:30–31 2Kings 20:1, 4–6 Ex. 33:1, 3, 17, 14</p>	<p>Jonah 3:10 <i>When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.</i> God's actions are related to the behavior of man. As unbelievers, the Assyrians deserved eternal judgment; as believers in the Revealed God, they had been redeemed from that judgment. Jonah came and warned them of the judgment of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and the Assyrians believed in his God.</p>
<p>Many of the <i>contradictions</i> are based upon this fundamental principle: our relationship to the God of the Universe affects our perception of God. God's character and essence did not change; the people of Assyria changed, resulting in God changing His policy toward them (God would not destroy them).</p>	
<p>God is just and impartial. Psalm 92:15 Genesis 18:25 Deut. 32:4 Rom. 2:11 Ezek. 18:25</p>	<p>God is perfectly just and impartial. However, when He blesses a believer or takes care of a believer, it may appear to the person on the outside that God is favoring that person. When a person has rejected God's grace or the offer of God's salvation, then they may find God's judgment upon them. God's justice remains the same throughout.</p>
<p>God is unjust and partial. Gen. 9:25 Ex. 20:5 Rom. 9:11-13 Matt. 13:12</p>	<p>We do not condemn a judge because on one day, he sets a man free and on the next day, he sentences another man to death, do we? We do not comment, "That judge is inconsistent!" The judge is ideally taking the same principles of law and applying them to different circumstances.</p> <p>Let's take a look at two of these passages individually.</p>
<p>Gen. 9:24–27 <i>When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant. May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem, and let Canaan be his servant."</i> Because of Ham's impertinence, Noah pronounced a curse upon his son, Canaan. This curse against Canaan would be carried out because Canaan gets his values from Ham his father; and he passes along those values to his own sons, which makes them cursed by God.</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Matt. 13:11–12 <b>And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away."</b> (ESV) As believers in Jesus Christ, despite our own physical infirmities, we are all given an equal shot. Any one of us can be as great as the Apostle Paul—greater in fact. As a person moves forward in the Christian life, God gives that person greater grace (James 4:6). If you, as a believer, have chosen to fritter your life away, God may take you out of this life by means of the sin unto death. This is not arbitrary but in accordance with the plan of God and our relationship to God. There is no great contradiction that God disciplines some of His children and blesses others.</p>	
<p>God is the author of evil. Lam. 3:38 Jer. 18:11 Isa. 45:7 Amos 3:6 Ezek. 20:25</p>	<p>God creates man and angels with free will. God allows for the function of free will, which means the ability to choose against God. In this sense, even though God does not sponsor evil, creatures created by God with true volition might do evil things.</p> <p>Have you ever heard two parents, and one of them says, "He did not learn that from me"? Most parents try to bring up their children with values and a sense of right and wrong; but that does not mean that the child will always obey them. They may intend that their child does not wreak havoc on earth, but every child has free will, which means some children do some very distasteful things. Children do act out and they do evil things which they have not seen done before.</p>
<p>God is not the author of evil. 1Cor 14:33 Deut 32:4 James 1:13</p>	<p>God obviously makes Himself available to mankind. Paul, in one of his messages, said: <b>"And He [God] made every nation of men of one blood, to live on all the face of the earth, ordaining fore-appointed seasons and boundaries of their dwelling, to seek the Lord, if perhaps they might feel after Him and might find Him, though indeed He not being far from each one of us."</b> (Acts 17:26–27; Green's literal translation)</p> <p>However, man does have the ability to reject God. God allows man to say <i>no</i>. The second group of passages will be examined below:</p>
<p>God gives freely to those who ask James 1:5 Luke 11:10 God withholds his blessings and prevents men from receiving them John 12:40 Joshua 11:20 Isa. 63:17</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

### Contradictions

### Explanation

John 12:37–40 Though he had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe in him, so that the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "Lord, who has believed what he heard from us, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe. For again Isaiah said, "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their heart, and turn, and I would heal them." (ESV; Isa. 53:1 6:10) Some people simply reject truth. The human soul is designed so, there is a point at which a *hardening of the heart* begins to occur, where the soul develops scar tissue regarding the truth. They go from a point of simply hearing and rejecting truth, to reenforcing their own rejection of the truth. How does this work?

Many of the miracles which Jesus did were undeniable. He would cure those who had suffered illnesses and disabilities for years and some for a lifetime. However, some people would reject Him anyway. Such negative volition needs to be strengthened into resolve, so such people will search out other explanations for what they just saw. One of those explanations during that time was, Jesus healed by the power of Beelzebub (*the prince of dung*; a name for Satan). See Matt. 12:22–37.

Today, people may initially reject Jesus Christ; but often, then will seek out others who have rejected Him or they will seek out books by famous atheists, and this helps to strengthen their resolve—in other words, this helps to build scar tissue on their souls. The Doctrine of [Scar Tissue](#).

Joshua 11:18–20 And Joshua made war many days with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the sons of Israel except the Hivites, ones living in Gibeon. They took all in battle. For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, so that they should come against Israel in battle, so that they might be destroyed, so that they might have no favor, but that He might destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses. (Green's literal translation) God set up the function of the soul. Believers are designed so that we can strengthen our souls through the study of the Word of God; however, the parallel function in the unbeliever would be to allow him to strengthen his resolve against God as well through similar means.

We see this with the souls of modern-day Palestinians, many of whom absolutely abhor the Jews and they built up and strengthen this hatred which they learn in their youth. One would think that, when a Palestinian child grows into an adult, he might begin to question the idea of Jews [evolving from apes and pigs](#).

Now, whether God is actively involved in strengthening one's negative volition, is a whole other topic which I am not ready to embark on as of yet. However, in any situation where God is said to harden the heart of a person, they harden their own hearts first—sometimes many times. The Pharaoh of the exodus is a good example of this. In Ex. 5, he demonstrates his negative volition toward God and God's people over and over again by his successive actions.



## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Isa. 63:17–19 O LORD, why do You make us wander from Your ways and harden our heart, so that we fear You not? Return for the sake of Your servants, the tribes of Your heritage. Your holy people held possession for a little while; our adversaries have trampled down Your sanctuary. We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, like those who are not called by Your name. (ESV; capitalized) Israel, in the time of Isaiah, had been turning away from God. This is simply negative volition on the part of the people there against their God. Isaiah is bemoaning this state of affairs. God is not with Israel because they have first rejected Him.</p>	
<p>God is to be found by those who seek him Matt 7:8 Prov 8:17</p>	<p>The context of Prov. 1:28 is, God made Himself known, He made Himself available, and yet this people rejected Him. Prov. 1:24–28 Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out My hand and no one has heeded, because you have ignored all My counsel and would have none of My reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when terror strikes you, when terror strikes you like a storm and your calamity comes like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish come upon you. Then they will call upon Me, but I will not answer; they will seek Me diligently but will not find Me.</p>
<p>God is not to be found by those who seek him Prov. 1:28</p>	<p>Putting aside, for the moment, the anthropathism of God laughing, we all face eternal judgment and God allows us to believe in Him—something which is free and takes mere moments to do—and this little bit of faith saves us from eternal damnation.</p>
<p>God is warlike Ex. 15:3 Isa. 51:15</p>	<p>This is like saying, our military is warlike and our military is peaceful—and that this is a fundamental contradiction of some sort. We have had troops stationed in South Korea for many decades now, and, for the most part, these troops have been peaceful. However, their general demeanor depends upon what happens in North Korea.</p>
<p>God is peaceful Rom 15:33 1Cor. 14:33</p>	

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God is cruel, unmerciful, destructive, and ferocious                      Jer. 13:14 Deut. 7:16                      1Sam. 15:2,3                      1Sam. 6:19</p>	<p>The explanation here is very much what it is above. When a people has become very negative toward God (which, in the ancient world, was often expressed by its relationship to the people of God), God dealt with those people in what may seem cruel to us today. When we execute a murderer today—what that murderer did might have been extremely cruel and heartless—but even those who completely support the death penalty can feel a tinge of sadness at the state-induced death of such a person.</p>
<p>God is kind, merciful, and good                      James 5:11                      Lam. 3:33                      1Chron. 16:34                      Ezek. 18:32                      Psalm 145:9                      1Tim. 2:4 1John 4:16                      Psalm 25:8</p>	<p>As we read in 1Sam. 2:30 <i>Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before Me forever,' but now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from Me, for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'</i> (ESV; capitalized)</p> <p>There are two sides in this world—there is Satan and there is God; and God's attitude toward us depends upon which one draws our allegiance.</p>
<p>God's anger is fierce and endures long                      Num. 32:13 25:4                      Jer. 17:4</p>	<p>First of all, <i>the anger of God</i> is an anthropomorphism. It represents God's judgment or His discipline (when directed toward a believer). The application of his judgment and discipline depends upon the situation. God overlooked King David's many wives for a fairly long period of time; however, when King David took the wife of a soldier and then had that soldier killed, God put intensive discipline upon David for his actions.</p>
<p>God's anger is slow and endures but for a minute                      Psalm 103:8 30:5</p>	<p>For those who have raised children, you certainly do not bring the exact same judgment and discipline down upon them for each and every offense.</p>

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>God commands, approves of, and delights in burnt offerings, sacrifices ,and holy days Ex 29:18, 36 Lev. 1:9 23:27</p> <p>God disapproves of and has no pleasure in burnt offerings, sacrifices, and holy days. Jer. 7:22 6:20 Psalm 50:13,4 Isa. 1:13, 11, 12</p>	<p>The burnt offerings, sacrifices and holy days looked forward to the Messiah and revealed truths about the coming Messiah. Israel was given the responsibility of preserving these ceremonies as a testimony to Jesus Christ.</p> <p>However, there were two ways that the Jews could break their bond with the God Who made them: (1) they could reject the God of their youth, but continue with these sacrifices and offerings as unbelievers. Or (2) they could participate in these ceremonies in uncleanness. This might be ceremonial uncleanness, but it would be likely the uncleanness of their own souls (that is, they have unconfessed sins in their lives).</p> <p>Ceremonies and rituals have no meaning if they are separated from the truth that they represent.</p>
<p>God accepts human sacrifices 2Sam 2:8, 9, 14 Genesis 22:2 Judges 11:30-32, 34, 38, 39</p> <p>God forbids human sacrifice Deut 12:30, 31</p>	<p>I have no idea what the references of 2Samuel are about. However, God asked Abraham to offer up his uniquely-born son to God; and Abraham would begin to comply with this. This particular incident confuses unbelievers greatly because they confuse God's request and Abraham's willingness to offer up his son as being the same as a human sacrifice. God stopped Abraham from offering up Isaac. This offering was to represent the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins and is discussed in great detail in <b>Genesis 22</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<p>In the second example of Judges 11, Jephthah does not offer up his daughter as a human sacrifice. She does, however, remain separated to the Lord for the rest of her life in an unmarried state. This is discussed in more detail in <b>Judges 11</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>)</p>	
<p>God tempts men Gen. 22:1 2Sam. 24:1 Jer. 20:7 Matt. 6:13</p>	<p>There is tempting and there is testing and the word in the Greek is the same word. God promises us that: <b>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.</b> (1Co 10:13; ESV; capitalized) So, we are all tested by God from time to time; but we have the inner resources to pass the test and resist whatever temptation is involved.</p>
<p>God tempts no man James 1:13</p>	<p>However, God does not simply place us in situations where we are going to fail and give in to temptation.</p>

## So-Called Bible Contradictions

Contradictions	Explanation
God cannot lie Heb 6:18	God allows man and angels in this world, and He allows them to exercise their free will (within some reasonable constraints). As a result, men will lie or stretch the truth, or present lies in such a way that they appear to be the truth.
God lies by proxy; he sends forth lying spirits to deceive 2Thess. 2:11 1Kings 22:23 Ezek. 14:9	God also allows some men to reveal all that is in their heart, which sometimes comes out in the way that they respond to that which is false.  We all have a choice. We can choose to pursue the truth, as God has revealed Himself in Scripture; or we can pursue after those who speak against God.

### Lesson 319 Genesis 28:11–12

### Contradictions in the Bible II

A study like this can help to clarify many passages that you may not have understood before.

[Evil Bible](#) breaks up its contradictions categorically. So let me hand the first few *contradictions* from each category.

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
These next 10 or so few come from the category of <b><i>moral precepts</i></b> . Unless otherwise noted, the ESV (capitalized) translation will be used.	
Robbery commanded Ex. 3:21–22 12:35–36	The Jews had been enslaved by the Egyptians, and God required payment for their centuries of work (Ex. 3:21–22 12:35–36). It is very likely that the person or persons who oversee the <i>evilbible</i> website believe in some form of reparations for American slaves—to them and to their children at the very least; and yet, somehow, post this as if it is a contradiction to <i>you will not steal</i> (Ex. 20:15). They are not stealing, they are being remunerated for work which they have done.
Robbery forbidden Lev 19:13 Ex 20:15	This is one of the many examples of the disingenuousness of many Bible skeptics. They probably believe in the principles taught in both passages, <i>in context</i> , and yet they act as if some this is some great contradiction.

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Lying approved and sanctioned  Joshua 2:4-6  James 2:25  Ex. 1:18-20  1Kings 22:21,22</p>	<p>In war, lying by those on the side of God is allowed. If a soldier is caught and being tortured, and being asked to give the position of his comrades so that they might be found and killed, do you really think that God requires this person—if he is a Christian—to tell the truth about where his fellow soldiers are? In the example of Joshua 2:4–6 James 2:25, Rahab the prostitute chose to ally herself with Israel and with Joshua.</p> <p>In the second example of Ex. 1:18–20, Egyptian midwives lied to Pharaoh when they did not kill Hebrew children. In the military, when a soldier is given a bad order (to kill, for instance a village of women and children), that soldier has a duty to <i>disobey</i> that order. Do you really think that if some government official—even the president—ordered you to kill some of God’s people without cause, that it is your duty to do so? We are to obey our leaders, but there are also reasonable limits to this obedience (which limits are clearly taught in Scripture).</p> <p>In 1Kings 22:21–22, Ahab is an evil king. God has sent prophets to him that spoke the truth to him. He rejected them and even persecuted these prophets. So God allowed <i>Ahab’s personal prophets</i> to lie to him—and Ahab believed the lie.</p>
<p>Lying forbidden  Ex. 20:16 Prov. 12:22 Rev. 21:8</p>	<p>In 1Kings 22:21–22, Ahab is an evil king. God has sent prophets to him that spoke the truth to him. He rejected them and even persecuted these prophets. So God allowed <i>Ahab’s personal prophets</i> to lie to him—and Ahab believed the lie.</p>
<p>Hatred to the Edomite sanctioned  2Kings 14:7 (evilbible inexplicably cites v. 3; but forgets to cite 1Chron. 18)</p>	<p>2Kings 14 is about a better than average king, Amaziah, who did good, but he came up short because of things that he did or did not do. He did not tear down all of the high places (the places of idolatry—2Kings 14:4); and he killed 10,000 Edomites (2Kings 14:7). These are given as examples of his shortcomings.</p> <p>The relationship between the Edomites and the Jews is tricky, however, because they are all descended from Abraham; so they are cousins, as it were. Because of Abraham, God set aside an area for the Edomites; however, when the Edomites became cattywampus with the Jews, they were to be dealt with. We have an example of that in 1Chron. 18:11–13. In any case, <i>hatred</i> is not mentioned regarding David or Amaziah.</p>
<p>Hatred to the Edomite forbidden  Deut 23:7</p>	<p>The relationship between the Edomites and the Jews is tricky, however, because they are all descended from Abraham; so they are cousins, as it were. Because of Abraham, God set aside an area for the Edomites; however, when the Edomites became cattywampus with the Jews, they were to be dealt with. We have an example of that in 1Chron. 18:11–13. In any case, <i>hatred</i> is not mentioned regarding David or Amaziah.</p>

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Killing commanded Ex 32:27</p>	<p>This ought not to be a difficult concept. Killing in war and executing a criminal is not the same as killing an innocent person. The Bible makes such a distinction; my guess is, the folks at evilbible make such distinctions as well. If a criminal was threatening your family with harm, do you really think God wants you to allow this to happen?</p>
<p>Killing forbidden Ex 20:13</p>	<p>See the <b>Doctrine of Murder</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<p>The blood-shedder must die Gen 9:5,6 The blood-shedder must not die Gen 4:15</p>	<p>There is a time frame here. In Genesis 4, there has been no commandment from God to execute murderers. The first commandment from God for man to execute murderers is given in Genesis 9. It is at this point that man is given that responsibility to execute murderers. In Genesis 4:15, Cain was punished, but this punishment was banishment from society.</p>
<p>The making of images forbidden Ex 20:4</p>	<p>God has always forbidden the making in images with the intent of using them to worship or as a part of worship.</p> <p>There was sort of an exception to this. In constructing the Ark of God, two cherubim were carved and placed on both sides of the seat of mercy (which sat upon the Ark). The Ark itself is made out of acacia wood (representing the humanity of Jesus Christ) and overlaid with gold (representing the deity of Jesus Christ).</p> <p>No one, in general, was to see this Ark<sup>11</sup> (most of the time, it was within the Holy of Holies and the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies once a year on the great Day of Atonement to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat (representing the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ for our sins). The cherubim represent the angels of God—the fallen and the elect angels—who observe man and the things which occur here on earth—the most important event being the offering of Jesus Christ for our sins. No one was ever encouraged to worship the Ark.</p>
<p>The making of images commanded Ex 25:18, 20</p>	<p>See the <b>Ark of God</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>)</p>

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<sup>11</sup> The Ark was used by God's direction in one battle. The Jews hauled it out of the Tabernacle to illegitimately use it on another occasions, and they were disciplined for it.



## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Slavery and oppression ordained Gen 9:25 Lev. 25:45,46 Joel 3:8</p>	<p>Slavery has been a part of man's history from the very beginning until now. What few people seem to realize is, there are different forms of slavery found in Scripture—some are allowed and some are forbidden. A person can place himself into slavery in order to pay off a debt—however, there are time limits to this by the Mosaic Law, so that a debtor does not become a lifelong slave. Also, when a country is conquered, the people could be taken as slaves. Israel did not just go out willy nilly conquering countries. God had them conquer countries where there was great idolatry (like the offering up of their own children to Baal or to Molech).</p>
<p>Slavery and oppression forbidden Isa. 58:6 Ex. 22:21 21:16 Matt. 23:10 (this passage in Matthew is not actually a reference to slavery)</p>	<p>There was a specific form of slavery which was forbidden: you could not just go into a country and capture 1000 or so men and force them into slavery. This was against the Mosaic Law. I believe the KJV refers to this as <i>man-stealing</i>.</p> <p>See the <b>Doctrine of Slavery</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<p>Improvvidence enjoyed Matt 6:28–34</p>	<p>I must admit that I did not know what improvvidence meant. This makes me think Evil Bible copied this from elsewhere. Jesus is telling His disciples in Matt. 6:28–34 not to be concerned about how they will eat or be clothed, as God will see to their needs. In this passage, Jesus is speaking to His disciples (Matt. 5:1–2), and He was both preparing them for the kingdom that He was promising and preparing them to go out and spread this message of the <i>Kingdom of God is at hand!</i> The Jews rejected this message, so we did not proceed from the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of Jesus Christ directly into the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent. Jesus' disciples were not being excused from work; they were being excused from menial work during the much of the time that they were with Jesus. Jesus public ministry was very short and the disciples were to concentrate on this ministry.</p>
<p>Improvvidence condemned 1Tim 5:8</p>	<p>1Tim. 5:8 <b>But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.</b> God does not excuse the believer from work—work is one of the divine institutions. Work was a part of Adam's life <i>before</i> he sinned (as well as after). We are not encouraged anywhere in the Bible to be layabouts.</p>

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Improvidence enjoyed Luke 6:30, 35	Luke 6:30, 35 <b>Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.</b> Jesus is speaking directly to His disciples (Luke 6:20) preparing them for their very short and intense ministry under Jesus Christ. A specific time and a specific purpose.
Improvidence condemned Prov. 13:22	Prov. 13:22 <b>A good man leaves an inheritance to his children's children, but the sinner's wealth is laid up for the righteous.</b> This passage is to be understood in two ways. First of all, it is normal and honorable to provide more for your children by your own life of hard work. Secondly, the book of Proverbs is all about wisdom—so one of the items that you leave for your children as an inheritance is wisdom.
There is more to be taken from Luke 6:35 than Jesus simply preparing His disciples. Our lives are not simply about the material and what is right before our face. It is possible to provide for your family, now and in the future, and still not be consumed by materialism.	
Luke 12:3 <b>Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.</b> This passage was included by Evil Bible for the topic above, but I am not sure why. Perhaps they meant to include Jesus teaching His disciples to not make a great display of public prayers?	
Anger approved Eph. 4:26	Eccles. 7:9 <b>Don't let your spirit rush to be angry, for anger abides in the heart of fools.</b> Generally speaking, the believer is not to allow himself to become angry. When we do, then we rebound this sin (we tell God that we were angry), and we are cleansed of our unrighteousness. 1John 1:9
Anger disapproved Eccl. 7:9 Prov. 22:24 James 1:20	Eph. 4:26 requires more explanation (see below):

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

### Contradictions

### Explanation

Eph. 4:26–27 "Be angry but do not sin;" do not let the sun go down on your wrath, LXX-Psalm 4:4; MT-Psalm 4:5 nor give place to the Devil. (Green's literal translation) This first passage is a little tricky. Paul is quoting Psalm 4:4, which reads: Tremble and do not sin. (Green's literal translation) The word *tremble* is rāgaz (רָזַז) [pronounced rawg-GAHZ], which means, *to be agitated, to quiver, to quake, to become excited, perturbed, disquieted*. Strong's #7264 BDB #919. The KJV translates this *stand in awe*. So, where many translations of the New Testament sound as if Paul is putting a fine point on anger, the passage that he is quoting is really putting a fine point on the first word that is used, limiting the means which may be used. Psalm 4:3 reads: But know that Jehovah has set apart the godly for Himself. Jehovah hears when I call to Him. (Green's literal translation) Then the psalmist tells the hearer, "Stand in awe! Quiver, quake; become excited." This is because the psalmist has invoked God Himself.

In Paul's context, he is referring back to this passage, but he is using it in a different way (which sometimes causes the common reader of Scripture some consternation). Paul is speaking in a different context than the psalmist. Clarke interprets Paul as saying this: *If you are angry, and if you think that you have cause to be angry; do not let your disaffection carry you to acts of rebellion against both God and your king. Consider the subject deeply before you attempt to act. Do nothing rashly; do not justify one evil act by another: sleep on the business; think about this using Bible doctrine upon your bed; consult your pillow.*<sup>12</sup> In other words, sleep on it before you act; and, if need be, name that sin to God.

The other option is, name that sin of anger to God, and do that soon (before you sleep).

Good works to be seen of men  
Matt 5:16

Good works not to be seen of men  
Matt 6:1

The pharisees made a big show of religious function. When they prayed, it was aloud in public. They were showing off their religiosity. Most unbelievers ought to be able to understand that this is not a good thing. On the other hand, the believer who is filled with the Spirit, who acts in accordance with doctrine, will exhibit behavior and works which are commendable.

Again, this is an example of something had those who post these contradictions read and reread, would understand that the false and phony religiosity is to be avoided; but that a believer in Jesus Christ will act in a way that is undeniably honorable (when he is filled with the Spirit and acting in accordance with the Word of God). Are these critics really saying, "I don't understand what the Bible means when it tells me not to be a religious phony"? This is not a deep concept where Jesus tells His followers not to be religious phonies; and He also tells them, their faith ought to mean something to those in their periphery.

<sup>12</sup> Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Psalm 4:4 (edited).

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>These things are posted—the stuff that they know can be explained along with the more difficult passages—with the intent of shaking the faith of a believer. The saying is, throw enough mud against a wall, and some of it will stick. It does not matter to them how legitimate or illegitimate their <i>contradictions</i> are. They need to have a lot of mud. They cannot post simply 10 well thought-out contradictions. They must post dozens in order to have the desired affect.</p>	
<p>Judging of others forbidden Matt 7:1–2</p>	<p>The confusion here is, the passage which Jesus tells His disciples, <i>do not judge or you will be judged</i>, has been distorted and misunderstood. It has come to mean, <i>do not judge any sort of behavior, do not judge any set of standards different from yours</i>. But that is not what Jesus said. Jesus said, you do not impute a sin to someone where there is some uncertainty. Further, you do not become overly concerned about the sins of others in a self-righteous way. Do not say to yourself, “My sins are more refined and less easy to spot than Charley Brown’s sins, so I am a better person.”</p>
<p>Judging of others approved 1Cor. 6:2-4 5:12</p>	<p>However, the believer is to be discerning. The believer has to make value judgments from time to time—about friends and activities. Much of the book of Proverbs is aimed toward the young person, warning him not to become involved with the wrong crowd; not to become involved in criminal activity. For a young person to decide not to hang out with Charley Brown because he is a drinker or he uses drugs or he sells drugs—that is discernment, and the Bible encourages that. This sort of <i>judging</i> is encouraged by Scripture.</p>
<p>Christ taught non-resistance Matt. 5:39 26:52</p>	<p>All of this could be summed up with the words <i>time and place</i>. Jesus did not teach situational ethics, but different circumstances call for different actions. The ability to worship God, whether rich or poor, was being infringed upon by the religious hierarchy, and Jesus put a temporary stop to that when He cleansed the Temple. This paralleled His words, <i>“Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”</i> (Matt. 11:28). Jesus spoke these words to all mankind, rich or poor.</p>
<p>Christ taught and practiced physical resistance John 2:15</p>	<p>The passages in Matthew will be discussed below.</p>

## Alleged Moral Precept Contradictions Found in the Bible

### Contradictions

### Explanation

Matt. 5:39 **But I tell you, don't resist an evildoer. On the contrary, if anyone slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.** In this first passage, Jesus was preparing His disciples for a very intense, 3 or 4 year ministry, and they were not to get bogged down by petty disputes. "You have a specific mission to accomplish, and that is to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Do not allow yourselves to become side-tracked from this."

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Matt. 26:50b–52 **Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him. And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."** In the second passage, Jesus was being seized to be taken to the cross. The reason that Jesus came to this earth was to die for our sins. Therefore, He is not going to resist the initial steps which take Him to the cross. If we were being tried and witness after witness stood up and lied about us, there would be a point at which we would stand up and shout, "Can they just lie about me in court?" Jesus, although dozens of witnesses (or more) stood up before the court and lied about Him, what He said and what He did, He did not object; He did not say a word (Isa. 53:7). All of this had to be fulfilled, so that He would be crucified.

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Luke 22:35–36 **And He said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing." He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one."** This passage was also referenced by Evil Bible. The disciples were facing two sets of missions, but with different marching orders. The first mission was at the beginning of our Lord's public ministry, and this was short and intense. After the crucifixion, their mission would be long and intense.

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### Lesson 320: Genesis 28:11–12

### Contradictions in the Bible III continued

This next group is from [Evil Bible](#) listed under the heading **historical facts**:

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## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Man was created after the other animals Gen 1:25–27</p> <p>Man was created before the other animals Gen 2:18,19</p>	<p>Some of these <i>contradictions</i> are so simple to explain, it amazes me that they show up again and again on various websites and in various books. Gen 2:18–19 <b>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him." Now out of the ground the LORD God had formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name.</b> (ESV) The only order which is clearly found here in the Hebrew is, God first formed the animals and then He brought them to the man to see what he would call them. This passage does <i>not</i> say, "God first created man; then God created the animals, and then God brought the animals to the man." The order in which animals and man were created is found in Genesis 1.</p>
<p>Seed time and harvest were never to cease Gen 8:22</p> <p>Seed time and harvest did cease for seven years Gen 41:54,56 45:6</p>	<p>Generally speaking, throughout the earth, we have seasons; and plants, trees and various crops grow according to these seasons. I don't think many people can argue with that. Furthermore, this continued from Genesis 8 until today. I don't think that anyone will argue with that.</p> <p>However, in some particular areas, during some periods of time, there is a withholding of the rain, which makes crop production nearly non-existent. I fail to see a contradiction.</p>
<p>God hardened Pharaoh's heart Ex 4:21 9:12</p> <p>Pharaoh hardened his own heart Ex 8:15</p>	<p>Most of these <i>contradictions</i> were simply copied from another website or from other reference material. Evilbible cites Ex. 4:21 <i>and</i> Ed 9:12 (which book does not exist; there is no book of Ed).</p> <p>This is one of the more difficult sections of Scripture but, it is not contradictory for pharaoh to harden his own heart and for God to harden his heart as well, as this process occurred several times. Obviously, two forces can act upon the same object—simultaneously or at different times.</p>



## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>All the cattle and horses in Egypt died Ex. 9:3–6</p> <p>All the horses of Egypt did not die Ex. 14:9</p>	<p>There is no contradiction here. God says that he would destroy all the Egyptian livestock in Ex. 9:3; but then, pharaoh's soldiers mount up on horses a few chapters later and chase after the Israelites. Now, read <i>all</i> of the words in Ex. 9:3, and see if you can see why no contradiction exists: <b>Behold, the hand of the LORD will fall with a very severe plague upon your livestock that are in the field, the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks.</b> (ESV; emphasis mine)</p>
<p>Moses feared Pharaoh Ex 2:14, 15, 23 4:19</p> <p>Moses did not fear Pharaoh Heb 11:27</p>	<p>Moses, being a normal person, was apprehensive of Pharaoh. He recognized Pharaoh's power and ruthlessness. Therefore, he was reasonably afraid of pharaoh. Now, there are different kinds of fear. Some people are paralyzed by fear, where they cannot act. This was <i>not</i> Moses. God built up Moses in the faith, while Pharaoh simultaneously became more and more recalcitrant (hardened) toward God. Therefore, we read in Heb. 11:27 <b>By faith he [Moses] left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing Him Who is invisible.</b> (ESV; capitalized) In the end, God told Moses to lead the children out of Egypt, and he did that. Did Moses fear Pharaoh in the beginning? Of course he did. However, Moses' faith was strengthened with each meeting that he took with Pharaoh.</p>
<p>There died of the plague twenty-four thousand Num 25:9</p> <p>There died of the plague but twenty-three thousand 1 Cor 10:8</p>	<p>In both the Hebrew and the Greek Old Testament, 24,000 were said to die in all. The Hebrew allows for this to read: <b>And those that died in [or, during] the plague were twenty-four thousand.</b> (Num. 25:9).</p> <p>Note what Paul writes does not contradict this: <b>Nor let us commit fornication, just as some of them fornicated, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;...</b> (ESV; emphasis mine) Although it is not clear how long the plague lasted, most of the people died on one day. No contradiction. Carefully reading the text explains the alleged contradiction away.</p>

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>John the Baptist was Elias Matt 11:14</p>	<p>Elijah the prophet is to return in the final days during the Great Tribulation. Malachi 4:5–6 <b>"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."</b> (ESV). There is time frame set up in the Old Testament: the 1<sup>st</sup> advent of the Messiah; the 2<sup>nd</sup> advent of the Messiah (the Tribulation); followed by the Millennium. In the Old Testament, there is no clear distinction made between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents of the Messiah. See the <b>Doctrine of Intercalation</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>). However, this is based upon God's people accepting and trusting in God's Messiah, Jesus Christ.</p> <p>If God's people accepted Jesus Christ, then Elijah would come and proclaim Him during the Tribulation. However, because God's people did not accept Jesus Christ (as a whole), there is a period of time <i>inserted</i> (or, <i>intercalated</i>) between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> advents of Jesus Christ. Jesus explains: <b>"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."</b> (Mat 11:12–15; ESV)</p>
<p>John the Baptist was not Elias John 1:21</p>	<p>Because the Jews were not willing to accept Jesus as their Messiah, John the Baptizer is not Elijah.</p>
<p>The father of Joseph, Mary's husband was Jacob Matt 1:16</p>	<p>There are two lines to Jesus Christ; one through Mary (who is actually the mother of the humanity of Jesus Christ—Luke 1:28–37) and one through Joseph, the legal but not physical father of Jesus (Matt. 1:1–16). These lines intersect back with King David (Matt. 1:6 Luke 3:23–38).</p>
<p>The father of Mary's husband was Heli Luke 3:23</p>	<p>So, <i>Jesus</i> is the son of (or, <i>descendant of</i>) Heli (Mary's father) in Luke 3:23—not Joseph.</p>
<p>The study of these two lines is fascinating. From the very beginning, the Messiah has been known as the <i>Seed of the Woman</i> (Genesis 3:15); because the sin nature is transmitted by means of the father (this is because Adam sinned knowingly and the woman was deceived). This is the reason for the virgin birth (Isa. 7:14).</p>	

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>We have already studied the <b>Coniah Curse</b> back in <b>Lessons 265–266</b>. (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>). Coniah is in the line of Joseph, which is cut off before coming to Jesus (because Joseph is the legal, but not genetic father of Jesus). Coniah was told he would be cut off because of his evil. Coniah is a real historical figure but he is also a type which represents the sin nature. See the <b>Coniah Curse</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>	
<p>The father of Salah was Arphaxad Gen 11:12</p>	<p>There is a missing name in the Hebrew Bible. Cainan's name has dropped out of the text (there are some textual errors in the manuscripts which we have). His name is found in the <a href="#">Greek Old Testament</a> and in the New Testament. This is examined in detail in <b>Genesis 11</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p>
<p>The father of Salah was Cainan Luke 3:35,36</p>	<p>Furthermore, the phrase <i>the father of</i> can mean <i>the ancestor of</i>.</p>
<p>There were 14 generations from Abraham to David Matt 1:17</p> <p>There were but 13 generations from Abraham to David Matt 1:2-6</p>	<p>Matt. 1:17a <b>So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations,...</b></p> <p>Matt. 1:2–6: Abraham ⇒ Isaac ⇒ Jacob ⇒ Judah ⇒ Perez ⇒ Hezron ⇒ Ram ⇒ Amminadab ⇒ Nahshon ⇒ Salmon ⇒ Boaz ⇒ Obed ⇒ Jesse ⇒ David the king. I count 14 generations, which include Abraham and David.</p>
<p>There were fourteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ. Matt 1:17</p> <p>There were but thirteen generations from the Babylonian captivity to Christ Matt 1:12-16</p>	<p>Mat 1:17b <b>...and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations,...</b></p> <p>Matt. 1:12–16: And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah ⇒ Shealtiel ⇒ Zerubbabel ⇒ Abiud ⇒ Eliakim ⇒ Azor ⇒ Zadok ⇒ Achim ⇒ Eliud ⇒ Eleazar ⇒ Matthan ⇒ Jacob ⇒ <b>Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ</b>. There are 14 generations, including Jeconiah and Jesus.</p> <p>These are both memory tools—14 generations = 14 names.</p>

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>The infant Christ was taken into Egypt Matt 2:14, 15, 19, 21, 23</p>	<p>Luke 2:22–23, 39 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") But Matt. 2:14–15a reads: And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.</p> <p>From <i>Cleaned-up Contradictions in the Bible</i>: <i>These are complementary accounts of Jesus' early life, and not contradictory at all. It is clear that it would take some time for Herod to realize that he had been outsmarted by the magi. Matthew's Gospel says that he killed all the baby boys that were two years old and under in Bethlehem and its vicinity. That would be enough time to allow Joseph and Mary the opportunity to do their rituals at the temple in Jerusalem and then return to Nazareth in Galilee, from where they went to Egypt, and then returned after the death of Herod.</i><sup>13</sup></p>
<p>The infant Christ was not taken into Egypt Luke 2:22, 39</p>	
<p>Christ was tempted in the wilderness Mark 1:12–13</p>	<p>Mark 1:12–13 The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him. John 2:1 On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. The <i>third day</i> likely refers to the third day of our Lord's public ministry (being tested/tempted by Satan is not a part of His public ministry).</p>
<p>Christ was not tempted in the wilderness John 2:1–2</p>	
<p>Christ preached his first sermon on the mount Matt 5:1, 2</p>	<p>These are different sermons with very similar content. In Matt. 5, Jesus actually moves away from the crowds, gathers His disciples to Him, and teaches them. In Luke 6, Jesus is teaching a much larger group of disciples (read the first few verses of each chapter to confirm this). There is no contradiction for Jesus to teach the same or similar material at different times. Have you never heard a pastor teach the same material? Have you never heard a pastor repeat a story, a doctrine, the teaching of a particular passage?</p>
<p>Christ preached his first sermon on the plain Luke 6:17, 20</p>	

<sup>13</sup> From *101 Cleared-Up Contradictions in the Bible* by Jay Smith, Alex Chowdhry, Toby Jepson, James Schaeffer. From e-sword; Matt. 2:14.

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
John was in prison when Jesus went into Galilee Mark 1:14	Jesus did not just go to Galilee once. He was raised up in the Galilee district; this is where much of His ministry took place. Galilee is mentioned nearly 60 times in the gospels alone. For this to be a contradiction, we would essentially have to confine Jesus to <i>one</i> trip to Galilee.
John was not in prison when Jesus went into Galilee John 1:43 3:22-24	The book of John was very different from the other gospels. I would guess that John read the other gospels and did not want to write an historical account that really added nothing to the history of Jesus. Therefore, in his gospel, John primarily covered incidents and perspectives not found in the other gospels; and he wrote from a perspective of many decades later.
Christ's disciples were commanded to go forth with a staff and sandals Mark 6:8–9	Mark 6:8–9 <b>He charged them to take nothing for their journey except a staff--no bread, no bag, no money in their belts--but to wear sandals and not put on two tunics.</b> Matt. 10:9–10 <b>Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food.</b> The key is the placement of <i>sandals</i> and <i>staff</i> in Matthew. In the Greek, this can indicate that they are not to take <i>two pairs of sandals</i> or <i>two staves</i> . Some translations give us the gist of Matt. 10:10 <b>Don't carry a bag. Take for your trip only the clothes and shoes you are wearing. Don't take a walking stick. A worker should be given the things he needs. (ERV) Don't take a traveling bag for the trip, a change of clothes, sandals, or a walking stick. After all, the worker deserves to have his needs met. (God's Word™)</b>
Christ's disciples were commanded to go forth with neither staffs nor sandals. Matt. 10:9–10	
A woman of Canaan besought Jesus Matt. 15:22	Matt. 15:22 <b>Just then a Canaanite woman came out of that area</b> [Note: Mark 7:26 calls her a Syrophenician Gentile], crying, "O Lord, son of David, have pity on me. My daughter is seriously troubled by an evil spirit." (AUV–NT) Mark 7:26 <b>Now the woman was a Greek [i.e., a Gentile], a Syrophenician by nationality.</b> [Note: This was a region just north of Galilee and consisted of Syria and Phoenicia]. <b>She begged Him to drive out the evil spirit from her daughter.</b> (AUV–NT)
It was a Greek woman who besought Him Mark 7:26	Nearly everyone is identified by where they are born and by where they are raised and by where they live. It is not a contradiction if someone calls me a Texan (where I have lived for decades) and if someone else calls me a Californian (where I was raised).

## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Two blind men besought Jesus Matt 20:30	Matthew was physically at most of the events which are recorded in Scripture. Luke was not at any of them. Luke pulled together information from eyewitnesses and from existing documents (I think he referred to Mark and Matthew). Whoever Luke interviewed, remembered one blind man in particular; Matthew saw and remembered both blind men. This is not a contradiction nor is Luke's narrative inaccurate. Missing a detail does not make a recollection inaccurate.
Only one blind man besought Him Luke 18:35, 38	

Here is another reason we know that these contradictions are copied from somewhere else. Do you really think the person or persons behind the website *Evil Bible* use the word *besought* in their day-to-day conversations?

Christ was crucified at the third hour Mark 15:25	Mark calculates time according to Jewish time; John uses Roman time. John's gospel was written long, long after the other 3 gospels; and John had become more <i>Roman-ized</i> over the years. Therefore, Mark recorded his gospel using Jewish time and John, many decades later, writes his gospel using Roman time.
Christ was not crucified until the sixth hour John 19:14,15	

When Critics Ask: *According to Roman time, the day ran from midnight to midnight. The Jewish 24 hour period began in the evening at 6 p.m. and the morning of that day began at 6 a.m. Therefore, when Mark asserts that at the third hour Christ was crucified, this was about 9 a.m. John stated that Christ's trial was about the sixth hour. This would place the trial before the crucifixion and this would not negate any testimony of the Gospel writers. This fits with John's other references to time. For example, he speaks about Jesus being weary from His journey from His trip from Judea to Samaria at the "sixth hour" and asking for water from the woman at the well. Considering the length of His trip, His weariness, and the normal evening time when people come to the well to drink and to water their animals, this fits better with 6 p.m., which is "the sixth hour" of the night by Roman time reckoning. The same is true of John's reference to the tenth hour in John 1:39, which would be 10 a.m., a more likely time to be out preaching than 4 a.m.*<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Mark 15:25.



## Alleged Historical Fact Contradictions Found in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
The two thieves reviled Christ. Matt 27:44 Mark 15:32 Only one of the thieves reviled Christ Luke 23:39,40	Both of these men are hardened criminals, and it is likely that both men cursed and insulted Jesus at the beginning. However, one of the men changed his mind about Jesus Christ while on the cross—his impending death looming large in his own eyes. When Critics Ask suggest that, when the second criminal heard Jesus forgive His enemies, that may have begun to change his thinking.

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ [= Messiah]? Save Yourself and us!"

But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into your kingdom."

And He said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." (Luke 23:39–43) This sounds very much like a man who has spent a few hours in agony reconsidering his life and his deeds.

### Lesson 321: Genesis 28:11–12

### Contradictions in the Bible IV continued

This final group of alleged contradictions from [Evil Bible](#) is listed under the heading *Speculative Doctrines*:

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Christ is equal with God John 10:30 Phil 2:5	Jesus is fully God and fully man; this is known theologically as the Hypostatic Union. In His humanity, He is equal to man and tested in all points as we are; in His Deity, He is equal to God in every respect. In this way, Jesus is a True Mediator, as He is equal to both parties (man and God) in the mediation. John 14:6 1Tim. 2:5
Christ is not equal with God John 14:28 Matt. 24:36	Therefore, when speaking from His humanity, Jesus is not equal to God, but is subject to the same natural forces as we are. Jesus is able to be thirsty and hungry, for instance. However, in His Deity, He is completely equal to God. When Jesus says, "Before Abraham, I am", He is speaking from His Deity. When He says, "I thirst", He is speaking from His humanity. When He says, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life", He is speaking from His Hypostatic Union.

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Jesus was all-powerful Matt 28:18 John 3:35	This apparent contradiction is explained by the doctrines referred to above. The is the <a href="#">Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union</a> ( <i>In the person of the incarnate Christ are two natures, divine and human, inseparably united without mixture or loss of separate identity, without loss or transfer of properties or attributes, the union being personal and eternal.</i> <sup>15</sup> ) and the <a href="#">Doctrine of Kenosis</a> . <i>During the dispensation of the hypostatic union, our Lord Jesus Christ voluntarily restricted the independent use of His divine attributes in compliance with the Father's plan for the Incarnation and the First Advent. This means that Jesus Christ did not use the attributes of His divine nature to benefit Himself, to provide for Himself, to glorify Himself, to act independently of the future protocol plan of God for the Church Age by the compromise of the prototype spiritual life.</i> <sup>16</sup> This so-called contradiction is key to the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
Jesus was not all-powerful Mark 6:5	

Jesus put Himself completely within the will of God the Father during His ministry on earth. He voluntarily gave up the free exercise of His Deity when fulfilling the plan of God on earth as a man. Over and over in the gospels we read about Jesus not doing His will but God's will (referring to God the Father). Over and over again, Jesus refers to doing miracles by means of the Holy Spirit (which would mean, He is not using His Deity to perform these miracles). Jesus, in His humanity, obeys God the Father in all things. Jesus, in His humanity, does not depend upon His own power (the doctrine of kenosis), but He depends upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

Functioning in this way, Jesus accomplishes two objectives: (1) He lives His life legitimately as a man, subject to the same physical limitations that we have; and the same temptations that we face. In addition to this (2) Jesus *test-drove* the Christian life for believers today.

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<sup>15</sup> From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=187](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=187) accessed November 25, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=3054](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=3054) accessed November 25, 2014.

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
The law was superseded by the Christian dispensation Luke 16:16 Eph 2:15 Rom 7:6	Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. He acted in accordance with the Mosaic Law, fulfilling all of its standards perfectly, and without sin. He also fulfilled the prophecies found in Old Testament, prophesying His coming. Jesus said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:17–19; ESV)
The law was not superseded by the Christian dispensation Matt 5:17-19	Jesus accomplished all that was in the Law and the Prophets. What the Law required of Him, He performed; what the prophecies said about Him, He fulfilled.

In the new dispensation, called here the *Christian dispensation*; and also known as the Church Age, the Mosaic Law is set aside (although most of its principles are *not* set aside). God no longer works through nation Israel, but God works through the church, which is made up of all of those who have believed in Jesus Christ, Jews or gentiles. See the **Doctrine of Dispensations** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) for more information.

Most of us have seen a '57 Chevy and some of us have even driven one. Chevrolet (that is, GM) set that product aside in subsequent years. It no longer produces 1957 Chevrolets. A 2014 Chevy Camaro Coupe is not the same as a '57 Chevy, but it still uses many of the principles of the '57 Chevy.

There were portions of the Mosaic Law which were completely set aside—like the animal sacrifices, which pointed forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Once the reality came, there was no longer a need for that which was *typical* of the reality.

Heb 10:1–4 explains this: For since the law has but a **shadow** of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (ESV) The Law, being a *shadow of the good things to come*, is another way of saying that the animal sacrifices (along with the Tabernacle, the various holy days, etc.) are *typical* of the Lord Jesus Christ and the crucifixion. They point toward Him and His work.

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Christ's mission was peace Luke 2:13–14</p>	<p>Jesus has come to establish <i>peace between man and God</i>. That is the reason we have phrases in the New Testament like <i>the gospel of peace</i> (Eph. 6:5). Paul is not talking about establishing world peace or peace between 2 or 3 nations, but peace between God and man. <b>For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.</b> (1Tim. 2:5–6; ESV; capitalized) It is the peace between God and man which is of primary importance to mankind. It is this that is meant by, "<b>Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!</b>" (Luke 2:14) Jesus did not come to establish peace between nations or even between individuals in the same family (Matt. 10:34 24:6), but between man and God.</p>
<p>Christ's mission was not peace Matt 10:34</p>	<p>John 5:33–34 <b>"You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved."</b> In context, Jesus is talking about those who are witnesses to Who He is, and He includes John the Baptizer in that list (who is a man). Unregenerate man and the religious types of His day would not be witnesses to His Hypostatic Union.</p> <p>John 15:27 reads: <b>"And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning."</b> (ESV) Jesus, in preparing His disciples to carry on after He is crucified, resurrected and then taken up into heaven, tells them that they will be His witness from that time forward. Again, there is no real contradiction here.</p>
<p>Christ received not testimony from man John 5:33–34</p>	<p>John 5:30–33 <b>"I can do nothing on My Own. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My Own will but the will of Him Who sent Me. If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not deemed true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about Me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."</b> You will note the passive voice: <i>My testimony is not deemed true</i>. The Law requires 2 or 3 witnesses, so that is what Jesus is providing (Deut. 17:6 Matt. 18:16). Jesus is not saying that He is lying; He is saying that the Law requires at least one more witness.</p>
<p>Christ did receive testimony from man John 15:27</p>	<p>John 5:30–33 <b>"I can do nothing on My Own. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My Own will but the will of Him Who sent Me. If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not deemed true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about Me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."</b> You will note the passive voice: <i>My testimony is not deemed true</i>. The Law requires 2 or 3 witnesses, so that is what Jesus is providing (Deut. 17:6 Matt. 18:16). Jesus is not saying that He is lying; He is saying that the Law requires at least one more witness.</p>
<p>Christ's witness of himself is true. John 8:18,14</p>	<p>John 5:30–33 <b>"I can do nothing on My Own. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My Own will but the will of Him Who sent Me. If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not deemed true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about Me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."</b> You will note the passive voice: <i>My testimony is not deemed true</i>. The Law requires 2 or 3 witnesses, so that is what Jesus is providing (Deut. 17:6 Matt. 18:16). Jesus is not saying that He is lying; He is saying that the Law requires at least one more witness.</p>
<p>Christ's witness of himself is not true. John 5:31</p>	<p>John 5:30–33 <b>"I can do nothing on My Own. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I seek not My Own will but the will of Him Who sent Me. If I alone bear witness about Myself, My testimony is not deemed true. There is another who bears witness about Me, and I know that the testimony that he bears about Me is true. You sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth."</b> You will note the passive voice: <i>My testimony is not deemed true</i>. The Law requires 2 or 3 witnesses, so that is what Jesus is providing (Deut. 17:6 Matt. 18:16). Jesus is not saying that He is lying; He is saying that the Law requires at least one more witness.</p>

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>Christ laid down His life for his friends. John 15:13 10:11</p>	<p>Jesus Christ died for all mankind. We are all inherently His enemies, because we all have Adam's original sin imputed to us and we have committed personal sins and we all have sin natures. Despite that, Jesus Christ died for us. Rom. 5:8 <b>God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.</b></p>
<p>Christ laid down His life for his enemies. Rom. 5:10</p>	<p>Some believers will achieve a state of friendship with God (like Abraham in James 2:23); and Jesus Christ died for them.</p>
<p>It was lawful for the Jews to put Christ to death. John 19:7</p>	<p>John 19:6–7 <b>When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made Himself the Son of God."</b> The Jews knew that they were not allowed to execute anyone apart from Roman law, otherwise they would never have involved Pilate or anyone else of the Roman empire. There is nothing in the Old Testament about penalty for someone who claims to be God. There is probably nothing in the Jewish religious customs about this either (although I have not researched that).</p>
<p>It was not lawful for the Jews to put Christ to death. John 18:31</p>	<p>Often, the evil thinking of the parents is passed along to their children. These children, with their parents' anti-God thinking, are also punished—but they are punished for their own viewpoint which they have taken up from their parents. God holds us responsible for the things that we do and the things that we think—whether they come from our parents or not.</p>
<p>Children are punished for the sins of the parents Ex. 20:5</p>	<p>Now, there are also natural results from actions that parents take. Our government is building up an horrendous amount of debt, and this will affect our children and grandchildren. The inflation and the economic chaos that will result are natural consequences.</p>
<p>Children are not punished for the sins of the parents Ezek. 18:20</p>	<p>Obviously, there are ways a parent can harm his children, and this harm continues for decades or longer.</p>

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
Man is justified by faith alone Rom. 3:20 Gal 2:16 Gal 3:11–12 Rom. 4:2	There are at least 2 forms of justification: (1) Justification by faith alone in Christ alone (for salvation). (2) Justification by works: a believer in time by his actions glorifies God.  The word here is <i>dikaiōō</i> (δικαίόω) [pronounced <i>dik-ah-YOH-oh</i> ], which means, <i>to render righteous; to show, exhibit, evince, one to be righteous; to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be</i> . Thayer definition only. Strong's #1344. In salvation, we are positionally pronounced righteous. In our life subsequent to salvation, we can produce divine righteousness by our actions.
Man is not justified by faith alone James 2:21,24 Rom. 2:13	If Paul, in the same letter (the Epistle to the Romans), speaks of justification in two ways, then it ought to be clear that there is no contradiction involved.
It is impossible to fall from grace. John 10:28 Rom. 8:38,39	All believers have eternal security. Once we have believed in Jesus Christ, we cannot lose our salvation, no matter how sorry our subsequent lives are. This is because our salvation stands upon the finished work of Jesus Christ, and not upon our own works. See the <b>Doctrine of Eternal Security</b> (external links). <a href="#">Bible Doctrine Resources</a> or <a href="#">Verse by Verse</a> (click on <i>printed doctrines</i> and then go to <i>Eternal Security</i> ).
It is possible to fall from grace. Ezek. 18:24 Heb. 6:4-6 2Peter 2:20–21	

The final two passages noted are difficult passages, so we will handle them separately.

Heb. 6:1–6 **Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding Him up to contempt.** The context of this verse (Heb. 5:12–14) is there were many Hebrews who had believed in Jesus Christ, but were not spiritually progressing as they should. There are a set of basic principles (listed above) that the Hebrew believers ought to understand, but they did not. They reveal that they do not understand these basic principles (represented by the word *repentance*) because they



## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
	<p>continue to offer animal sacrifices (Heb. 7:27–28 9:25). As long as they continued to observe the various Hebrew rituals, they could not be <i>restored</i> to these basic principles. By engaging in animal sacrifices, they are continuing to <i>crucify the Son of God over and over again, holding Him up to contempt</i>. They could not grow spiritually as long as they continue to do that. If they kept offering up animal sacrifices, they could not be renewed to the fundamental principles of Bible doctrine.</p>
	<p>2Peter 2:19–22 <i>They [false teachers] promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire."</i> In life, the unbeliever is not a child of God, and therefore, not subject to God's discipline. He is subject to the consequences of his own actions. However, once a person believes in Jesus Christ, then God becomes his Father, and he is subject to the discipline of God. God's discipline while on earth can be quite severe. Furthermore a person's own bad decisions can also have a very negative impact on his life.</p>
	<p>A dog who returns to his vomit has vomited up something which does not agree with him. But yet, he goes back and sifts through this rejected vomit to see if maybe there was something good still there. When you believe in the truth, you also reject things which are against God. However, as a believer, you may later reject the truth; which means you may often go back and try again things you were once smart enough to reject (like the dog returning to his vomit). So, as a believer, you may believe in Jesus Christ; but later, reject some doctrine that you hear (the Angelic Conflict or whatever) and find yourself rejecting Jesus Christ for that reason. Then you return to the vomit of your past life—that is, you return to doing and thinking things that you were smart enough to reject at one time. In time, your life will be worse than it was before. Eternity is a different matter; but Peter is speaking of the entanglements of life.</p>
<p>No man is without sin. 1Kings 8:46 Prov. 20:9 Eccles. 7:20 Rom. 3:10</p>	<p>If you know any Christians at all, then you know that Christians are not sinless.</p> <p>We do have periods of time when we are sinless. When we have named our sins to God, and are filled with the Holy Spirit (1John 1:9—the context), the believer then enjoys a period of sinlessness (that is, until he sins again). This period of time might be a few minutes, a few hours or even a day or so. That is what 1John 3 is all about.</p>
<p>Christians are sinless. 1John 3:9,6,8</p>	

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

Contradictions	Explanation
<p>There is to be a resurrection of the dead.                      1Cor 15:52                      Rev. 20:12,13                      Luke 20:37                      1Cor. 15:16</p>	<p>The correct understanding is, believers will be resurrected.</p> <p>Job says: "Remember that my life is a breath; my eye will never again see good. The eye of him who sees me will behold me no more; while your eyes are on me, I shall be gone. As the cloud fades and vanishes, so he who goes down to Sheol does not come up; he returns no more to his house, nor does his place know him anymore." (Job 7:7–10) There is the sense that, when a person dies, they never return to their life again. There will be a point of time in all of our lives that, we die and we will never walk through the front door of our house ever again. Eccles. 9:5 reads: <i>For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten.</i> There is a distinct separation between those on earth living life and those who have died.</p>
<p>There is to be no resurrection of the dead.                      Job 7:9 Eccles. 9:5                      Isa. 26:14</p>	<p>Isa. 26:14 is speaking of the unbeliever (see v. 10); and Isa. 26:19 reads: <i>Your dead shall live; their bodies shall rise.</i> So Isaiah is teaching resurrection for the righteous.</p>
<p>Reward and punishment to be bestowed in this world                      Prov. 11:31                      Reward and punishment to be bestowed in the next world                      Rev. 20:12                      Matt. 16:27                      2Cor. 5:10</p>	<p>Is this really a difficult <i>contradiction</i> to figure out? Does God not deal with us in time and in eternity; do we not receive blessings from God now and in eternity? Why does one necessarily contradict the other?</p> <p>There are exceptions to this: some believers will receive great blessing in heaven because they endured so much difficulty here in time on earth.</p>
<p>Annihilation the portion of all mankind                      Job 3:11,13-17,19-22                      Eccles. 9:5,10                      3:19–20                      Endless misery the portion of all mankind                      Matt. 25:46                      Rev. 20:10,15 14:11                      Daniel 12:2</p>	<p>The Job passage does not speak of annihilation of mankind. See <b>Job 3</b> (<a href="#">HTML</a>) (<a href="#">PDF</a>) (<a href="#">WPD</a>).</p> <p>Eccles. 9:5, 10 <i>For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going.</i> Ecclesiastes simply speaks of a complete separation from life.</p>

## Alleged Contradictions Of Speculative Doctrines in the Bible

### Contradictions

### Explanation

When Critics Ask: [Solomon in Ecclesiastes 9:5) affirmed also that the dead do not know what is going on “under the sun” ( 9:6 ). But while they do not know what is happening on earth, they certainly do know what is going on in heaven (cf. Rev. 6:9 ). In short, these texts refer simply to man in relation to this present life—they say nothing about the life to come immediately after this one.<sup>17</sup>

This completes our study of some of the alleged contradictions. For each section, I took the first 10, 15 or 20 so-called contradictions listed by [evilbible.com](http://evilbible.com) (a fairly well-known anti-Bible site, which I accessed October 14, 2014 and several times since then) and explained them. No contradiction was left out; I simply did not cover the entire list for each section.

For most of the contradictions which I read, I can answer them without a web search and without having to search out the answer from my considerable personal resources. Sometimes they did not understand things like anthropopathism or the Hypostatic Union; and sometimes they simply ignore this or that phrase within the context which explains the apparent contradiction. Of their *contradictions*, only 2 or 3 were difficult to explain.

What will *never* happen is, one of these websites will read an explanation (such as, “although God is a Spirit, He can choose to manifest Himself in a way that He might be seen”), and then say, “Oh, I get it now. I see how this can be explained.” And then remove the *contradiction*. They don’t do that. They will *never* do that. These websites will not remove any of their contradictions, even when the explanation is quite simple. They are not in the business of disseminating honest information; they are in the business of persuading you that the Bible is not the Word of God. So every contradiction on their webpage will stand forever more, as if etched in stone.

These anti-Bible websites need to have a long list of *contradictions*. A webpage of contradictions is not very impressive if it only lists 3 or 4 contradictions.<sup>18</sup> However, if they list 50 contradictions, and, from the outset, ban [any classification of explanation that they do not like](#) (like saying, *you may not explain this using the word anthropopathism*), it appears to be impressive and well thought out (although most of these contradictions were found elsewhere and put in this website—usually without attribution).

Most of these websites do not allow for discussion of their list.

On the other hand, I make every attempt to make my translation and interpretation of Scripture error-free. When I come across a mistake that I make (and I certainly do make them), I endeavor to go back and fix this error of mine. I do not need to protect my own ego.

<sup>17</sup> From Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask*; Victor Books; taken from e-Sword, Eccles. 9:5.

<sup>18</sup> In these long lists of contradictions, there were perhaps 2 or 3 which required actual research on my part, beyond opening the Bible to the passages cited.

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I have several books on the topic of the Bible being evil or filled with contradictions. I recall with a smile one author who promises that he would make the Bible a thing of the past—he is, by the way, an author you have *never* heard of. The Bible is here and he is a thing of the past.

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## Lessons 322–323: Genesis 28:1–22

## The uniqueness of the Bible

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The progression of this study is as follows. Jacob observes angels; and I made the observation that quite a number of Biblical authors make reference to angels without contradiction. To the Bible critic, there is no such thing as angels. So, how can a dozen authors writing individually come up with a consistent picture of angelic creation—particularly, if such creatures do not exist? How exactly is agreement reached among a variety of writers over hundreds of years time—writers who have never met or consulted with one another—regarding something which skeptics do not even believe exists?

This led us to examine a few so-called Bible contradictions. We had examined a few of them before, but we studied a great deal more of them.

And this leads to a short study of the remarkable collection of the books of the Bible.

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The Bible is quite a remarkable book or set of books. We should not be able to take a collection of ancient writings, by shepherds, kings, nomads, doctors, tax collectors and generals and end up with an authoritative delineation of the nature of God, of the plan of God, and the history of mankind. That defies human logic. Such a collection should seem disjointed, pointless, contradictory, and filled with a variety of opinions and myths (those who do not believe in the Bible believe that is a good description of the Bible). However, in reality, the Bible comes across as a cohesive whole, as if its writing had been directed by One Person.

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### The Uniqueness of the Bible

1. Conservative Christians usually see the span of time for the writing of the Bible as 1500 years (from the writings of Moses to last words penned by John on the Island of Patmos). Liberal Christians and critics shorten that time to maybe a 1000 years or so, having all kinds of weird theories about the authorship. I believe that the greater part of Genesis was originally written by believers who actually experienced those events (the writing of Jacob in Genesis is intensely personal and filled with details). So I believe that the Bible was written over a period of 2000–4000 years, the writing of Genesis and Job being originally preserved by memorization, when man's mind was much greater in its capacity than it is today.
  2. From time of Moses to Jesus, there are about 50 generations. So the Bible was written over a period of greater than 50 generations. There are about 56 generations from Abraham to Jesus. What other book has been composed by
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## The Uniqueness of the Bible

so many different generations? I am not aware of any—not a single one. Is there even a book written over a period of 10 generations? Again, I am not aware of any. Wouldn't people writing 500 or 1000 years later dismiss what has come before as outdated or primitive? That is how critics try to portray the Bible today—but no writer of Scripture 500 or 1000 years later ever besmirches or corrects any previous writer. Once Jesus fulfilled the Law and the Prophets, some portions of the Law were set aside—but only because He had fulfilled them. Those portions of the Law looked forward to Jesus, and were fulfilled in Him and by Him. They could be set aside not because there was anything wrong with them, but because they had been fulfilled.

3. The authors of the Bible include nomadic shepherds (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob); a man trained and educated to assume the throne of Egypt (Moses); a military general (Joshua); a priest/prophet given over to God (Samuel); a poet, musician, writer and king (David); a highly educated philosopher, engineer, builder and king (Solomon); a prime minister (Daniel); a tax collector (Matthew); a physician and historian (Luke); fishermen (Peter and John); a man who barely spoke the language in which he wrote (John) and a rabbi turned believer (Paul).
4. The Bible is also unique in its perspective of the key figures of human history. Most people who know anything about the Bible or about the Jewish race know Abraham; and some know a few things about him. Although Abraham was a very successful businessman, he was not a king—he was a wandering shepherd, and yet we know about him—but who could name a king from this same era? While Abraham was alive, there was no Israel. And yet we know about Abraham.
5. The Bible is unique in the perspective presented by its human authors. King David had about 10 wives and 10 mistresses and King Solomon had 600 wives and 300 mistresses. Both of them had errant sons. It is human nature to try to rationalize what you have done in your own life. So, in reading Proverbs or the Psalms, we might expect to read many diatribes against errant sons or some justification for having more than one wife. However, when it comes to young people, the emphasis of Proverbs is upon the importance of the good teaching of the father. When it comes to marriage, monogamy is always presented as the standard (which is, of course, true throughout the Bible). There is nowhere in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes or Song of Solomon where one might find justification for polygamy.
6. We find this honest approach to one's own character over and over again in various books of the Bible. Elijah whines about being the only faithful man remaining, and God upbraids him for this. Jonah expresses his distinct disapprobation for the Assyrians that God sends him to evangelize—and God corrects him for his wrong notions (even though the Assyrians are generally not spoken of favorably in other passages of Scripture). The Apostle Paul, in the book of Acts, compromises the clarity of the gospel message in order to get a hearing with the Jews of Jerusalem—and he is disciplined by God for this. King David takes the wife of a soldier and then has that soldier killed. He is put under pressure/discipline by God for 10 years for doing these evil things. There is no



## The Uniqueness of the Bible

- question in our minds that what David did was wrong. The mistakes and wrongdoing of the saints are never glossed over or excused or rationalized.
7. The Bible was written under a variety of circumstances: Genesis 24 is clearly a bedtime story for children, recounted either by the children's mother or by the slave of their grandfather; some portions were written under the stars as a shepherd (David; possibly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob); some portions in the palace as a king (David and Solomon); in the desert on a 40 year march (Moses); during or following a military campaign to control the land of Canaan (Joshua); in a dungeon (Jeremiah); within a Roman prison (Paul); while isolated on the Isle of Patmos (John); and while traveling on a missionary tour (Luke).
  8. The mental states of the writers varied dramatically. King David wrote during times of great pain and suffering; as well as during times of great happiness (as is so apparent in the Psalms). Solomon wrote while suffering great pangs of old age; he wrote as a younger man, confused by his pursuit of human excellence; he wrote as a man clearly understanding the importance of his father's teachings; he wrote about his pursuit of and rebuff by a woman. Moses wrote while being very frustrated with the people of Israel who saw many signs and wonders and yet, they still acted like a bunch of idiots. Paul wrote letters to churches and individuals when suffering from a physical ailment, when under the pressure and threat of death, when in jail, and as a man confident of his theological approach.
  9. The Bible was written in West Asia, Africa, and Europe.
  10. The Bible was written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek; and in a variety of styles of each language. The most elementary Greek student can pick up the work of Luke and of John and note a striking difference in vocabulary, cadence, thought, and even intention.
  11. There is a 400 year gap between the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament was in constant and general use at the time that Jesus walked the earth. It had been translated into Greek by this time and was written about extensively by the Jews (although, they primarily distorted the meaning of Old Testament Scripture).
  12. The topics of Scripture have been very controversial: the existence and character of God; the function of the free will of individuals; the function and purpose of civil government and the response to the function of civil government. The Bible discusses family, children, war, peace, discipline, slavery, capital punishment, and the concept of right and wrong in society. Any one of these topics could start an extensive argument on the internet, yet, there is a moral agreement throughout Scripture. Our American society today does not agree with our society 50 years ago (the strongly anti-Communist and fiscally conservative Democrat John Kennedy of 1960 would find no place in the Democrat party today), and yet, there is a consistent God and a uniform morality throughout Scripture, though written over a period of thousands of years.
  13. Probably the most controversial subject is man's relationship to God; and the Bible has a unique approach to this, which not found in any other religious book.
    - 1) God's love cannot overrule His justice and righteousness; so, because we



## The Uniqueness of the Bible

- are all guilty of sin, God must condemn us. However, He took upon Himself the burden of our sin (Isa. 53:4–5, 11–12 Gal. 3:13 Heb. 9:28 1Peter 2:24 3:18).
- 2) Our relationship with God is established by faith in Him (Genesis 15:6 Psalm 106:31 John 3:16, 18, 36 Gal. 3:6–14 Eph. 2:8–9 Titus 3:5).
  - 3) Every other religion has a series of steps or requirements which must be met in order for a man to be saved. None of them address man's inherent sinfulness and the sins that he has already committed. These things seem to magically disappear in these other religions when man starts fulfilling the conditions of that religion.
  - 4) However, the Bible remains consistent throughout regarding God; God's love, righteousness and justice; man's basic nature; and God's relationship to man.
14. F. F. Bruce<sup>1</sup> (The Books and the Parchments, Fleming H. Revell) observes that: "Any part of the human body can only be properly explained in reference to the whole body. And any part of the Bible can only be properly explained in reference to the whole Bible." Bruce continues: "The Bible, at first sight, appears to be a collection of literature --- mainly Jewish. If we inquire into the circumstances under which the various Biblical documents were written, we find that they were written at intervals over a space of nearly 1400 years. The writer wrote in various lands, from Italy in the west, to Mesopotamia and possibly Persia in the east. The writers themselves were a diverse group of people, not only separated from each other by hundreds of years and hundreds of miles, but belonging to the most different walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsmen, soldiers, legislators, fishermen, statesmen, courtiers, priests, and prophets, a tentmaker, a Rabbi and gentile physician, not to speak of others of whom we know nothing, apart from the writings they have left us. The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law (civil, criminal, ethical, ritual, sanitary), religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biography, personal correspondence, personal memoirs and diaries, in addition to the distinctively Biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic. For all that, the Bible is not simply a collection of writings, or anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together. An anthology is compiled by an anthologist, but no anthologist compiled the Bible."
15. McDowell: *If you took 10 authors, all from one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language, and just one controversial subject (the Bible speaks on hundreds of subjects in harmony and agreement). Would the authors agree? No! You would have a conglomeration!*
16. This quotation is found [many places](#) on the internet without attribution: *Imagine that a book began to be written during the time of the Roman Empire, continued down through the Middle Ages, and was completed in this 20th century, with many different writers contributing. What result would you anticipate if the writers were as diverse in their occupations as soldiers, kings, priests, fishermen, herdsmen, and doctors? Would you expect the book to be harmonious and*

## The Uniqueness of the Bible

*coherent? 'Hardly!' you may say. Well, the Bible was written under these circumstances. Yet, it is harmonious in its entirety, not just in overall concepts but in minute details too.*

17. Do you know what the #1 selling book last month was? Well, you won't find it listed that way anywhere, but it was the Bible. How about the month before that? The Bible. The best selling book 3 months ago? The Bible. Since the invention of the printing press, the Bible has been the #1 bestseller, month after month, year after year. The critic may claim, *well, that does not prove it is the Word of God!* And it doesn't; but this does prove that the Bible is unique and above all other books.
18. Of course the Bible is translated and paraphrased into more languages than any other book in human history; and it was probably the first book or one of the first books translated into another language. The entire Old Testament was translated into Greek circa 200 B.C.
19. The Bible is unique in its survival.
  - 1) McDowell: *Written on materials that perishes easily, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish it's style, correctness nor existence.*
  - 2) Bernard Ramm: *Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. They kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word, and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity --- scribes, lawyers, massoreetes. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca? <sup>2</sup>*
  - 3) John Lea, in *The Greatest Book in the World*, compared the Bible to the more recent writings of Shakespear: *In an article in the North American Review, a writer made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures which shows how much greater care must have been bestowed upon the Biblical manuscripts than upon any other writings, even when there was so much more opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of the printed copy than when all the copies had to be made by hand. He said: "It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old. During nearly fifteen of which it existed only as a manuscript ... with perhaps a dozen or so exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than any doubts as to the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."*<sup>3</sup>
20. The Persecution of the Scriptures:

## The Uniqueness of the Bible

- 1) Tens of thousands of men (or more) have attacked the Bible in a variety of ways. There are a huge number of books designed to *end the Bible*. I own one which promised to do so, by an author you have never heard of. Voltaire, an influential French infidel, said that, within a 100 years of his death, the Bible would be swept out of existence. 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used Voltaire's press and house to produce copies of the Bible.
  - 2) In A.D. 303, an edict was issued by Diocletian to destroy all Christian churches, to burn all their Scriptures, and to persecute all professing Christians. 25 years later, Constantine, his successor, called for 50 copies of the Scriptures to be prepared at the expense of the government.
  - 3) Interestingly enough, some of the greatest attacks upon Scripture comes from the Catholic church. At some point in time, popes decided that it was not a good idea for the common people to have copies of Scripture in a language that they understood. So the Catholic church actually went out of its way to keep this from happening—even persecuting those who tried to disseminate copies of Scripture. This period of time in human history is known as the Dark Ages.
21. The Bible has survived, despite intense criticism.
- 1) Bernard Ramm<sup>4</sup> adds that: *A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or belles letters of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? The Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions.*
  - 2) Christians theologians and those posing as Christian theologians came up with a preposterous notion known as documentary hypothesis or the JPED theory. They begin with the assumption that nobody was writing stuff down during the time of Moses, and therefore, developed very unusual theories about the authorship of Scripture, based upon that assumption. Well, now we know that assumption is false, but this theory is still taught as fact in hundreds of seminaries all over the United States and elsewhere. So we might say that the Bible is also attacked by those within the tent as well as by those without. See **Documentary Hypothesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
  - 3) If you search *Bible*, *Bible contradictions*, *Bible problems* or whatever on [Amazon](#), you will find hundreds of books dedicated to taking down the Bible. Many of them will profess that they will be the author to remove the Bible from its lofty perch. One generation passes away, and so does that author and usually his book.
22. No one in the Bible is presented as sinless; not the patriarchs, not the kings of

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Israel, not the prophets or priests of God, not even the disciples of our Lord. Even the great Apostle Paul in the book of Acts reveals some serious shortcomings in at least one of the important decisions which he made (to offer a vow in order to get a hearing by the Jews). Only one man is presented as sinless, and that man is Christ Jesus.

23. Science and the Bible. The Bible is primarily an historical work, but there are principles of science found throughout Scripture which are quite remarkable.

1) From George DeHoff's [Why We Believe in the Bible](#) (accessed December 2, 2014): *Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) first announced that there are only five "manifestations of the unknowable" in existence--time, force, action, space and matter and that all else is based on these fundamentals.* Interestingly enough, Genesis 1:1 reads: *In the beginning [time], God [force] created [action] the heavens [space] and the earth [matter].*

2) The creation of the heavens and the earth appear to parallel the concept of the Big Bang theory, which would make sense. The creation of the heavens and the earth in Genesis 1:1 is not the same as the restoration of the earth which follows in vv. 3–31.

3) In Genesis, the earth appears to have been around a lot longer than man.

4) In the restoration of the earth, there is at least the suggestion that the earth was packed in ice. The Holy Spirit *broods* over the earth.

5) Also from [DeHoff](#): *All men once held with Sir Isaac Newton the idea that light is an emanation from the sun and other luminous bodies, but in recent years men think they have proved that light existed before the sun. There are many theories concerning light but all scientists are apparently agreed that light existed before the sun was made its governor.* In Genesis 1:3, we have light (on the first day); and in Genesis 1:14–16 (on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day), we have the sun and stars being made.

6) God spends a full day making the atmosphere for the earth; yet the concept of atmosphere man has only begun to appreciate in the past few hundred years. God does this before He creates plants, animals or people. You might say, "Well of course—you cannot have plants, animals or people without atmosphere." And you are right. But how did some uneducated and superstitious shepherd know this millennia before any scientist?

7) From [DeHoff](#): *Scientists now teach that there are three great kingdoms mineral, vegetable and animal. This scientific division is a comparatively recent innovation. Neither the cuneiform records of Babylon and Assyria nor the hieroglyphics of Egypt reveal that the ancients knew of such a division. It is thought that Linnaeus was the first to recognize these three kingdoms and he made his announcement in A.D. 1735.* In Genesis 1, the first 10 verses are about the mineral material kingdom, the next nine verses are about the vegetation, and the remainder of the chapter is devoted to the animal kingdom (which includes man).

8) The body of man is made out of the chemicals of the earth—not really an

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intuitive concept. However, life must be breathed into us. Even today, we don't know how this happens. We cannot give life to something which has no life. We cannot take non-living chemicals from the earth and turn them into living organisms.

- 9) God makes Eve by means of modified cloning. I did not understand how God could take a rib and use the genetic material to make the woman when I first read this passage 40 years ago. Today, we actually understand theoretically and to a limited degree what this process is.
- 10) God compares the stars of the sky to the sands of the sea in number. Until the past hundred or so years, this would have seemed to be a preposterous comparison. From [DeHoff](#): *The ancients believed that there were only a very few stars in the heavens. In 150 B.C. Hipparchus said that there were less than three thousand. In A.D. 150 Ptolemy said there were not more than three thousand. This was considered a high estimate. But, 2000 years before that, God suggested that there were billions upon billions of stars by comparing the stars of the heavens to the sands of the sea.*
- 11) The earth is said to be a circle or a sphere in the book of Isaiah (Isa. 40:22).
  - (1) From [Answers.com](#) (accessed December 2, 2014): *"The shape of the earth". The "Encyclopedia Americana" said: "The earliest known image that men had of the earth was that it was a flat, rigid platform at the center of the universe. ... The concept of a spherical earth was not widely accepted until the Renaissance." Some early navigators even feared that they might sail off the edge of the flat earth. But then the introduction of the compass and other advancements made possible longer ocean voyages. These "voyages of discovery," another encyclopedia explains, "showed that the world was round, not flat as most people had believed."*
  - (2) When Jesus describes the coming of the Son of Man, it is an event which is sudden (Luke 17:24), and yet happens to some people in the daytime (Luke 17:31, 35) and others at night (Luke 17:34). This requires a spherical earth.
- 12) And God is said to hang the earth upon nothing (Job 26:7). There were ancient theories from ancient times: *Some believed that the earth was supported by four elephants standing on a big sea turtle. Aristotle, a Greek philosopher and scientist of the fourth century BCE, taught that the earth could never hang in empty space. Instead, he taught that the heavenly bodies were fixed to the surface of solid, transparent spheres, with each sphere nested within another sphere. Supposedly the earth was on the innermost sphere, and the outermost sphere held the stars...The Bible's accurate statement predated Aristotle by over 1,100 years. Yet, Aristotle's views continued to be taught as fact for some 2,000 years after his death! Finally, in 1687 C.E., Sir Isaac Newton published his findings that the earth*



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*was held in space in relation to other heavenly objects by mutual attraction, that is, gravity. But that was close to 3,200 years after the Bible had stated with elegant simplicity that God hangs the earth upon nothing.* Quotations are from [Answers.com](http://Answers.com) accessed December 2, 2014.

- 13) Isa. 40:22 *God is enthroned above the circle of the earth; its inhabitants are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth and spreads them out like a tent to live in.* (HCSB) Isaiah is describing the atmosphere which is stretched out over the earth like a thin cloth (it is both very thin and you can see through it). The atmosphere is absolutely required in order for us to live on the earth. Compared to the mass of the earth, the Troposphere is like a thin layer stretched out over the earth—just as Isaiah described. Most of the atmosphere is within 10 miles of the surface of the earth—an earth which has about an 8000 mile diameter—so Isaiah describes quite well the atmosphere of the earth, in 700 B.C., long before man knew that there even was an atmosphere.
  - 14) From [DeHoff](#): *In March, 1919, the government of the United States launched its first concrete ship at San Francisco. The dimensions were 300 feet, by 50 feet, by 30 feet. This is the same proportion as the ark which Noah built. Even with all our modern development in shipbuilding we still hold to approximately the same proportions as those used by Noah in building his boat. Who taught Noah how to build ships? How did he know what proportions to make his ark?*
  - 15) From [DeHoff](#): *Matthew Fontaine Maury, "the pathfinder of the seas", and the founder of the science of Oceanography, was a firm believer in and a close student of the Bible. His teaching caused the Annapolis Academy to be founded and his memory is honored and respected throughout the world. On monument row in Richmond, Virginia, is a statue of the great scientist sitting with the Bible in one hand and his charts of the sea in the other. Behind him is a globe of the earth which he helped to explore. Before Matthew Fontaine Maury lived there were no sailing lanes and no charts of the sea. One day, when he was ill, his son read to him from the eighth Psalm. He read that God put under man "...the fowls of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea." "Read that again," he said. Upon hearing it the second time, the venerable scientist said, "If the Word of God says there are paths in the sea, they must be there. I will find them." Within a few years he had charted the principal lanes or paths of the sea and these are followed by oceangoing vessels to this day. How did David know of these paths of the sea?*
  - 16) There are dozens of examples of how the Scriptures lines up with modern science, even though the writers of Scripture were not scientists.
24. Modern Historians:
- 1) The historian Phillip Schaff vividly describes the uniqueness of the Savior of the Bible: *This Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon; without*



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*science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all philosophers and scholars combined; without the eloquence of schools, He spoke such words of life as were never spoken before or since, and pronounced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet; without writing a single line, He set more pens in motion, and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, learned volumes, works of art, and songs of praise than the whole army of great men of ancient and modern times.*<sup>5</sup>

- 2) From the unbeliever historian Will Durant: *The discoveries here summarize have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of the Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the test of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments, or excavations... We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.*<sup>6</sup> Durant has written one of the greatest set of volumes on Ancient History. He rejects anything supernatural, and yet confirms that the historicity of Genesis is, so far, unimpeachable.
25. Ancient Historians and Jesus. I have read and listened to people who dogmatically assert that Jesus is a made-up character. Since Jesus is the heart of the Bible, it is reasonable to ask, are there any historical references to Jesus Christ outside of the Bible? These references are from [Everystudent.com](http://Everystudent.com)
  - 1) Cornelius Tacitus (A.D. 55-120), an historian of first-century Rome, is considered one of the most accurate historians of the ancient world. An excerpt from Tacitus tells us that the Roman emperor Nero "inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class...called Christians. ...Christus [Christ], from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus..."<sup>7</sup> How do you have Christians without Christ?
  - 2) Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian (A.D. 38-100), wrote about Jesus in his Jewish Antiquities. From Josephus, "we learn that Jesus was a wise man who did surprising feats, taught many, won over followers from among Jews and Greeks, was believed to be the Messiah, was accused by the Jewish leaders, was condemned to be crucified by Pilate, and was considered to be resurrected."<sup>8</sup>
  - 3) Suetonius, Pliny the Younger, and Thallus also wrote about Christian worship and persecution that is consistent with New Testament accounts.
  - 4) Even the Jewish Talmud, certainly not biased toward Jesus, concurs about the major events of his life. From the Talmud, "we learn that Jesus was conceived out of wedlock, gathered disciples, made blasphemous claims about himself, and worked miracles, but these miracles are attributed to sorcery and not to God."<sup>9</sup>
  - 5) The author of this [Every Student](http://Every Student) article concludes: *This is remarkable information considering that most ancient historians focused on political*

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*and military leaders, not on obscure rabbis from distant provinces of the Roman Empire. Yet ancient historians (Jews, Greeks and Romans) confirm the major events that are presented in the New Testament, even though they were not believers themselves.*

26. Jesus spoke of false prophets, using the well-known phrase, **“By their fruits, you will know them.”** (Matt. 7:16).
  - 1) Have you ever heard the testimony, “I used to steal, lie, drink, use and sell drugs, abuse my family, cheat on my wife; but then I came across these books on atheism, and now, I have paid all of my debts, I no longer drink or use drugs, and have patched things up with my family.” Of course not! We hear a testimony like this from someone who has believed in Jesus Christ. Paraphrased from [DeHoff](#).
  - 2) From [DeHoff](#): *In the days of the Old Testament all nations, except the Hebrews, were built on slavery. The Hebrew nation, even when it permitted slavery surrounded it with many alleviations and held no one in servitude more than seven years. The Roman nation with a population of about one hundred and twenty-five million held more than sixty million in the basest sort of slavery. Overworked, underfed and killed at the pleasure of their owners, these slaves were indeed "without God and without hope" in the world. But lo, the Christ came and died, and from the very beginning slaves were received into the churches of Christ on the same basis as their masters. The New Testament teaches the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. Where Christianity has gone, slavery has either retreated or been destroyed. While Mohammedanism has enslaved millions, Christianity has freed millions.*
  - 3) From [DeHoff](#) concerning the place of women in society: *In ancient times women held a degraded place among all nations except the Hebrews. In Rome a man might put his wife to death without a trial; in Greece the women who ministered to the lowest passions were highly honored. The Hebrews honored their wives and sisters. Who has not heard of Rebekah and Rachel, Ruth and Hannah, and Deborah and Esther? And time would fail us to tell of the woman who was once the virgin Mary, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, Lydia, Priscilla and a host of women who are highly honored in the Bible. The position of women in many eastern countries today is lower than that of the Hebrew women in 1,000 B.C. It is only in Christian lands that men and women stand side by side in doing the work which the Heavenly Father gave them to do.*
27. One could also look at the concept of type and how Jesus fulfilled the many Old Testament types which are found. See **Typology** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
28. We could have also examined fulfilled prophecies of Scripture. Although I have not carefully examined this page, [100 Prophecies](#) might do a good job on this. Also examine **Jesus in the Old and New Testaments** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
29. There is a great deal more which can be done on this topic. Josh McDowell's books are among the best in this realm. George DeHoff's [book](#), (available online)

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is also excellent.

The quotations from *answers.com* (and other similar sites) obviously came from someone's book as opposed to having been written by someone who simply sat down and answered the question to the best of his own ability. However, these exact quotes are spread so far and wide across the internet, I don't know who to properly attribute them to.

There is an interesting contrast between the written Word of God and the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ. Jesus did not write anything down, nor did He instruct anyone to write anything down. His public ministry was quite short—3 or 4 years. It is so short that we should not know anything about Him. The ground that He walked upon was quite limited. Primarily He walked between Galilee and Jerusalem, covering a distance of less than 100 miles north to south. He was struck down in the prime of His youth. Of all the known religious figures of history, His public ministry was the shortest, the amount of material that he wrote down was the least, and the area where He proclaimed His message was the smallest. We should not even know that Jesus exists. However, most Christian scholars agree that the material which makes up the New Testament was all composed by the people who are said to have composed it during the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.

Regarding the 1<sup>st</sup> century Christians who wrote the New Testament and who evangelized the world—they were not rewarded for their efforts. They were not held in high esteem throughout the Roman empire. Although respected in the churches that they founded, they were persecuted, jailed, executed, martyred, and banished from society. We know this through their own words, through historical records, and by tradition. These men *knew* whether or not the information they were writing about was true or not. They *knew* whether or not they saw the risen Christ. They *knew* their own writings to be the truth or stuff that they just made up. And yet, to a man, they all suffered for what they wrote and publically taught. 11 of the 12 Apostles were put to death for their testimony of the Lord. Any one of them could have recanted his testimony or his writings when facing certain death—again, things they *knew* were true or false. And yet, in this period of great prolific writing, we have nothing to indicate that these men backed down from their testimony of speaking with the Risen Christ.

People die as religious martyrs all the time; people die for things that they believe in all the time; but how often do people willingly die for things they *know* to be false? Fundamental to the testimony of the Apostles was, every one of them had seen the risen Christ on several occasions. Remember that Thomas, hearing this testimony from the others, still doubted them—until he saw Jesus with his own eyes. All of that has to be the truth or a load of lies—and yet, every Apostle was willing to suffer persecution and to eventually die for this testimony.

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Remember how the disciples behaved when Jesus was taken into custody in the Garden of Gethsemane? What did they do? The scattered like sheep; they ran for their lives. That is how the disciples of Jesus responded, even after spending 3 years with Him teaching; even after spending 3 years observing His miracles. They still ran to preserve their own lives. John remained for the crucifixion, and Peter remained until he denied the Lord thrice, and then he left, experiencing personal disgust for himself. Yet, one week later, the acts of the disciples revealed remarkable bravery, which continued throughout their lives. What happened? According to the Bible, there was something that happened. They all saw the Risen Christ.

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The basic points were taken from Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict Volume I*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1979 Campus Crusade for Christ; pp. 14–24. Many were expanded upon.

<sup>1</sup> Cut and paste from <http://home.surewest.net/dfrench/evidence/unique.htm> accessed October 14, 2014; but I originally read this in *Evidence That Demands a Verdict Volume I*; p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> From above, but originally from Bernard Ramm; *Protestant Christian References*; Moody Press; 1957; pp. 230–231.

<sup>3</sup> Cut and paste from above. McDowell's book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict Volume I*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>4</sup> Cut and paste from above, but originally from Bernard Ramm; *Protestant Christian References*; Moody Press; 1957; pp. 232–233.

<sup>5</sup> Cut and paste from above, but originally from Philip Schaff *The Person of Christ*; American Tract Society, 1913; quoted by McDowell in *Evidence*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 300 (footnote). Footnotes 7–9 are from <http://www.everystudent.com/features/bible.html> accessed October 15, 2014.

Their references are noted below:

<sup>7</sup> Tacitus, A. 15.44.

<sup>8</sup> Wilkins, Michael J. & Moreland, J.P. *Jesus Under Fire* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*.

## Lesson 324: Genesis 28:10–15

## Jacob's Dream continued

Returning to our narrative:

**Genesis 28:10–11** Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. (ESV)

You will recall that Jacob deceived his father Isaac and received a blessing meant for Esau, his twin brother. Esau became so angry, he was ready to kill Jacob; so Rebekah, their mother, believed it best if Isaac leave town for awhile. In fact, he was going to leave Canaan.

Rebekah could not reveal that she knew about Jacob deceiving Isaac, because she put him up to it. So, the cover story was, Jacob needed a wife—not a Canaanite or a Hittite—so he was sent back east to find one from their stock. This was not racial purity; this was religious purity. See the **Doctrine of Racial Inter-marriage** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Neither Rebekah nor Jacob had any idea how long Jacob would be gone or what would transpire. He will be gone from the land for 20 years. It appears that Rebekah will die before he returns as we will not hear from her again. Also, there is perhaps one recorded meeting between father and son (between Isaac and Jacob) in Genesis 35:27. There is no indication that Jacob returned to the Land of Promise and then tried to find his parents.

At this point in our narrative, Jacob is still in the Land of Promise. He has only begun his journey to head east; he has only traveled a short distance north.

**Genesis 28:12** Then Jacob [lit., *he*] dreamed, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a staircase [ramp, ladder, elevator, escalator?] stationary on the earth; and its top reached [into] the heavens. And he saw [lit., *behold*] the angels of Elohim ascending and descending on it.

But the key to all of this is the plan of God. Angels are just as much a part of God's plan as we are. They are not peripheral beings, floating about on clouds playing harps, as they have been falsely portrayed. They are clearly participants in this earthly life, but we are given very little by way of particulars on this (in Genesis 32, we will look at the functions of angels).

So Jacob, in a dream, sees angels, going to pint heaven, and returning back to earth. Jesus will make reference to this phenomenon in John 1:51. He has called Nathaniel as a disciple and Nathaniel recognizes that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus then tells Nathaniel: "Point of doctrine: I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending toward the Son of Man." As an aside, this is one of the many times that Jesus affirms His Deity. He is the Son of Man, and here He told Nathaniel that the angels of God (elect angels) will ascend and descend toward Him. Now, Who is standing at that top of this staircase (ladder, escalator, elevator)?

**Genesis 28:13a** And behold! Jehovah stood above it [the staircase, the ladder],...

Here, Y<sup>e</sup>howah (Jehovah) stands over this place; and in John 1:51, Jesus promises Nathaniel that he will see Jesus stand there.

For some reason, there are critics who think that this is some great contradiction that Jacob sees God and yet Jesus said, "God is a Spirit and no man has seen God at any time." God the Son makes Himself manifest in a variety of ways since the beginning of time. Adam and the woman spoke with God and, in that form, He walked through the Garden of Eden. Abraham had met God on many occasions—this would be God the Son, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Person of the Trinity, the Revealed God (or the Revealed Lord). We know Him as Jesus, but He was known by many other names prior to the incarnation.

Jesus said that "God is a Spirit" while people were looking at Him. He was speaking of God the Father; but not of His manifestation on earth as the God-man (which manifestation was real and perceived by all the sense of man).



**Genesis 28:13** And behold! Jehovah stood above it [the staircase, the ladder], and said, "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac! The land on which you lay, I will give to you and to your seed.

God is standing above this escalator (or elevator or whatever), with angels going up and down. And God speaks to Jacob.

In this era, God did speak to some people through dreams. Now, simply because something has happened in the past, that does not mean that is how things will be done forevermore. Moses will turn water into blood and Jesus will turn water into wine, but that does not mean that Christians do that today. I have never seen water turned into blood or into wine; nor do I expect to. It is not that I doubt the power of God to do this; I simply recognize that is not His *modus operandi* for the Church Age.

God's promise here to Jacob is not based upon Jacob outsmarting his father Isaac. God's promises are not based upon Esau selling him his birthright. God promises are based upon God's plan. God continues the promise to Jacob that He originally gave to Abraham (Genesis 13:14b–16, which reads: "Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward, for all the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if one can count the dust of the earth, your offspring also can be counted."—ESV) God made a similar promise to Isaac in Genesis 26:3–4. Now God makes a similar promise to Jacob, despite his acts of deception.

**Genesis 28:14a** And your seed will be like the dust of the earth,...

So far, there have been 3 patriarchs, and Abraham, the eldest, is dead; and Isaac is near death. Jacob is not married; therefore, he has no children. But God tells him that his seed will be like the dust of the earth. The amount of dust on the earth is impossible to even fathom, but this is both hyperbole and illustrative. Hyperbole means that there will not be a one-to-one relationship between the number of Jews and the number of dust particles on the earth. There will simply be a lot of them. Furthermore, the illustrative aspect is that the Jews will cover the earth just as dust covers the earth.

**Genesis 28:14** And your seed will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your Seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.

You will note that the word *seed* is in the lower case at the beginning of this verse, but capitalized near the end. There is actually no difference between the words in the Hebrew. The word is found in the singular nearly always (always as far as I know), yet can be translated *seed*, *Seed* or *descendants*.

When the Bible refers to *seed* as in many, then we know that we are talking about the *descendants* of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the final phrase reads: **And in you and in your Seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.** This has a double-meaning. It



certainly refers to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and wherever Jews are made welcome, in whatever nation, that nation is prospered. This also refers to Abraham's *Seed*, Who is Jesus Christ; and all who believe in Him are blessed as well. All families who have exercised faith in Christ are greatly blessed.

[Genesis 28:14](#) And your seed will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your Seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.

God appears to repeat this blessing to Jacob, which is almost the same blessing He had given to Abraham and to Isaac. However, God adds that the Jews (those who descend from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) would be spread throughout the world. And this is the case today—there are Jews spread across the world in nearly every nation (as far as I know, Jews can be found in every nation).

There are even Jews in Muslim nations, although Muslims are doing their best to keep the Jews out, and to kill those who are living in their nations. There are Jews among the Palestinians today, although they are there covertly. There are Jews in every Muslim nation, although many of them keep their heritage a secret. There are some Jewish children in these Muslim nations that do not find out that they are Jewish until they become of age. This information is kept from them in order to protect them (throughout history, when Jews have been persecuted, some have [hidden their identities](#) as Jews).<sup>19</sup>

Because it is God's plan for Jews to be found in every nation, obviously we would expect some nations to try to *cleanse* themselves of Jews, either [by killing them or driving them away](#).

And Jews are clearly found throughout Europe, [Asia](#) and the Americas. This is God's plan; and the nation that is the most welcoming, is the nation that is the most blessed. At one time, this was Great Britain; today, this is the United States. Tomorrow, it might be [South Korea](#) or [China](#) (large Christian populations always provide a haven for Jews).

This explains the great movements in human history to destroy the Jews. God's plan is stated above—to have Jews throughout the world, to the west, east, north and south of where Jacob lay. So what would Satan's plan be? To do just the opposite. Therefore, wherever Satan has the most influence, that is where we would expect Jews to be persecuted the most. That is where we would expect Jews to be expelled. And the religion which worships Satan is going to be the most vigorous religion when it comes to persecuting the Jews.

Ideally speaking, Satan would like to concentrate the Jews into one area and then to destroy that area. This is why there are so many Middle Easterners who are appalled at

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<sup>19</sup> The fact of hidden Jews within a society has been distorted by antisemitic groups to suggest that they are [secretly in control of everything](#) or that they are behind various evil movements, like [modern-day slave trade](#).

the Jewish settlement in Israel, despite the fact that Israel is approximately 0.2% of the Middle East.

The Jewish people are emblematic of believers (either in the Revealed God of the Old Testament or of Jesus Christ in the New). God sends believers to all nations and to all peoples to evangelize them.

We made a great many mistakes in Iraq, but the greatest mistake of them all was not allowing soldiers to evangelize. If the army wanted to require them to do this on their own time using their own funds, fine; but being antagonistic toward evangelizing the Iraqis was a big mistake.

We evangelized the people of Japan, Germany and South Korea, and, as a result, these are strong, free and prosperous nations today—and they are our allies. Whereas General Douglas MacArthur encouraged evangelizing, asking for Bibles and missionaries; our official military policy in Iraq was against evangelizing the people. This is one of the reasons Iraq is in chaos today.

**Genesis 28:15** And, behold, I am with you, and will keep you in every place where you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you.”

It is apparent that God’s geographical will for Jacob is to leave the land of his fathers and to go east (recall that God stopped Isaac from leaving the Land of Promise in Genesis 26:1–6). God would be with Jacob outside of the land and God would again bring Jacob back to this land.

Jacob, although he has not been what we would consider to be a great servant of God, is in God’s geographical will. God does *not* tell him, “Look, Jacob, I am blessing you and your seed with this land—so you need to stay here.” Instead, God says, “Listen, I am with you, and I will keep you in every place where you go, and I will bring you again into this land.” Jacob has made a mess of things—something which most of us are quite capable of doing in our own lives—and God tells Jacob, “I have got it covered. I am with you wherever you go, even if you are back in the land of Padan-aram. When it is time, I will bring you back to Canaan.”

God could have easily added, “Jacob, I have been with you everywhere you have gone; and I will continue to be with you, even outside of the Land of Promise. But you are one sorry believer and there are times when you just make Me sad.”

Jacob might be thought to, in this way, to represent the dispersion of the Jews. God has allowed His people to spread across the world, and at some point in the future, He will regather them to the land (Ezek. 37:12 Isa. 11:10–12 Jer. 30:3–4).

God would remain with Jacob until God brought Jacob back to this land where he was. As God told Jacob: “For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to

you.” We find a similar promise generalized in both the Old and New Testaments. **Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for He has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."** (Heb. 13:5; Deut. 31:6b, 8b; ESV; capitalized)

God said to Jacob, “For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you.” That which God spoke to Jacob are the promises which He has now made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

## **Lesson 325: Genesis 28:10–16 The Spiritual Life in the Old and New Testaments**

So far, this is what we have studied:

Genesis 28:10–11 **Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. (ESV)**

Jacob has made his twin brother Esau so upset, that Esau was ready to kill him.

Gen 28:12 **And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it! (ESV)**

Jacob, while still in the Land of Promise, dreams of angels ascending into heaven and descending back to the earth. We studied how angels have a real involvement in world affairs, even though we do not see them (or, if we see them, we do not know that they are angels—Heb. 13:2).

Gen 28:13–15 **And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth 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 promised you." (ESV)**

Isaac, Jacob’s father, gave Jacob a real blessing when he was leaving—without being duped. And here, God blesses Jacob as well, despite the fact that Jacob is quite duplicitous.

**Genesis 28:16** **And Jacob awakened from his sleep. And he said, “Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know.”**

Jacob has given very little thought to God. If he knew, understood and believed the promises that God made to his father and grandfather, none of this would have happened. He would not have gotten Esau to sell his birthright to him—he would not have needed to

do that; and he would not have cheated Esau out of the blessing from Jacob. All of this is unnecessary. These sorts of things are not a part of God's plan; and they call into question the character of His people. Jacob only needed to study and learn the Word of God; and allow life to simply unfold.

It appears that his mother, Rebekah, had some understanding of the blessing that would come from Isaac, but she believed that duplicity was needed in order to secure it.

**Genesis 28:16** After waking up, Jacob said, "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know."

You may not realize it, but this is quite an impressive statement for Jacob to make. How did he use God's name before? He was putting one over on his own father, pretending to be Esau, and Isaac asked him, "How did you track and kill wild game so quickly?" And Jacob answered, "Y<sup>e</sup>howah granted me success!" He lies using God's personal name! He was lying to his father and trying to manipulate his father, and he used God's name in order to do this. Do you see what a no-account Jacob has been? And now God has spoken to Jacob and this turns Jacob and his attitude around quite a bit. However, Jacob is going to be much different from Abraham. Abraham made some mistakes and had stumbled now and again, but he steadily moved forward—he learned more and he began to trust God more. Jacob will be up and down, up and down. He will say and do things which suggest spiritual progress, and then he will revert back to the same old so-and-so that he has always been.

Jacob has not has a great many meetings with God. This is the first. He has heard about the God of Abraham and Isaac, but has not encountered Him until now. Jacob had no doubt heard at least Rebekah speak of Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim, and possibly his father as well. We do not have any interaction recorded between Abraham and Jacob, so we do not know if he learned anything from Abraham.

Barnes describes Jacob's new attitude: *[Jacob] knew of God's omnipresence; but he did not expect a special manifestation of the Lord in this place, far from the sanctuaries of his father. He is filled with solemn awe, when he finds himself in the house of God and at the gate of heaven.*<sup>20</sup>

There was one thing, however, that was quite amazing about this family line: God had now spoken to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All of these men had encounters with God; this being the first one for Jacob.

Jacob's spiritual life is much different than our own. First off, he has almost no spiritual life, this being his first *religious experience* (and don't misunderstand me; I am not saying that having some sort of *religious experience* is necessary for the believer).

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<sup>20</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:18–19 (slightly edited).

In any case, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have all spoken to God; and more importantly, God has spoken to them. That is a lot different than believers today. I speak to God, but I do not hear an audible voice—not a loud booming one or almost indiscernible voice. Only a tiny percentage of Christians make such a claim to hear God, and most of those who do are nutballs.<sup>21</sup>

The fact that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all interacted with God, and that fact that you and I will never interact with God while we are still alive on earth, should suggest to you that things are different now.

We are really comparing spirituality between those of the Age of Israel and believers in the Church Age (this is the time frame during which we are living).

<b>The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament</b>	
<b>Old Testament</b>	<b>New Testament Church Age</b>
<p>The Word of God is still being written. As a result, God contacted some believers and spoke directly to them. This was a part of assembling the Word of God.</p>	<p>The Word of God is complete. Because God’s Word is complete, God does not need to contact any one of us individually to give us guidance or truth. All of that is found in the Bible already.</p>
<p>Spiritual revelation is still being given in a variety of ways—and it is designed both for the person who receives this revelation, as well as for us today.</p>	<p>There is no new revelation given to believers today. There is no cult somewhere where some really holy guy gets his marching orders from God each day (or month or year). No one is recording new personal interaction with God. Anyone who is, is suffering from some kind of mental disease.</p>
<p>There are two possible options here for us in the Church Age. If a person claims to have interaction with God, either what he teaches lines up with the Bible or it does not. If it lines up with the Bible, then why would God need to talk to him? If such a person says things which contradict the Bible, then we know him to be a false prophet/teacher (and, obviously, is not really talking to God).</p>	
<p>Believers depended upon the laws of divine establishment and the Scripture which existed at that time. Nation Israel followed the laws of divine establishment, which was a big part of the Mosaic Law.</p>	<p>We have the complete Word of God to study. The laws of divine establishment, which have been shown to work historically, are designed for believers and unbelievers.</p>

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<sup>21</sup> There is one person—a child-pastor (which ought to be a contradiction in terms) at one time—who made the claim to have been in heaven and engaged in splash fights with Jesus at the River Jordan (or some such goofy scene).

## The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament

### Old Testament

### New Testament Church Age

See the **Laws of Divine Establishment** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Believers in the Old Testament also grew spiritually and learned from the Word of God, as it existed. Many of the citizens of Israel simply learned and obeyed the laws of divine establishment. The made Israel a great nation.

Primarily, believers grow today within a local church. A pastor-teacher, who has been trained in the Word of God, teaches the Word of God; as well as the mechanics found in the Word of God, and we grow by that (and by, of course, the application of our volition). Believing what we hear is a necessary part of our spiritual growth.

See the **Grace Apparatus for Perception** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Believers in the Age of Israel obey the Mosaic Law, which involved animal sacrifices. Animal sacrifices look forward to the cross of Christ.

Believers in the Church Age look back to the cross. We do this in our own thoughts, when it is taught to us, or in communion, which represents our Lord and His work on the cross. Luke 22:19 1Cor. 11:23–25

Believers in the Age of Israel observe special days and follow various dietary laws. The days spoke of future events; the dietary laws preserved Israel during a time of no refrigeration. These laws preserved the people of Israel.

Believers in the Church Age do not follow any set of days or dietary laws. Col. 2:16

There were a limited number of men who had the potential for spiritual greatness.

The potential for greatness exists in all Church Age believers. All believers possess a spiritual gift (or gifts). 1Cor. 12:20–22

Only some believers had the Holy Spirit and it could be lost due to excessive carnality. Psalm 51:11

All believers have the Holy Spirit during the Church Age. We lose the filling of the Spirit when we sin, but never the indwelling. 1Cor. 12:13 Eph. 5:22

The Holy Spirit is given to some believers for some specific tasks. See 2Sam. 23:2 Matt. 22:43 Luke 1:15, 41 2Peter 1:21.

The Holy Spirit is given to all believers; every believer has a purpose in the Church Age. 1Cor. 12:15



## The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament

### Old Testament

### New Testament Church Age

Specific believers have been chosen by God to do specific things.

All believers have the potential of spiritual greatness. For many, this will sound blasphemous, but *you can be as great as the Apostle Paul* (and that statement is not blasphemous). In fact, you can be greater than Paul (or Peter or John).

Believers during the Old Testament had little or no access to God's Word. This is because writing materials were quite ephemeral and reproducing Scripture was an arduous task.

In many countries, believers have complete access to the full Word of God in a variety of translations and languages. It is both ubiquitous in written and digital form. Where there is positive volition, there is greater access to God's Word.

The teaching of God's Word was limited and we know very little about it, apart from the synagogues, where God's Word was read.

Today, teaching can be found on the radio, television and the internet (although the quality of teaching can vary dramatically). Despite the variety of outlets, the believer is still to grow as a part of a local church.

God worked through nation Israel. Israel stood as a witness to God. Isa. 43:10

God works through the local church. The local church is designed for the building up of believers (a person is often evangelized outside of the church). Eph. 4:10–13

Israel, as a nation, had an impact; but this is less true of individual believers.

Today, *any person* can have a dramatic impact in his spiritual life. Your impact is your choice. How public that impact is depends upon your gift and your volition; but the function of the spiritual life in the church age glorifies Jesus Christ, which will be rewardable. 2Cor. 5:10

## The Spiritual Life—Old and New Testament

### Old Testament

The average person had limited spiritual impact. Not all believers had the Holy Spirit; not all believers had access to the Holy Scriptures (as they existed).

The life of most believers of Israel was limited to living according to the laws of divine establishment, as were outlined for client nation Israel in the Law of Moses. These actions preserved the Jewish people and preserved nation Israel. This is why you know a number of Jewish people today and why you do not know any Assyrians or Hittites.

### New Testament Church Age

Believers today have the same spiritual life that Jesus Christ test-drove. We have all of the assets that He had. You might be confused at this point and wonder, *well, then, why can't I walk into a hospital a cure everyone there?* You have that question because you are mixed up about God's plan. Jesus Christ healed many people, but He did not heal everyone of their illnesses (although, He could have). His healing was His credit card. This is one way that the people in that time period knew that Jesus is the Messiah. *You* are not the Messiah; *you* do not need a credit card to show that you are a believer. You have the power of God the Holy Spirit, you have the divine operating assets, and you have the Word of God.

Some of you cannot get over the concept of miracles, even though you have probably witnessed some of the greatest spiritual awakenings in the history of man. I have seen an evangelist speak at the school on many occasions where I taught, and his ability to grab and hold the attention of these young people (often in messages given before lunch) was a sight to behold. Personally, I had trouble on occasion, keeping order in a classroom of 20–30 students. I saw this man stand up in front of 600–700 students and they were transfixed (most of the times he spoke). Even right before their lunch.

If you are my age, then you are aware of the Billy Graham crusades. Billy Graham would travel throughout the country and hold meetings in auditoriums and in stadiums (this is Billy Graham the evangelist, not the wrestler). Many times, there would be thousands in attendance; but there was often a television audience of millions. I recall one of my friends sitting on a couch watching Billy Graham—and he rejected Jesus Christ as his Savior (insofar as I know). During that era of the 1950's and early 1960's, Billy Graham would hold a series of [evangelistic meetings](#), and they would be carried on live television on one of the 3 networks during prime time, without commercials. And millions would watch. That is powerful. That is the power of God the Holy Spirit reaching out to the unbeliever.

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Can you imagine this today? Can you imagine mid-week, prime time television on one of the main channels where the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is proclaimed—with millions of Americans watching? If the hunger was there for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then we would be seeing those shows. I don't care how secular the networks are, if there was positive volition, then the message of Jesus Christ would be available.

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Now, my point in all of this is, Billy Graham was a man through whom God worked. God took this ordinary man and spoke to millions of people through him. Having a significant ministry is available to every believer. I don't mean significant in numbers, because there is not always a great deal of positive volition. Sometimes we have to experience a world war—sometimes we have to see with our own eyes just how much evil is in the world—in order for us as a nation to turn to God. I don't think that we are in a period of time when that is happening. But whatever gift (or gifts) God has given you can function and bring great glory to God through its function.

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The function and importance of your gift does not depend upon the positive volition of those around you. The church in Ephesus may have been very positive toward Paul's teachings, but the church in Corinth resisted him on many issues.

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God has given you great access to Him through prayer, it is possible that not even 10 people know your name and that none of them even know what God does through you. God's power is great, not only in time of great positive volition, but during the times when man rejects Him as well. We studied Sodom and Gomorrah. There was great degeneracy; there was negative volition throughout. Was God's power weakened? Of course not! Was the spiritual impact of Abraham lessened because he lived up the road from Sodom and Sodom was filled with degeneracy? Of course not!

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In the Church Age, you can live on this earth 70 or 80 years and have a marvelous ministry, and it is possible that no one knows what the ministry is; and that no one recognizes the great impact that you have for Jesus Christ in your life. Your impact is not dependent upon the positive volition of those around you; or upon their negative volition either. Your impact is your spiritual life which is lived in accordance with the example of Jesus Christ.

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In case you are ever confused about *why* God has so greatly blessed the United States with peace and prosperity, it is because millions upon millions of people believed in Jesus Christ. They heard the gospel and they believed that Jesus died for their sins. Many of those people are still alive and God honors and blesses their faith, even today.

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## **Lesson 326: Genesis 28:17–18**

## **Jesus Christ, the Model for our Spiritual Lives**

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We have been on a bit of a tangent. We have Jacob seeing the angels going between heaven and earth and then hearing God. Therefore, it was important to understand the differences between the spiritual life of the believers in the Old Testament compared to our spiritual lives today. After all, you are not going to see what Jacob has seen here. You are

not going to witness thousands of angels ascending and descending into heaven while in your earthly body.

Let's return to Jacob after he awakens from this dream.

**Genesis 28:17** And he was afraid, and said, "How fearful is this place! This is nothing but the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven!"

Like any other normal person, this caused Jacob to experience some fear and apprehension. Jacob has never had a dream like this before.

**Genesis 28:18** And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone which he had put at his head, and set it as a memorial pillar, and poured oil on the top of it.

In the Bible, the rock (or stone) is often representative of Jesus Christ; and oil is often representative of God the Holy Spirit. So Jacob, without knowing it, is presenting the anointing of God the Son by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3:16).

Unless otherwise noted, the translation is from the ESV; capitalized.

### **A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model**

1. Jesus Christ test-drove the Christian life. We look to Him as our example. This is the fundamental concept.
2. This understanding is a little tricky because Jesus Christ, as the Messiah, fulfilled all Old Testament requirements and prophecies. The 1<sup>st</sup> Advent of Jesus Christ is the Jewish Age; it is *not* the Church Age. Even if we understand His 1<sup>st</sup> Advent to be the Advent of the Hypostatic Union (a very short dispensation indeed), He is still adhering to the requirements of the Mosaic Law and fulfilling all of the Old Testament prophecies and Old Testament typology (Jesus fulfilled Old Testament typology *before* we knew what it was).
3. However, at the same time, Jesus provides us the model for the Christian life.
4. There are two fundamental principles of the Christian life that we learn from Jesus Christ: the power of God the Holy Spirit and the power of God's holy Word.
5. Over and over again, the Bible tells us of Jesus Christ being empowered by the Holy Spirit.
  - 1) Isaiah prophesies in Isa. 11:1–2 **There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.** There is even a play on words here, which draws attention to what is being said. The *Spirit* is *rûwach* (רוּחַ) [pronounced *ROO-ahkh*], and what the *Spirit* does is: *nûwach* (נוּחַ) [pronounced *NOO-ahkh*] *upon Him*. *Nûwach* means *rest, cause to rest, to be at rest, set down, lay down, deposit, leave*. Strong's #5117 (and #3240) BDB #628. See also Matt. 12:18 Luke 4:18 where this is acknowledged to be about Jesus

## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

Christ.

- 2) Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Matt. 1:18
  - 3) Jesus grew spiritually in His humanity. Luke 1:80 **And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and He was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**
  - 4) When Jesus was baptized by John, the Spirit descended upon Him. Matt. 3:16 Luke 3:22
  - 5) Jesus was led by the Spirit. Matt. 4:1 Mark 1:12 Luke 4:1
  - 6) Jesus was empowered by the Spirit. Luke 4:14
  - 7) Jesus cast out demons by the power of the Spirit. Matt. 12:28
  - 8) Although Jesus is fully God, He did not use the power of His Deity during the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent; He relied upon the power of God the Holy Spirit instead. You may recall one of the temptations laid before Him by Satan: "Cast Yourself down and God's angels will catch You." As the Creator of the Universe, Jesus had power over His creation. He could have easily cast Himself down without any harm. However, that was outside of God's plan; and He would have been relying on His Deity; or He would have been relying on the intervention of angels. We read in Philip. 2:6–8 **He existed in the form of God [i.e., He shared God's very nature], but did not consider [remaining] equal with God something [to continue] to hold onto. Instead, He gave up what He had and took on the form [i.e., the nature] of a slave, becoming like a man, [and even] His appearance was found to be like a man's. He humbled Himself [by] becoming obedient [to God] to the point of death, even death on a cross.** (AUN–NT) He accepted His form as a man and relied completely upon the power of God the Holy Spirit, the same power He has given to us.
6. Jesus promised His Spirit to His disciples.
    - 1) When they were persecuted and had to speak, Jesus told them that God would speak through them through the Holy Spirit. Matt. 10:20 Mark 13:11
    - 2) Jesus told His disciples that the only need ask for the Holy Spirit. Luke 11:13
    - 3) John the Baptizer promised that Jesus would baptized His people with the Holy Spirit. Mark 1:8
    - 4) Before He was taken up into the 3<sup>rd</sup> heaven, God again promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples. Acts 1:8
  7. Just as the birth of Jesus involved the Holy Spirit, so we are reborn by God the Holy Spirit. John 3:5–8 **Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again [or, from above].' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."** The *wind* is often symbolic of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that gives life.

## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

- John 6:63
8. We call this birth by the Holy Spirit as being born again or being regenerated. John 3:7 Titus 3:5 1Peter 1:23
  9. The disciples would be able to recall all the Jesus taught them by means of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26
  10. God gives the Spirit without measure in John 3:34. Although, in context, this applies to Jesus Christ; this is also the promise to us as believers in Christ.
  11. As believers, our worship of God must be in Spirit and in truth (= Bible doctrine). This is the key to the entire spiritual life of the believer. John 4:24
  12. The ministry of the Holy Spirit to the early church:
    - 1) After Jesus was crucified and resurrected, He gave the Holy Spirit to His disciples to carry them through to the day of Pentecost. John 20:22
    - 2) On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would be given to the disciples, and, through them, to all believers in the Church Age. Acts 2:1–18, 38
    - 3) However, the focus was to be on the saving work of Jesus Christ, not upon the power of God the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:21–41
    - 4) The early Apostles were filled with God the Holy Spirit. Acts 4:8, 31 6:3, 5 7:55
    - 5) The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God—which comes from exercising faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 5:29–32
    - 6) Much of the book of Acts involves finding those who have trusted in the true God, indicating to them that their faith needs to be in Christ Jesus, and afterward, the Holy Spirit is given to them. Acts 19:2, 6
    - 7) The early disciples were shown to clearly have the Spirit of God because they manifested various sign gifts. Once their authority was established, their words became authoritative; after which, their writings became authoritative.
    - 8) For new converts, the Holy Spirit was given simultaneous to their faith. After the time period of the book of Acts, there was not a group of people wandering about who believed in Jesus Christ, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. That is, there was not two classifications of Christians—those who received the Holy Spirit and those who believed in Jesus but did not yet get the Spirit. **For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.** (1Cor. 12:13)
  13. The Holy Spirit is given to all believers.
    - 1) Once Jesus is glorified, then the Holy Spirit would be given to all believers. John 7:37–39 **On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this He said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.**
    - 2) The Holy Spirit would guide Jesus' disciples into all truth; and, by



## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

application, this is the same promise made to us. John 16:13 *When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth, for He will not speak on His Own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come.*

- 3) The carnal Corinthians have the Holy Spirit.
  - (1) Of all the churches referred to in the New Testament, the Corinthian church appeared to have the most problems.
  - (2) Paul talks about how he still needs to give them milk (basic doctrine) when they ought to be eating meat. 1Cor. 3:2
  - (3) Yet Paul speaks of the Spirit searching all things, and how the thoughts of God can only be known by the Spirit of God (1Cor. 2:10–11). Then Paul writes: *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.* (1Cor. 2:12)
  - (4) Paul tells these carnal Corinthians that the Spirit of God dwells in them. 1Cor. 3:16
  - (5) Paul tells them: *...you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.* (1Cor. 6:11)
  - (6) He tells them that their bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit in 1Cor. 6:19.
  - (7) Paul sarcastically tells the Corinthians *I too have the Spirit of God* in 1Cor. 7:40 (some of them arrogantly thought that they had a greater spiritual understanding than Paul).
  - (8) In 1Cor. 12, Paul speaks of the gifts of the Corinthians and how they have the various gifts and that these gifts are bestowed by the Holy Spirit.
  - (9) Paul then writes: *For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body--Jews or Greeks, slaves or free--and all were made to drink of one Spirit.* (1Cor. 12:13)
  - (10) Throughout both epistles to the Corinthians, Paul *never* says, “You know, what might be your problem is, some of you never got the Spirit.” If there were two classes of Christians—this with and those without the Holy Spirit—then don’t you think that Paul would have figured that this might be the problem with many of the Corinthians?
  - (11) The Corinthians have one problem with God the Holy Spirit, and that is that they are often in carnality, and therefore, quenching the Spirit (1Thess. 5:19). Before eating the bread or drinking the cup of communion, Paul tells these Corinthians to examine themselves (for sin) and to judge this sin in themselves. *But if we [had] examined ourselves [properly], we would not be [i.e., not have been] judged [i.e., with sickness and death. See verse 30].* (1Cor. 11:31; AUV–NT) So it is the end of 1Cor. 11 which tells us the problem that the Corinthians faced—they had the Holy Spirit,

## A Spiritually-Empowered Jesus Christ is our Spiritual Model

- but they were carnal. Paul tells them here that they deal with that by judging themselves. John presents the same concept in 1John 1:9 that we confess (name) our sins to God.
14. Therefore, throughout the New Testament, we are urged to follow the example of Jesus Christ:
    - 1) Peter mandates: **But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.** (2Peter 3:18a) This is again based upon the model of Jesus Christ, Who also experienced spiritual growth in His humanity: **And Jesus kept advancing in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and people.** (Luke 2:52; ALT)
    - 2) **Whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.** (1John 2:6) We have discussed in this doctrine *how* Jesus walked.
    - 3) **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in His steps.** (1Peter 2:21; ESV; capitalized)
    - 4) **Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.** (Eph. 5:1–2; ESV; capitalized) The phrase *in love* is actually a technical phrase referring to being filled with the Spirit.
    - 5) See also Gal. 3:27 Philip. 2:5.
  15. There is one difference regarding the Spirit between Jesus and us. Jesus did not sin, so He did not confess any sin. He always had the Spirit of God and was always empowered by the Spirit of God throughout His brief public ministry. We have the same Spirit; we simply need to acknowledge our sins when we sin, so that we are filled with (that is, empowered by) the Spirit once again. 1Cor. 11:31 Eph. 5:18 1John 1:9

The emphasis of this doctrine is clearly upon the power which we have, by means of the Holy Spirit; and how Jesus, during His public ministry, showed us how it was done.

### Lesson 327: Genesis 28:12–20a

### Jacob naming Bethel; the Hebrew Language

Jacob is leaving the Land of Promise because he has angered his twin brother Esau. Jacob successfully pretended to be Esau to their father, Isaac; and Isaac gave the preferred blessing of Esau to Jacob. At this point, Jacob finds himself at the beginning of his 400 miles journey to his family in the east.

Gen. 28:12 **And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!**

Jacob had barely begun his trip, when he had this very strange dream of angels being transported between heaven and earth right where he lay.

Gen 28:13–15 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth 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 promised you."

Then God speaks to him, and reiterates the promise which God originally made to Abraham and then later, to Jacob's father, Isaac. God assures Jacob that he would be blessed with a great many descendants—so many, that they would be as the dust of the earth.

God also promised to remain with Jacob, wherever he went.

Gen 28:16–18 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." So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

Jacob was amazed by this experience and he refers to this place as the *house of God*, as well as *the gate of heaven*. Then Jacob continues on his journey to the east (he is actually traveling northeast).

Although this journey is portrayed as if Jacob is traveling alone, it would be reasonable that he had several servants with him. There is the strong likelihood that Rebekah's personal nurse is with Jacob at this point (Genesis 35:8). However, when Abraham sent a servant in search of a wife for Isaac, he sent him with many camels, servants and gifts. Getting Jacob to move along was not the result of a well, laid-out plan—but something done to quickly get him out of town and away from Esau. So, at this point, we do not know for certain if Jacob is traveling alone or with servants or with a servant. However, we may certainly surmise that he is not leading this great procession of camels, as did Abraham's servant back in Genesis 24.

Genesis 28:19 And he called the name of that place *The House of God* [= *Beth-el*]. But the name of that city was Luz at first.

This same place is called *Bethel* back in Genesis 12:8 13:3. I believe that the book of Genesis was passed along from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob. I think that portions of it were understood to be the Word of God (surely Genesis 1–10). Much of the rest was the family line and a family history. Today, we know that all of the book of Genesis is the Word of

God; however, let me suggest when Abraham or Jacob wrote this family history, they themselves may not have considered the parts that they wrote to be divinely inspired.

We have no idea whether this history was kept through memorization or if it was written down (writing materials did exist in this era; but it is unclear whether Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had access to them; or whether their Hebrew was reduced to a written language that they knew at this time<sup>22</sup>). There are words for writing in the Hebrew, but they have not been used in conjunction with Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob.

Now, Jacob, knowing the history of Abraham (which is exactly what we have been studying from Genesis 12 forward), would have naturally taken the previous name of this place Luz and rename it in the history which he had memorized (or written down). Jacob is telling Joseph, for instance, the family history; and he is at Genesis 12:8 (there were no chapters or verse divisions at that time), Jacob would first say *Luz*, and then he would clarify this by saying, *which is now known as Bethel*. He has not changed anything, although he has clarified to Joseph where this place is. So, Jacob originally heard the family history from Abraham (or from Isaac), and heard the words: *From there he [Abraham] moved to the hill country on the east of Luz and pitched his tent, with Luz on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.* He repeats this narrative to his son Joseph, but Joseph does not know where Luz is; so, instead, Jacob tells Joseph: *From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.* What I am suggesting—and this is simply a theory—is that portions of the Scripture came into their final form very logically and organically. No person sat down, thinking to himself, “Now it is time for me to write down the Word of God.” Jacob does not necessarily consider his family history as being on a par with the Word of God (Genesis 1–10 or the book of Job). So, he would have heard Genesis 12:8 taught to him with the city *Luz*; but because he changed the name of that city (it wasn’t really a city at that time), he teaches it to his son Joseph using the name *Bethel* instead.

I believe the process of writing the Word of God, remembering the Word of God, and recognizing these chapters as the Word of God all took place at different times, in a very organic and progressive way. So, Abraham may certainly view Genesis 1–10 as being divinely inspired; and he also records his own family history, logically, to connect that time with his own. He might not even connect the two sets of writings in his own mind. He may understand the record of the ark, for instance, to be inspired by God. However, at the same time, as he records his own life in Genesis 12 and onwards, he is simply recording family history. Even though the Holy Spirit guided him to record this history (and his personal history may have been recorded mentally); that does not mean that Abraham knew that he was writing (or thinking) Scripture.

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<sup>22</sup> Remember when Abraham bought the acre or so of land on which Sarah would be buried, title was clearly transferred verbally before witnesses.

So Jacob preserves the history of his family, but he changes the name of the places where Abraham was, so that his sons know where this place is (they know it by the name *Bethel* and not by the name *Luz*).

What I have done here is offer a completely logical reason why we find the name *Bethel* back in Genesis 12:8–13:3; and yet, it is not given this name until now. This approach simply takes into account how real people would act when it comes down to writing or remembering family history.

If memory serves me correctly, the street that I lived on in 1953 was called Palm Ave., but later it was named Flagstone St. When referring back to it, we always refer to it as Flagstone, because that was its name for most of the time that we lived there.

It does not seem reasonable that Abraham sat down and decided to write out the Word of God, and so he begins with Genesis 12:1. When a patriarch recorded the Word of God (mentally or in writing), he did not necessarily need to know himself that he was recording the Word of God. Nor did his children necessarily recognize that they were hearing the Word of God when spoken to them by their father or grandfather. To them, this would have been family history—and, quite obviously, Abraham's interaction with God would be a good reason to remember family history.

You will recall that we studied Genesis 24, which was all about Abraham's servant making this trip to find a wife for Isaac. The vocabulary and the repetition of the language certainly suggests a different author than Genesis 23 or 25. You may recall that language was very much like a story spoken to a child before they go to sleep. It seems unlikely that the servant who wrote this history and probably repeated it to Jacob as a child, did not consider it the Word of God, but simply a true bedtime story.

Obviously, Jacob would have appreciated the importance of knowing Genesis 1–10; and he would have appreciated knowing the family history—and about God speaking with his grandfather, Abraham. He would have memorized both; and he would have likely memorized these things together. What is not necessary in this process is for him to have the full-on understanding of what it means for this to be the Word of God, inspired by God the Holy Spirit.

**Genesis 28:19** And he called the name of that place *The House of God* [= *Beth-el*]. But the name of that city was *Luz* at first.

This tells us the route that Jacob was going along; and this would have been quite early on in his journey.



**Map of Jacob's Journey** (so far) from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com), accessed August 6, 2014. Jacob would have started his journey down in Beersheba and now he has traveled north-northeast, parallel to the Dead Sea and the River Jordan up to Bethel.



Logically, God is would have contacted Jacob *while* he is still in the Land of Promise (which is what we have been studying). Like Abraham, every time that God speaks to Jacob, he is going to make a mental note of it and recall all of the pertinent circumstances. When God speaks to you, obviously you are going to remember what He said and the circumstances surrounding this talk.<sup>23</sup>

[Genesis 28:20a](#) And Jacob vowed a vow, saying,...

Before we examine this vow, we are going to take a little time to look at the Hebrew here and to discuss ancient Hebrew and the vowel points found in the later Hebrew.

### **The ancient Hebrew, vowel points, and the preservation of ancient manuscripts:**

This is the first time that we have the verb *to vow* and its noun cognate. The verb is *nâdar* (נָדַר) [pronounced *naw-DAHR*], and it means, *to vow, to make a promise, to make a commitment, to give a word of assurance concerning a matter, to give one's personal and honorable guarantee, to make a solemn oath or pledge to do or not to do a thing*. Strong's #5087 BDB #623. The noun is *nêder* (נֶדֶר) [pronounced *NAY-der*].

In the original Hebrew, before the vowel points were added, these words would have looked exactly the same, but have been pronounced differently. The reading of this would have originally been *NDRNDR* (נדרנדר), but the reader would have pronounced these words *naw-DAHR NAY-der*. (Actually, the subject of the verb, *Jacob*, is found between these two words.) These words would have been memorized, so people who read them would read them as different words, even though they are spelled identically in the original Hebrew, which did not have vowels (or, vowel points).

<sup>23</sup> God is not audibly speaking to anyone today.



They apparently memorized the Word of God and the passages so that they would be able to read them aloud.

Vowel points were later added—in fact, these vowel points may not have been added until around the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. So רדנ became רִדָּן. If you notice, the original text remains undisturbed; unchanged. But now, a reader of Hebrew can look at this word by itself and know whether it is the verb or its noun cognate. Furthermore, he is able to pronounce it.

There is a goofy practice among a few people today who spell the word *God* as *G\*d*. Somehow, they think that they are being more true to original language when they do that or more intellectual. Using the spelling *G\*d* is absolutely absurd! There were no vowel used at all in the Hebrew for about 2000 years. Now, if you think that you should leave the vowels out of the word *God*, then why don't you leave them out of every word, as the ancient Jews did? And why do you use an asterisk? The Hebrews did not use asterisks!

What did happen is, the Hebrews, when reading the Word of God publically, stopped saying God's proper name *YHWH*, and began using the more general term *Adonai* instead (*Adonai* means *Lord*). So, the text *YHWH* (יהוה) would be what they saw with their eyes; but they said *Adonai* instead. As a result, for thousands of years, they knew how to say *NDRNDR*, because they knew that they were different words; but they forgot how to say *YHWH*—because they stopped saying it! As a result, you may see God's proper name as *the Lord*, *Jehovah*, *Adonai*, *YHWH*, *Yaweh* and *Y<sup>e</sup>howah* (which I believe is the most accurate representation of God's person name). The latter word is pronounced *Y<sup>e</sup>ho-WAH*, somewhat like an exhaled breath (the first 4 letters form a single syllable with a very short e).

My guess is, some people use the spelling *G\*d* to show off how smart they are—when they really aren't.

Speaking of old manuscripts: originally, the manuscripts which we have depended upon for the Hebrew Old Testament were two (yes, only two): the Leningrad Codex, which was copied in A.D. 1008 and is a complete copy of the Old Testament. We also depend upon the Aleppo Codex, which was copied in A.D. 925<sup>24</sup> (this is an incomplete text). By this time, the vowel points had been added in. There are other partial manuscripts, but there are only a handful<sup>25</sup> of ancient Masorite manuscripts of the Old Testament, as compared to the 26,000 full and partial ancient manuscripts of the New Testament. So our Old Testament is primarily based upon a single ancient manuscript, which is removed in time from the original text by at least 1400 years (for the final few books).

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<sup>24</sup> Some sources say A.D. 930.

<sup>25</sup> Geisler and Nix list only 7 of them; the Leningrad codex being the only complete manuscript. Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 250.

After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 until around the 8<sup>th</sup> century, the rabbinical scholars attempted to establish an accurate and consistent text of the Old Testament.<sup>26</sup> It was probably in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century A.D. when Masorites actually standardized the Hebrew text, which included the addition of vowel points.<sup>27</sup> At this point, once the decision had been made to *vocalize the text* (add in the vowel points), all other ancient manuscripts were probably ordered destroyed, which explains why we have no Hebrew manuscripts prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

The exception to this are the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947 (and in the years following), which was an ancient library of texts dated around 100 B.C. This would make these manuscripts roughly coterminous with the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament).

The Hebrew writing of the Dead Sea Scrolls would have been without vowel points.

Because Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) had conquered so much territory, many Jews spoke Hellenistic Greek as their first language, and Hebrew was becoming an unused language, except for religious purposes. Therefore, they needed to have a Bible in the language which they spoke. Interestingly enough, even though the Greek Old Testament (called the Septuagint) was developed for the Hellenistic Jews, the early Christians seized on this Greek Bible (many of them did not speak Hebrew) and they took on the responsibility of preserving the Greek text of the Old Testament. At the same time, the Jewish scribes continued to preserve the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. When Latin became the dominant language of that area, then the forerunners of the Catholic church began to preserve both testaments in Latin. Ancient translations of the Bible were made in Syriac and in Arabic as well, which were preserved by other sets of people.

As a result, we have several witnesses to the text of the Old Testament. (1) There are the Dead Sea Scrolls from 100 B.C.; (2) there are several Hebrew manuscripts from a time of standardization of the Hebrew text (mostly from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D.); (3) and we have the Greek Septuagint (along with several other ancient translations)—these 3 sets of witnesses were all preserved by 3 very different groups of people. What would be natural (to the thinking of the unbeliever) is for these different groups to preserve the text in such a way to preserve their own beliefs and traditions, but that has not happened.

Although there are certainly some differences of note (primarily between the Masoretic and Greek texts), there is very little which is actually substantive. If you read an English translation from the Greek text and another English translation made from the Hebrew text, you would be hard-pressed to identify which was which. You would *not* be able to say, “Well, the Christian influence is profound, so this must be translated from the Greek.” The

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<sup>26</sup> *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible*; translation and commentary by Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint and Eugene Ulrich; Harper SF, ©1999, p. xi.

<sup>27</sup> Norman Geisler and William Nix; *A General Introduction to the Bible*; Chicago; Moody Press, ©1968, p. 251.

differences in the text are, for the most part, non-theological. In fact, I have personally gone through over a third of the Old Testament, word-by-word in the Hebrew, and compared that to the Greek, and I cannot think of a single instance where a textual difference could be seen as theological in nature—despite the disparate nature of those who preserved the text.

I can only think of one instance where the difference in the text was significant (Saul calls for the *ark* in 1Samuel 14:18, but it is apparent that he has really called for the *ephod*).

## Lessons 328–329: Genesis 28:12–22

## Christian Giving

Back to our text:

Jacob is on his way out of the Land of Promise—he has not traveled too far, and God has come to him in a dream.

**Genesis 28:20–21** And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, and I come again to my father's house in peace, then will Jehovah be my God.

*Barnes: A vow is a solemn engagement to perform a certain duty, the obligation of which is felt at the time to be especially binding. It partakes, therefore, of the nature of a promise or a covenant. It involves in its obligation, however, only one party, and is the spontaneous act of that party.*<sup>28</sup>

Does this saying mean that Jacob has not yet put his trust in the God of his fathers? Or has Jacob always believed in the God of Abraham, but has never trusted Him with his day-to-day life? Clearly, Jacob has not fully believed in the promises of Y<sup>e</sup>howah; he has not applied these promises to himself; and he has therefore, spent his life trying to improve his own advantage in any way that he could.

Jacob had a very short-sighted view of himself, his own life, and his family history. Now he has seen the Revealed God (albeit in a dream) and he has seen the amazing sight of angels traveling between earth and heaven.

That being said, this does not mean that Jacob will completely turn his life around at this point. However, when Jacob arrives in Padan-aram, he is going to be at least a slightly changed man. He is not going to spend his time trying to figure out how to put one over on this or that person, as he did to his brother for those many years. Part of the reason for this is, Jacob will meet a woman (and what man's life has not been changed by a

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<sup>28</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22.

woman?). However, his uncle is going to see him as an easy mark, and his uncle is going to try to get as much out of Jacob as he possibly can.

Jacob has been a chiseler for much of his life; but his Uncle Laban is going to school him in the art of chiseling and people manipulation. Jacob had studied manipulation and deception as an undergraduate student from his mother Rebekah; but he will get the graduate course from his Uncle Laban.

**Genesis 28:22** And this stone which I have set for a pillar will be God's house. And of all that You will give me, I will surely give the tenth to You.”

Jacob tithing (giving a tenth) to God is a response to God, as well as a deal that Jacob is brokering here. He has been told about the God of Abraham, but he is only just experiencing that God now (don't mistakenly take from this to mean that you must *experience* God in some sort of supernatural way as well).

At most, the only thing available to the Old Testament saint of that era would have been the first 15 or 20 chapters of Genesis (which were probably memorized and recited from generation to generation) and the book of Job (which was also probably memorized and carried down until writing became a part of their culture<sup>29</sup>).

However, note here that Jacob sees his relationship to God as more of a deal than the result of God's graciousness. “You do this for me, God, and I will give 10%.”

You may ask, “Just who gets the 10%?” We know from Genesis 19 and our meeting with Melchizedek that there were priests in that era—not well-defined for us like the priests of Israel are—and that they had dedicated their lives to the Revealed God as well as to the offering of sacrificial animals. Their exact *modus operandi* is never given to us, although we may logically surmise that offered up animal sacrifices they preserved whatever was known of the God Who made Adam.

I have suggested that Melchizedek may have handed off the Bible (possibly verbally) to Abraham; or confirmed the words of Scripture that Abraham already knew. In any case, Abraham knew to respect Melchizedek as a legitimate priest.

Jacob here is offering to give a tenth of what he has to the LORD, and we have already studied tithing; so that would lead us to the doctrine of giving.

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We covered the **Doctrine of Tithing** back in **Genesis 14** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This might be a good time to study the Doctrine of Christian Giving.

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It is human nature to be selfish; and human nature to hold on to all that you have. Conversely, it is also human nature to try to bribe God for a better deal in life. Neither of these attitudes works in the Church Age.

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<sup>29</sup> Writing does exist during this time period.

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

### 1. Definition.

- 1) Giving is an expression of worship to commemorate the grace policy of God.
- 2) Giving in the Church Age is a legitimate function of the believer's royal priesthood in worship, both inside and outside the local church (for instance, offering hospitality). Giving is one of the four categories of Christian service.
  - (1) Christian service related to your spiritual gift.
  - (2) Christian service related to your [royal priesthood](#), which [includes](#) prayer, giving, and the execution of the protocol plan of God through learning, thinking, and solving.
  - (3) Christian service related to your [royal ambassadorship](#), which includes evangelism, witnessing, administration in the local church, function on the mission field, and function in a Christian service organization.
  - (4) Christian service related to the [laws of divine establishment](#), which includes the divine institutions and patriotism, as well as military service and a respect for law enforcement, and government. Political activism is not a part of Christian service.
- 3) Giving is the presentation of money or other valuable commodities which may be used to sustain the ministry of doctrinal communication. Many churches meet in homes, rent out a space; and some build a church building. The location is immaterial. The actual amount that you give is unrelated to your actual say in church policy.
- 4) Christian giving may be extended to organizations other than the local church, e.g., missionary organizations, Bible schools, radio, or tape ministries. Giving is designed to support communication gifts (the communication of the gospel and the communication of Bible doctrine).
- 5) Giving is one way of inculcating teamwork and coordination into the body of Christ.

### 2. The Motivation in Giving.

- 1) Motivation is always the issue in giving, not the amount given.
- 2) 2Cor. 9:7 **Each person, to the degree he has determined by means of his heart [= right lobe], so let him give. He is not to give as motivated by distress of mind or compulsion of emotions; for God loves a grace-oriented giver.**
  - (1) You give based on the metabolized doctrine in your soul, not on the basis of your emotions.
  - (2) God provides all of our material benefits and He enjoys the mental attitude which accompanies giving. God loves grace-oriented giving. Don't give emotionally or impulsively. Determine for yourself what to give.
- 3) 2Cor. 9:8 **And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every**

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

good deed.

- (1) God graciously provides the ability for grace givers to give.
- (2) The only legitimate system of giving is a grace giver giving to a grace cause. Giving because you are under pressure from the pastor or the board of deacons is not true giving.
- (3) A right action must be done in a right way in order for it to have impact in the plan of God.
- 4) 2Cor. 9:9 [Psalm 112:9] **Just as it stands written, He scatters abroad, He gave it to the poor, His righteousness abides forever.**
  - (1) "He scatters abroad" means that the good man (as per the context of Psalm 112:9) shares of his blessings.
  - (2) He provides for the poor. This may be a part of your consistent giving and it may be a result of coming into contact with others.
  - (3) The righteousness of such a man stands forever; that is, it remains as eternal, divine good.
  - (4) This is not socialism; nor does this advocate socialism.
- 5) 2Cor. 9:10 **Now He who supplies seed to the sower [= capital] and bread for food, He will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.** God supplies and gives profit to grace givers. As a result, there is an increase in the harvest of your Christian service.
- 6) 2Cor. 9:11-12 **You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.** God blesses us in a multitude of ways. His grace to us overflows.
- 7) Giving is a mental attitude based upon grace-orientation. Grace-orientation is the basis for grace giving.
3. The Doctrinal Principles of Giving.
  - 1) Giving is an expression of the royal family honor code.
    - (1) Rom. 15:26 **For Macedonia and Achaia have decided with pleasure to make a special offering to the poor believers who are in Jerusalem.**
    - (2) Gal. 2:10 **They only asked us to remember the poor; the very thing I was also eager to do.**
    - (3) Charity is from God; socialism and government welfare are from man. As discussed in the doctrine of Tithing ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), it is reasonable for the government to supply some aid to the helpless. In the Mosaic economy, 3⅓% per year was the amount set apart for the poor from the government of Israel (the people themselves provided additional help for the poor). The poor received additional help from private persons in the Age of Israel.
  - 2) Giving is an expression of free will, without gimmicks and without coercion.



## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

- 2Cor. 8:3 I testify on the basis of their ability and beyond their ability they gave willingly. Their giving was a sign of their volition and their spiritual growth. It was not a matter of coercion.
- 3) Giving is an expression of mental attitude in every circumstance of life. 2Cor. 8:2 That in the midst of severe testing and great pressure, the superabundance of their happiness and their deep poverty overflowed in rich generosity. Even though under adversity, they shared the happiness of God. And having that mental attitude, they gave even while in deep poverty.
  - 4) Giving must express an attitude toward the Lord before it can express an attitude toward others. 2Cor. 8:5 And not even as we anticipated, but they gave first of themselves to the Lord, then they gave to us by the will of God. They were occupied with Christ and had personal love for God the Father which motivated their giving.
  - 5) Giving depends on the consistent post-salvation epistemological rehabilitation. 2Cor. 8:7 But just as you excel in everything in faith-rest and in doctrine and in knowledge and in all diligence and in love from you to us, you also excel in this grace giving. Giving is associated with [impersonal love](#), not with [personal love](#). That is grace giving.
  - 6) Precedence for giving is derived from the [dispensation of the Hypostatic Union](#) and is predicated on grace. 2Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich [as eternal God], yet for your sake He became poor [true humanity], so that you through His poverty [being judged for our sins] might become rich [a son of God].
  - 7) Giving is a mental attitude related to an overt act. 2Cor. 8:12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable on the basis of what one has, not on the basis of what one does not have. Willingness counts for giving even if you have nothing to give.
  - 8) Giving is related to motivation from metabolized doctrine in the right lobe of the soul (metabolized doctrine is spiritual information which you understand and believe). 2Cor. 9:7 Each one, as he has determined in his heart [= right lobe], so give, not from distress of mind or under compulsion or pressure of emotions; for God loves a gracious giver. True giving is a result of a gracious mental attitude; it is not the result of pressure or coercion.
  - 9) God in His matchless grace provides both the spiritual motivation and monetary capital for grace giving. 2Cor. 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that in always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have abundance for every good deed.
  - 10) God in His matchless grace provides both the monetary capital for grace giving and makes it part of your Christian service. 2Cor. 9:10 Now He who supplies seed for the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

- 11) Generosity of mental attitude results in generosity of giving. 2Cor. 9:11 **You will be made rich in every way, so that you can be generous on every occasion; and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.** Giving is never a strain.
- 12) Giving is Christian service; it is the result of spiritual growth and blessings from God. 2Cor. 9:12 **For this service which you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgivings to God.**
4. The principle of giving is related to two spiritual gifts: pastor-teacher and evangelism.
  - 1) The pastor must make an issue out of two things as a recipient of support from believers: the gospel, and what is the Christian way of life after salvation. If you are making an issue out of the gospel and Bible doctrine, then you cannot make an issue out of money.
  - 2) The pastor must never make an issue out of money.
  - 3) 2Cor. 11:7–9 **...because I proclaimed the gospel of God to you without charge? I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to serve you; and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when fellow believers [lit., *the brethren*] came from Macedonia, they fully supplied my need in everything, and I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so.**
    - (1) Paul was supported by other church bodies, such as the Ephesians and Philippians, while he was in Corinth. In this way he could make an issue out of the Gospel and doctrine.
    - (2) The function of the board of deacons is to make issues clear that pertain to the economic survival of a local church.
    - (3) The Corinthians were very wealthy; and yet Paul could not make an issue out of money with them. They were a difficult and confused group, and had Paul made an issue out of money, a faction of them would have complained, saying, "This is why Paul has established a church here—he wants our money."
  - 4) The pastor-teacher exchanges spiritual blessing to the congregation for material blessing from the congregation, fulfilling the principle of mutual blessing by association. Philip. 1:3, 5 **I am giving thanks to God for every memory of you, ...because of your contribution from the first day until now for the purpose of spreading the gospel.**
  - 5) Giving reflects the mental attitude of the congregation toward their pastor-teacher. Philip. 4:10 **I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you have been concerned, but you lacked opportunity to give.**
  - 6) Giving establishes a partnership between the pastor and the congregation. The congregation provides the financial contribution as they are spiritually blessed by the pastor's teaching. Philip. 4:14 **However, when you shared [by giving] and became partners with me in my adversity, you functioned**

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

**honorably.** Although this passage is specifically applied to Paul and his gift of apostleship, the principle is applicable to individual pastors and their congregations.

- 7) Giving is the application of Bible doctrine on the part of the congregation. Philip. 4:15-16 **And you yourselves also recognize, that in the beginning of my ministry with reference to the gospel, when I had departed from Macedonia, [that] not one church contributed to me in the application of doctrine of giving and receiving except you Philippians only; because even in Thessalonica you had sent an offering more than once for my needs.**
- 8) Giving is a grace production in Christian service, which service will accumulate and eventually be rewarded. Philip. 4:17 **Not because I seek the gift, but I seek after the grace production of divine good which accumulates to your account.**
- 9) Giving to one's right pastor is maximum blessing to the pastor and it is pleasing to God. Philip. 4:18 **Moreover, I have received in total all of your gifts, and I have an abundance; I have been filled with blessing, having received from Epaphroditus the things [money] from you, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.** Paul was the right pastor for many congregations, although he made an effort to train new pastors for these churches (e.g., Timothy).
- 10) The responsibility for support of the pastor is the responsibility of the local church. The number one priority is support of the pastor, not the building.
  - (1) Like many others, I appreciate amazing [architecture](#), and I have seen [churches](#) and temples which I enjoy aesthetically. However, it is not the business of the church to be spending huge amounts of money on buildings. Some congregations may have particularly wealthy donors; and other congregations might have only a handful of people who struggle day-by-day. Whatever is done by way of a meeting place—gathering in someone's home or in a massive church—is not the issue and it should never get in the way of the teaching of the Word of God. A local church may or may not have a large, impressive building.
  - (2) Related to this is the pastor and his own relationship to his congregation. A pastor really needs to think twice about *moving up* to a better church, better area and/or a larger congregation. Some congregations are going to be small where there are virtually no church assets; and others will be larger. This should never be an issue to the pastor-teacher. It takes great faithfulness on the part of a pastor-teacher to remain faithful to a congregation of 5 or 10 people; especially if another congregation of 300 or 3000 beckon him. God has a place for every teacher, and it is not always at the front podium of some mega-church. As Zechariah asks, **"Who has despised the day of small things?"** (Zech. 4:10a)

5. The Grace Concept of Giving. It is never the amount; it is always the mental

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

attitude.

- 1) In the Old Testament, Prov 11:24–25 **There is the one who gives generously, yet he becomes more prosperous. There is also the one who [is stingy] holds back what is fitting, and he becomes impoverished. The generous person will be prosperous. He who gives water will also himself be caused to have water.** Those who hang on to their money impoverish themselves. Giving never impoverishes. In supergrace, no matter what you give you never lose.
- 2) In the New Testament, 1Cor 16:2 **On the first day of the week let each one of you put aside and save on the basis of his prosperity, that no collections be taken when I come.** You determine how much you can give from your prosperity. You don't give if you are broke or if giving would place a hardship on your family.

### 6. A Review of the True Meaning of Tithing.

- 1) Tithing is not spiritual giving in the Old Testament. Tithing promotes arrogance. Tithing was never spiritual giving in Israel.
- 2) Tithing was a 10% income tax under the laws of establishment delineated in the Mosaic Law for the citizens of Israel only. Believers and unbelievers alike were being charged the same amount of tax. As a tax it was not spiritual giving.
- 3) There was also a 10% tithe for all Jewish citizens, both believers and unbelievers, for the maintenance of the Levites for their presentation of doctrine (Num 18:21, 24). This is not pertinent today.
- 4) There was also a 10% tithe for all Jewish citizens, both believers and unbelievers, to support the cost of the Lord's sacrifices (Deut. 14:22–24). This is also not pertinent today.
- 5) Every third year Israel required the payment of a charity tithe of 10% for those who legitimately needed help (Deut 14:28–29). This was a 10% income tax paid by all the people. This was charity and not socialism. This is the only tax pertinent today. We should pay income tax for the support of the military, and should pay a 10% charity tax every third year.
- 6) Spiritual giving in the Old Testament is presented under the word "offerings." Offerings were given by believers only.
- 7) In the time of apostasy in Israel, both believers and unbelievers failed to pay their taxes; and believers were not fulfilling their spiritual obligations in giving as well. Mal. 3:8–10 talks about income tax. **"Will a person defraud God, yet you have been robbing Me. Yet you say, 'How have we robbed You?' 'In tithes [income taxes], and offerings [spiritual giving]. To the entire nation you are cursed with a curse, for you are defrauding Me. Bring your entire tithe [taxes] to the treasury, so that there may be food in My house,' says the Lord of the Armies. 'See if I will not open for you the windows of heaven [prosperity] and pour out blessings for you until there is not room enough."**

## The Doctrine of Giving (from Bible Doctrine Resource)

One of the things which attracted me to Berachah Church, particularly because I was quite poor when I first became positive toward Bible doctrine, was their policy on [giving](#):

*There is no charge for any material from Berachah Church. Anyone who desires Bible teaching can receive our recordings without obligation. God provides Bible doctrine. We wish to reflect His grace.*

*Berachah Church is a grace ministry and operates entirely on voluntary contributions. There is no price list for recordings. No money is requested. When gratitude for the Word of God motivates a believer to give, he has the privilege of contributing to the dissemination of Bible doctrine.*

This policy was put into effect by R. B. Thieme, Jr. and I can personally testify that I have never been asked for money; and have never been treated differently during the times when I could contribute and the times when I could not.

From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=2422](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=2422) accessed January 25, 2015 and subsequently edited. Many of the doctrines on this page originate from the teaching of R. B. Thieme, Jr. The translation used above is probably from R. B. Thieme, Jr. as well.

The verse which set off this study:

**Genesis 28:22** And this stone which I have set for a pillar will be God's house. And of all that You will give me, I will surely give the tenth to You."

Interestingly enough, up to this point, all of the vows have been one-way. God has made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob concerning what He would do for them. Here, Jacob is making a vow to God—a vow which is completely and totally voluntary on his part.

*Barnes: Here, then, Jacob appears to take a step in advance of his predecessors. Prior to this, God had taken the initiative in every promise, and the everlasting covenant rests solely on his eternal purpose. Abraham had responded to the call of God, believed in the Lord, walked before him, entered into communion with him, made intercession with him, and given up his only son to him at his demand. In all this there is an acceptance on the part of the creature of the supremacy of the merciful Creator. But now the spirit of adoption prompts Jacob to a spontaneous movement toward God...[This] is the grand and solemn expression of the soul's free, full, and perpetual acceptance of the Lord to be its own God. This is the most frank and open utterance of newborn spiritual liberty from the heart of man that has yet appeared in the divine record. "If God will be with me." This is not the condition on which Jacob will accept God in a mercenary spirit. It is merely the echo and the thankful acknowledgment of the divine assurance, "I am*

*with thee," which was given immediately before. It is the response of the son to the assurance of the father.*<sup>30</sup>

Personally, I question just how much of a step forward this really is, given who Jacob is. However, Jacob will appear to be somewhat changed in the years that follow.

## Lesson 329 addendum: Genesis 28:1–22

## A Brief Review of Genesis 28

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 28:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

In the previous chapter, Jacob, as encouraged by his mother, pretended to be his brother Esau when with his father, and managed to wrangle from him the blessing for the firstborn. See Genesis 27.

When Isaac realized what had taken place, his wife told him that Jacob needed a wife from their relatives and not from the Hittites. Rebekah had already butted heads with Esau's Hittite wives.

Rebekah's solution, presented at the end of Genesis 27, is to send Jacob back east to take a wife. Isaac must make this call. Isaac must send Jacob there.

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<sup>30</sup> Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:20–22 (slightly edited).



Genesis 28:1 And Yitshaq [= Isaac] called Ya'aqob [= Jacob] and blessed him, and commanded him, and said to him, "Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena'an [= Canaan]."

Rebekah has told her husband that Jacob needs to marry a woman of their own breeding, and there are relatives living in Charan (Haran) which Jacob could marry.

However, it is the next day after being deceived and certainly Isaac has figured out that: (1) Jacob deceived him. (2) His wife, Rebekah, was a party to this scheme. (3) Esau wants to kill his brother. (4) His father, Abraham, did not want him to leave the land of Canaan no matter what. When Rebekah told Isaac that Jacob needed to go to Haran, all of this information was already in Isaac's mind. He probably did not know what he was going to say to Rebekah or do. However, guaranteed, what she said to him here came right out of left field. He was not expecting this at all.

What Rebekah has apparently told Isaac is, "Jacob cannot marry some uncivilized Hittite trollop like his brother did. We need to send him up to Haran in order to find a decent wife. Based upon the information given in this chapter, Rebekah did not reference what happened the previous day—it was as if nothing had happened. Yet, all of this time, Isaac has been thinking about everything that he knows.

So what does half-blind Isaac do? Does he confront his wife and say, "Listen, you were in on this scheme with Jacob, weren't you?" Does he say, "Let's let the boys sort it out between themselves"? Does he assert, "Listen, Abraham would not let me leave the land, so Jacob cannot leave the land"? Or does Isaac go with option #4, ignore these things which he already knows or has figured out; and keep the peace by sending Jacob to Haran to find a wife? What is so good about this solution? Jacob and Esau are separated and Isaac does not need to talk to Rebekah or to Jacob about the great deception from the previous day.

Therefore, Isaac does exactly what Rebekah requests. No matter what happens between Jacob and Esau—Isaac does not want one of them to die. Furthermore, Isaac remains married to Rebekah (there is no reason for them to discuss yesterday's events). To some degree, Isaac is dependent upon Rebekah (although he is certainly rich enough to live separately and still be taken care of).

I suspect that Isaac weighs all of these possible options in his mind and decides that the simplest solution, the one that stirs up the least amount of dust and disappointment, is sending Jacob away to Haran to *find a wife*. Furthermore, no matter what Isaac planned or determined to do, Jacob has the blessing of the firstborn. Therefore, he needs a wife. Since Isaac already knows what the Hittite women can be like, he decides, that sending Jacob to Haran is the best solution. It solves all their family problems.

Genesis 28:2 (Isaac continues speaking to Jacob:) "Arise, go to Paddan Aram, to the house of Bethu'el your mother's father. And take a wife for yourself from there, from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.

Isaac send Jacob to Haran for the express purpose of finding a wife (as per Rebekah's request from the previous chapter). Nothing is said about the blessing achieved by deceit; nothing is said about Esau's anger. The whole cover story—which is accurate, by the way—is all about sending Jacob to Haran to find a wife.

Genesis 28:3–4 “And Ėl Shaddai bless you, and make you fruitful and increase you, and you shall become an assembly of peoples, and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your seed with you, so that you inherit the land of your sojournings, which Elohim gave to Abraham.”

Ėl Shaddai is another name for God, and Isaac blesses Jacob a second time, confirming that he will receive the blessing of Abraham (which would be the blessing of the firstborn). “You and all of your descendants will inherit the land of Canaan, which God gave to Abraham.”

Genesis 28:5 So Yitshaq sent Ya'aqob away, and he went to Paddan Aram, to Laban son of Bethu'el the Aramean, the brother of Ribqah [= *Rebekah*], the mother of Ya'aqob and Ėsaw.

Jacob is sent away, but all of this takes place rather quickly. Isaac does not take time to put together a dowry, as was done for him.

Genesis 28:6–7 And Ėsaw saw that Yitshaq had blessed Ya'aqob and sent him away to Paddan Aram to take himself a wife from there, and that as he blessed him he gave him a command, saying, “Do not take a wife from the daughters of Kena'an,” and that Ya'aqob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan Aram.

Esau did not necessarily watch with his own eyes all of this take place. He found out about it, so that, at some point, Esau knew all that had happened. He is well-aware that his Hittite wives are displeasing to his mother.

Genesis 28:8–9 So Ėsaw saw that the daughters of Kena'an did not please his father Yitshaq, and Ėsaw went to Yishma'el [= *Ishmael*] and took Maḥalath the daughter of Yishma'el, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebayoth, to be his wife, besides the wives he had.

It is at this point that Esau realized that his parents did not approve of his two wives. He knew that there was some tension, but at this point, he takes it seriously. Therefore, Esau reaches out to Ishmael to take a wife from his tribe. This is Esau's third wife.

Genesis 28:10 And Ya'aqob went out from Be'ersheba and went toward Haran.

Jacob, with whatever he was given, left Beersheba and went to Haran.

When Abraham's servants went to Haran to take a wife for Isaac, he was sent with a massive dowry. This totally got the attention of Laban. However, there is no indication that

Jacob will travel with anything except one or two camels, maybe a slave, and some supplies to keep him alive.

In the book of Genesis, there is a fair amount of travel which takes place. However, when a person travels from point A to point B, rarely do we know anything about the actual trip between those two places. However, this is different. This trip was quite eventful.

Genesis 28:11 *And he came upon a place and stopped over for the night, for 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.*

Along the way, Jacob had to stop and sleep.

Genesis 28:12 *And he dreamed and saw a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to the heavens, and saw messengers of Elohim going up and coming down on it.*

In his dreams, Jacob saw an amazing thing. He saw a ladder going up from the earth to heaven and he watched messengers go up and down this ladder. This has been represented by many paintings over the years.

Genesis 28:13 *And see, הוהי stood above it and said, "I am הוהי Elohim [= YHWH Elohim, Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim, Jehovah God] of Abraham your father and the Elohim of Yitshaq [= the God of Isaac]. The land on which you are lying, I give it to you and your seed.*

God speaks to him in this dream. He repeats His promises made to Abraham and to Isaac. Even though Jacob did some terrible things, God chooses him over Esau. Why? Because of Jacob's line. God can see where Esau's line is going to go and He can see where Jacob's line is going. There will be believers in the line of Esau. In fact, I believe that the list of descendants from Esau all represent specific believers. But, after a certain period of time, Esau's line had fewer and fewer unbelievers. At many points in their history, they became antagonistic to the Jews. This is true of many specific groups, particularly the Arabs.

Jacob's line is going to lead to the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, despite his many shortcomings, he is the line of promise.

Genesis 28:14 *"And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall break forth to the west and to the east, to the north and the south. And all the clans of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your seed.*

"Your seed," God tells Jacob, "is going to be scattered throughout the entire earth, to the east, to the west, to the north and to the south." God has given the people of Jacob a specific plot of land, but at the same time, Israel is going to be scattered throughout the globe.

Prior to this, all of the promises made to the people of God were that they would be associated with the land of Canaan. With Jacob, suddenly, God's promises have them breaking out of their land and ending up all over the world. Right at this point in time in the narrative, there are essentially five Jews, living or dead: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob. Every genealogical Jew will be born with the genes of these three men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis 28:15 “And see, I am with you and shall guard you wherever you go, and shall bring you back to this land. For I am not going to leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

God promises Jacob to guard him wherever he goes and that He will bring Jacob back to the land of promise.

Genesis 28:16 And Ya'aqob<sub>u</sub> awoke from his sleep and said, “Truly, הוהי is in this place, and I did not know it.”

Jacob wakes up and he is surprised by what he dreamed. “Certainly, Y<sup>e</sup>howah is here, in this place, and I had no clue.”

Genesis 28:17 And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of Elohim, and this is the gate of the heavens!”

Jacob called this place awesome, the house of God, and he said the gates of heaven are found here.

Genesis 28:18 And Ya'aqob<sub>u</sub> rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a standing column, and poured oil on top of it.

Jacob stood a stone up, and then poured oil upon it. Sometimes this was done to mark a spot of importance. A large oblong stone is stood upright to make some kind of a statement.

Genesis 28:19 And he called the name of that place Běyth Ĕl, however, the name of that city had been Luz previously.

He calls this place Beth-el, which means, *House of God*.

Genesis 28:20–22 And Ya'aqob<sub>u</sub> made a vow, saying, “Seeing Elohim is with me, and has kept me in this way that I am going, and has given me bread to eat and a garment to put on – when I have returned to my father's house in peace, and הוהי has been my Elohim, then this stone which I have set as a standing column shall be Elohim's house, and of all that You give me, I shall certainly give a tenth to You.”

Jacob then makes a vow to God, that if God feeds and clothes him, and returns him to his father's home, then he will give God a tenth of what he has.

What lies ahead for Jacob is this: he is presently a dishonest, crafty manipulator; so he is going to spend time with his Uncle Laban, who is more dishonest, more crafty and more of a manipulator.

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**Lesson 330: Genesis 29:1–2****Jacob comes to Laban's well**

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In the previous chapter, Jacob was still in the Land of Promise, eventually heading North and then east; and God had come to him in a dream, where Jacob had the vision of the angels going up and down from earth to heaven.

Jacob will leave the land of Canaan, and go to a land where there is deception, superstition, and a worship of false gods. However, the worship of the True God was known within his family—although it will become apparent in later chapters that they have some problems in this area.

There are assumptions that we will make—truth is revealed to those who want it. God's truth is not available to every single person, but that is a matter of their volition, rather than God's inability to provide it. The believer who wants to know God, Who God is and what God does will be provided with this information. That is a function of God's character.

So what Jacob knows is a matter of his own volition; and the same is true of his eastern family. They have some positive volition toward the Revealed God and they will all appear to have some recognition of God's authority as well. Nahor is the father of those who live in the east; Abraham is the father of this very small clan in Canaan. However, the God of Abraham is equivalent to the God of Nahor (Genesis 31:53). So, when Abraham's servant spoke to Bethuel and Laban about the God of Abraham; He is their God as well.

God has promised to be with Jacob during this time—therefore, Jacob is going to learn from this experience as well as become enriched by this experience. Jacob will return to Canaan, 20 years from this time, a very changed man. He will be married—twice—and he will have two mistresses (more properly, surrogates). His attitude toward Esau will be changed dramatically. However, he will never achieve the status of Abraham and be called the friend of God.

The blessings of God follow after Jacob. Jacob, as we have already observed, is not a spiritual giant—not by any stretch of the imagination. However, he is in the line of promise, and, as such, is the recipient not only of God's care and protection, but of God's blessings.

David wrote in the psalms: [Indeed, \[divine\] good and \[God's\] grace will pursue me all the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of Y<sup>e</sup>howah forever.](#) (Psalm 23:6) This describes the life of the mature believer. During his time on earth, God's divine good and grace pursue him; and then, in eternity, he is with God forever. What could be a better life? And even Jacob, who is anything but a mature believer, is in the line of promise, and in this line, goodness and grace still pursue him. God has promised this to him directly:

Gen. 28:13–15 And behold, the LORD stood above it [the stairwell] and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth 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 promised you." (ESV)

As we discussed in Genesis 28, if Jacob had not put his trust in God before, he indeed had some trust in God now. After all, God appeared to him in a dream.

It will also become clear, from the very personal nature of portions of Genesis, that Jacob wrote a considerable number of chapters in this book.

This, of course, makes many people think, "If God appeared to me, I would have a greater strength of faith too." No doubt, there are people you know (perhaps even you) who think that you have been short-changed (1) because God has never appeared to you; (2) you were not alive when Jesus walked the earth; (3) you have never seen anything that you could undeniably call a miracle.

This is one of the amazing things in the history of God and man: Jacob will not become a great believer, like his grandfather Abraham. God appeared to both men; and God will appear to Jacob on many occasions. Abraham became great in faith. Jacob advanced to a stage of mediocrity. The Exodus generation saw great miracles performed by God. Most of the miracles which occur in Exodus are done on a grand scale, so that all the people of Egypt and all the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could observe them. However, bear in mind that the Egyptians, for the most part, remained hostile to the Jews, despite the fact that they witnessed the very same miracles. There was not a mass exodus of Egyptians to go with the Jews (although some Egyptians did accompany the Jews).

God remained with the Jews of the Exodus and not only continued to perform miracles for them, but spoke aloud to them (which frightened them greatly). And yet, this generation of Jews, who witnessed a dozen or so amazing miracles, were one of the worst generations of believers in Jewish history. Most of them died the sin unto death. God killed them before entering into the Land of Promise. He later commented, "For 40 years, I loathed that generation." (Psalm 95:10) They saw great miracles with their own eyes; and the miracles were confirmed by everyone there, and yet, the adults who left Egypt were a nearly all a worthless lot of believers.

There were a great many people who saw Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry; and many of them observed miracles of healing. Yet not everyone believed. Jesus spoke to Jews, to scholars of the Old Testament, to Romans, to Samaritans, and most of these people—who saw Jesus with their own eyes—opposed Him. In fact, there was a coalition between the Romans and the Jews which took Jesus to the cross—and these two groups hated one another!



What you need to do is appreciate where you are and what you know; and enjoy this period of history. Being an American, I was raised during the greatest period in America's history, where we have enjoyed great material prosperity and great blessing at the hand of God. I have also seen a significant number of Americans turn against their own country and turn against God, ignoring or even repudiating their spiritual history. I could witness in my very own lifetime the destruction of the United States, which is the greatest country to have ever existed up to this point in time. What could be more exciting than that? What could be more dramatic?

We don't need to see miracles; we don't need to hear the voice of God; we don't need to meet Jesus during His very short, earthly ministry. We have the full and complete Word of God and most of us live in a country where we have easy access to God's Word. In fact, we have online access to over 80 English translations of the Bible.

We live during one of the greatest periods of time in human history; and many of us in the greatest nation in human history. We are witnesses to two of the greatest evils in human history—Islam and communism. Their evil cannot be denied, and yet it is. One of our political parties has more in common with the communist party than with our founders; and the other party barely tolerates those who are trying to reconnect with the spirit of our founders.

We as Americans are beneficiaries and heirs to the greatest spiritual heritage of any previous nation. For those of us who live in the United States, we have a front row seat to one of the greatest struggles in the history of mankind. We can see the full-on evils of socialism and Islam and how these disparate ideologies seek to destroy, above all else, the faith of Jesus Christ—and to destroy any nation that professes Jesus as their Lord and Savior (as well as to destroy nation Israel).

This is a wonderful time to be alive. This is one of the greatest and most exciting eras of human history. If you know Bible doctrine; if the truth of God is in your thinking; then the spiritual battle which undergirds current events is clear, unmistakable, and, quite frankly, exciting. Each day brings more news of the spiritual battle which is the basis for all that is happening. Consequently, the choices that God has allowed us to make at this time could not be more stark or more meaningful.

The political party which is most hostile to Christians, to nation Israel, and to the Bible, on the other hand, tries to sell the idea that their governmental philosophies are most akin to Scripture. This requires every believer to search the Scriptures.

On to Genesis 29:

[Genesis 29:1](#) And Jacob lifted his feet and went to the land of the sons of the east.

This is an interesting phrase, *and Jacob lifted up his feet*; and I think unique in the Bible. Most of the time, to preface action for which there is concentrated intent, we have the verb *to get up, to rise up*. It does not mean that someone is laying on the ground and then he

gets up, but that he moves forward with purpose. I think that here, Jacob is becoming somewhat more introspective. He has just seen God—God has spoken to him (albeit in a dream) and he is leaving the Land of Promise (which is necessary; he has no choice here). It is as if Jacob knows that his future is in the Land of Promise, but he is cognizant of his feet carrying him in the opposite direction, away from the Land of Promise. He thinks about his direction and he finds himself being conflicted; yet he still *lifts up his feet*.

Jacob had been in Bethel (= the House of God), and he saw the angels going up and down between heaven and earth; and God spoke to him. So leaving that place was difficult for him to do. No doubt, he wanted to experience that again. This has added an whole new dimension to his life.

Like the journey of Abraham's servant of perhaps 60 years previous, no description of the actual 400+ mile journey will be given. In one verse, he is in the Land of Promise; in the next verse, he is at his destination. In Genesis 28:22 and 29:1, Jacob is in the Land of Promise; and in v. 2, he is over 400 miles away.

In v. 2, we pick up with Jacob's journey<sup>31</sup> a month or many months later, and he has arrived in the land where his Uncle Laban lives; and, at this point, he has come to a well frequented by Laban's family (and possibly owned by Laban).

**Genesis 29:2** And he looked, and he saw [lit., *behold*] a well [that] was in the field! And, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it, for they watered the flocks out of that well. And a great stone was upon the well's mouth.

Jacob is going to be very descriptive here and throughout this entire chapter. This will be the day that he first meets Rachel, the love of his life. This will account for all of the detail found here.

Jacob, despite what we have seen from him so far, is a romantic individual; and he will fall very much in love with Rachel. Furthermore, by some things which we will observe here, it will be clear that all of this is recorded by Jacob. Quite obviously, who else would have recorded this information, which is clearly a first-hand account. Furthermore, there will be other things which will be said from time to time that make it apparent that this is all from Jacob's perspective.

The Bible tends to focus upon the life of one patriarch at a time. We have studied Abraham, then Isaac and now Jacob. Just as we never went back to Abraham's life in narrative form once we turned to Isaac; we will not go back to Isaac at a later time. He will be mentioned again, but we are no longer following his life. We will study a time when God comes and speaks to Jacob again; but God will not come and speak with Isaac. So, Isaac will be mentioned again, but not in a narrative form where it is clear that we are hearing his words describe his situation.

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<sup>31</sup> Although the servant of Isaac makes this journey both ways and so does Jacob, we are never given any information about their trips.

Right at this point and time, Isaac is still alive. He is about 130 years old and he will live another 50 years (Genesis 35:28). You will recall that our study of Isaac's narratives were fairly straightforward and they centered on major events (births, marriages and deaths).

My guess is that Jacob records the narrative in Genesis 28:1–35:29 (give or take). In Genesis 37:1, Joseph will appear to take up the narrative. At that point, Jacob will still be alive and one of the characters in the narrative, but it will be clear that this will be Jacob as seen through the eyes of his son Joseph.

The principle is, each generation stands on its own. Each generation is responsible for its own decisions.

It ought to be clear that I unequivocally reject the idea that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. At the most, he was the final editor—but, my guess is, this book existed in its final form at the time that Moses was born. Whether it was in the thinking of the people of Jacob (that is, they memorized it) or had been committed to writing by the time of Moses is unknown.

At this point, we are with Jacob and will be with him until Genesis 35; and for the next 7 chapters of Genesis, everything will be presented from his perspective. The thread which holds Genesis 28–35 together is, Jacob is a witness to all of it.

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**Lesson 331: Genesis 29:1–10a      Jacob speaks with the shepherds at the well**

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The entire journey of 400 miles is described in v. 1; and Jacob coming upon the land of Laban is found in vv. 2–3:

Genesis 29:1–2 *Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large,...* (ESV)

The first 14 verses of Genesis 29 could be summed up simply as, *And Jacob arrived in Padan-aram and met his cousin Rachel by their well, and she brought him to her father Laban's house.* But, instead of 1 verse, there are 14. You might be wondering, *what are all of these details about?* There are all of these 3 flocks of sheep near a well and a stone over the opening of the well; and then there is this conversation. Why is this recorded? Jacob is remembering the first day that he sees Rachel; and he remembers all of these details of that first day. It is likely that, many days after this, while working for Laban, that he replays all of this day in his head, and remembers back to this first meeting—holding onto this wonderful memory, recalling the first day that he sees the woman of his life. It is this memory which gives him the strength to work for his Uncle Laban for 7 years; and yet, these 7 years pass by quickly as if only a few days in his own mind. When Jacob is unable to be near Rachel, he is thinking about her and this day that they first meet. Hence, all of the details that we read.

Jacob has been sent to Padan-aram for two reasons—to escape the emotional revolt of Esau’s soul (his brother Esau wanted to kill him), and to find a wife from his own family. During this long trip, Jacob has begun to think more and more about this trip and about his potential future wife.

There are two things on Jacob’s mind. He is over 40 years old and is not yet married; and this is something he desires. Furthermore, he might be giving some thought to his spiritual heritage as well, which flows from Abraham to Isaac to him. This spiritual heritage continues through his seed as promised him by God. That requires a wife and children as well.

Jacob knows that this spiritual heritage is real, because God has appeared to him and spoke to him, and has confirmed these promises to him—the same promises that God had also made to Abraham. So, what his father Isaac (or mother Rebekah) has told him is confirmed by God.

[Genesis 29:3](#) And all the flocks were gathered there. And they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in its place.

What is described in v. 3 is what typically happens. The flocks begin to gather at the well at a particular time each day. Then the stone is rolled away from the opening to the well so that the sheep can be given water. Afterwards, the stone is rolled back over the hole. Jacob will observe this on this occasion; but he will observe this on many occasions.

Jacob had never been to this place before. Whatever description that he had from Rebekah was from 60 or more years ago. The servant of Abraham who actually made the trip to and back was probably dead by now. So Jacob has a description of the route and the area that he is to go to. So, what he sees here, he takes a mental inventory; and there is likely some parallels to the place where Rebekah has sent him. We don’t know exactly what things stood out to tell Jacob that he was approximately in the right place.

Jacob may have with him Deborah, his mother’s personal nurse (or nanny), who would have left this same area with Rebekah some 60 years ago. So, she has actually seen this place before, as a young woman—perhaps many times. The reason that we think that she might be with Jacob is, he will record her death in Genesis 35:8 (the implication being that she has been with him the whole time).

However, it should be pointed out that the vocabulary here used to describe this water source is quite different from the vocabulary used to describe the well in Genesis 24. So, they may be at the same place, but the source of water is different, as is the access, as the vocabulary and the description is quite different.

So Jacob has come to the area which is near Haran, which is where his grandfather Abraham originally settled.

Genesis 29:4 And Jacob said to them, “My brothers, where are you from?” And they said, “We are from Haran.”

Jacob takes all of this in. Where he is was described to him by his mother, and he thinks that he might be in the right place. Or, Deborah, his mother’s nanny, identifies this as probably being the right place.

More than likely, there were only a few roads in that era (they would appear to be more like trails to us today); so Jacob can get onto a trade route and it would take him where he wanted to go. This would not be a confusing road system, with roads going all over the place. There would be some primary routes which would have been followed.

Jacob finally approaches the shepherds at the watering hole, and asks about them. Although you cannot read this in the English, the Hebrew conversation begins as very sparse and simple. It is possible that they are struggling to communicate with one another.

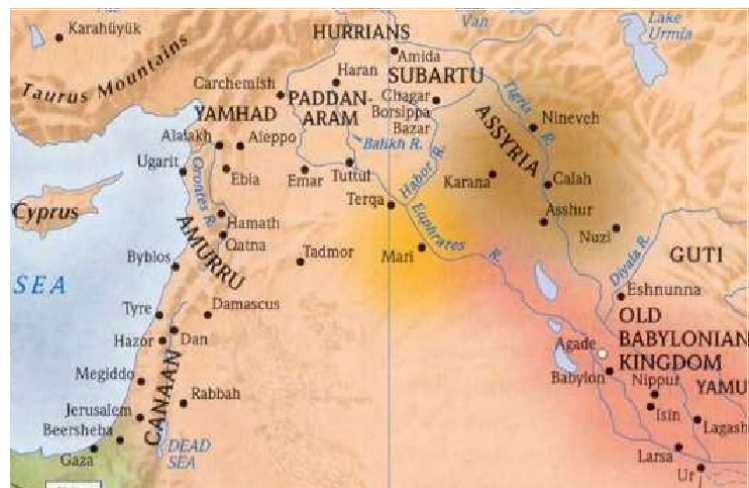
Syriac and Hebrew are very similar languages, but they are not equivalent. The people in this area speak Syriac; Jacob speaks Hebrew (see Genesis 31:47, where Jacob and Laban both name a pile of rocks representing a covenant between them with the same name, but in different languages).

The term *brothers* has been used for a great many centuries to mean something other than a person’s literal brother. This is an attempt by Jacob to establish a rapport between himself and these shepherds. It is unlikely that he believes himself to be related to these men.

Genesis 29:5 And he said to them, “Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?” And they said, “We know him.”

Laban is Rebekah’s brother and Jacob’s uncle. Nahor is Abraham’s brother. *Laban ben Nahor* is very similar to our first and last name way of identifying one another. Although names were not unique, and then, as now, some family names would be used again and again, if Jacob was in the right place, then these people should know who Laban ben Nahor is.

We do not know how widespread the language of Abraham’s family was. Recall that Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldees (Iraq) and moved originally to Haran (Charan) and then to the Land of Promise. A fairly large contingent of Abraham’s family settled in Haran, and Abraham himself lived there for a period of time. They



are all Semitic peoples, so it is possible that they spoke dialects of the same language (like those in Ireland, Scotland and Wales). In any case, they are all able to communicate, but much of the Hebrew is fairly simplistic, nevertheless.

**Map of the Middle East** around the time of the patriarchs from Bible Atlas Maps in e-sword, p. 18. Ur is off in the far right corner. Haran is in Paddan-aram in the north. So Jacob traveled northeast to get to Haran.

Based upon Genesis 31:47, it will appear that those living in Paddam-aram all spoke Syrian and that Abraham spoke Hebrew.

**Genesis 29:6** And he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. And, look, his daughter Rachel comes with the sheep."

The word translated *look* is often translated *lo!*, *behold*; but in this context, it is calling attention to something happening off in the distance. It would be reasonable to translate this word as, *in fact, look over there*. This would give us:

**Genesis 29:6** And he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "He is well. In fact, look over there: his daughter Rachel comes with the sheep."

Probably, Rachel is just a figure far off in the distance. The shepherds there would know her; her walk, her demeanor, her clothing, and her sheep. She catches Jacob's eye as well.

These men are not relatives to Jacob. Otherwise, they would not say, "Here is Laban's daughter approaching us;" they would say, "Yes, we are Laban's sons" or "We are Laban's servants. Our sister now approaches." However, just as they said, they know Laban but they are not related to him.

**Genesis 29:7** And he [Jacob] said, "Lo, the day is yet high. It is not yet time for gathering the cattle together. Water the sheep, and go feed them."

Jacob uses 3 imperatives in this verse. However, Jacob is not telling these men what to do. He is not saying, "You all have jobs to do, right; now, therefore, go back to work!" Let me suggest the tenor is more like he is saying, "Look, don't let me keep you from what you have to do. I know you need to tend to your sheep, and that is fine by me." Or perhaps he is using the imperative somewhat in jest; or as indicative of their limited ability to communicate with one another. In any case, Jacob is not telling them what they must do. Quite obviously, there must be a way that Jacob says this, so that it is clear to these men that he is not telling them what to do.

Jacob was looking to speak with someone related to Laban, and now his daughter has arrived. Therefore, he is going to speak with her rather than with these shepherds.



As Rachel approaches, perhaps Jacob thinks to himself, “And I would much rather talk with this lovely woman here anyway.”

**Genesis 29:8** And they said, “We cannot, until all the flocks have been gathered together. And they roll the stone from the well's mouth, then we water the sheep.”

There is a great deal of speculation which results from these next few verses. These men are gathered near the water hole with their sheep to get some water; but they cannot move the stone out of the opening of the well yet. All of the flocks have to be gathered together first.

I must admit that this was not clear to me at first. One possibility is, several men are required in order to roll this stone away. However, it sounds as if there are enough shepherds there at this time to move the stone. Jacob will, apparently by himself, move the stone, a few verses from now.

The stone is placed there probably to keep unauthorized persons from using the well. It possibly hides the well from the untrained eye as well. It is an indication of ownership and control, much like the lock on the front door of a house.

What is most likely is, only certain men are given the authority to roll back the stone. The men to whom Jacob is speaking do not have the authority to roll the stone out of the way. They might pay Laban a fee for this; and there are specific rules that must be obeyed in order to use the water from this watering hole.

**Genesis 29:9** While he still spoke with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she kept them.

At this point, Jacob is able to get a good look at Rachel, who would become his wife.

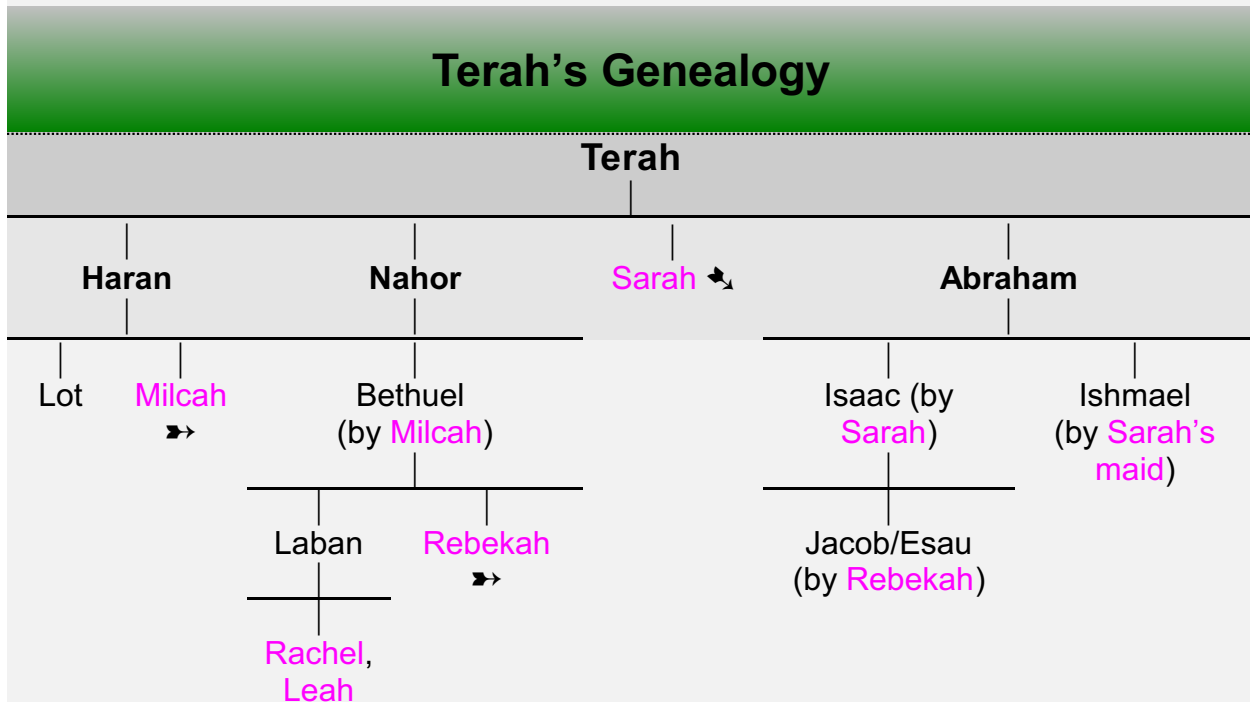
This is unusual—she is a woman and she is in charge of a herd of sheep. Is this what she wants? Is she somewhat of a tomboy? Or is this the charge of her father, who would rather use his daughter to watch the sheep than to hire someone or to purchase another slave? Based upon what we will find out about Laban, it is likely the latter reason. Laban does have sons, but they become a part of the narrative later on—so many of them may be too young at this time or not even born (his sons will not appear to be a part of the narrative until 20 years later).

Remember what we know about Laban already. We met him as a young man back in Genesis 24, when the servant of Abraham had come to his family to find a wife for Isaac. What impressed him was the jewelry that the servant brought for his sister Rebekah. That got his attention. Wealth impressed Laban, and that will appear to be what motivates him in life.

**Genesis 29:10a** And it happened when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother,...

Let me reword this for more clarity: *And Jacob saw his cousin Rachel, his Uncle Laban's daughter.* We better understand the relationship between Jacob and Rachel.

This is a short genealogy, so that we can see how the people in this chapter are related to one another.



As you can see, Laban is Jacob's uncle through Rebekah.

## Lesson 332: Genesis 29:1–17

## Jacob Meets and Speaks with Rachel

Jacob has found the way to the land of his Uncle Laban. It is possible that Deborah, his mother's nurse, helped him to identify the route and the actual place.

Genesis 29:1–10a Then Jacob went on his journey and came to the land of the people of the east. As he looked, he saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep lying beside it, for out of that well the flocks were watered. The stone on the well's mouth was large, and when all the flocks were gathered there, the shepherds would roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place over the mouth of the well. Jacob said to them, "My brothers, where do you come from?" They said, "We are from Haran." He said to them, "Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?" They said, "We know him." He said to them, "Is it well with him?" They said, "It is well; and see, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep!" He said, "Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep and go, pasture them." But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together and the stone is rolled from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep." While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. Now as soon as

Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother,.. (ESV)

As previously observed, there are a great many details here, and this is because this is the first day that Jacob meets the love-of-his-life. Therefore, these details are important to him.

Furthermore, throughout the book of Genesis, there are person-specific details, which suggest that a variety of men (primarily the patriarchs) recorded this information. Although I have suggested in the past that Moses may have been the editor of this material, there is really no need for even that (apart, possibly, from an occasional gloss<sup>32</sup>). We follow one patriarch's life after another, almost seamlessly. The writing styles and sorts of information recorded by each patriarch is unique and related directly to that patriarch. There seems little reason for an editor to come along 400 years later and decide, *I will keep this section, but I will cull out that section*. By what authority and for what reason would someone do this?

The first chapter of Exodus will tie this history of the patriarchs found in Genesis to Moses and his time, where a summation of the Jews in the land of Egypt is given, but without a clear reference to an existing book. Knowledge of previous events and to the Revealed God are found in Exodus (such as, in Ex. 1:1–8, 17, 21 2:23–25 3:6, 14–15); but no reference is ever made in those early chapters of Exodus to an existing book (at least, I have not found one yet). They were aware of some of the general history of Genesis—but they could have been aware of that without the complete book of Genesis.

**Genesis 29:10** And it happened when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, then Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flocks of Laban his mother's brother.

This is an odd thing, that Jacob rolls the stone away. Obviously, he does not personally have the authority here. Did he get the nod from someone? Did Rachel, as the boss's daughter, give the nod to these men, and then they gave the nod to Jacob. Perhaps he looked at Rachel, and then moved the stone out of his own initiative.

Nothing is said about there being several men involved to move this stone (although that could have occurred). Even though it says the Jacob moved the stone out of the way, this does not mean that he does this without help. Again, we can only speculate as to why these other shepherds had not gotten access to the well themselves—logically, this appears to be an authority issue.

Ownership of wells in the ancient world was absolutely important and often a matter of serious dispute (recall that we have studied this with both Abraham and Isaac). If I were to venture a guess, Laban is the owner of this well, and he would allow access, but only

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<sup>32</sup> That is, he might update the name of a place, here or there.

under the supervision of himself or a member of his family. He would allow the well to be opened up at a specific time, and if you were early, you had to wait; and if you were late, then too bad.

With Rachel there, Jacob could certainly move the stone from the well. If he received assistance in this, the text does not reveal this to us.

The verb *watered* is a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine singular, which would suggest that Jacob did the watering. So he may have lowered the container into the well to dip out the water. There would have been troughs further away from the water source, and the water would be carried to those troughs. Jacob and several people probably did this.

**Genesis 29:11** And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept.

Jacob is aware that Rachel is his cousin, the daughter of his uncle, and he kisses her (not romantically, but as a relative); and weeps that he has found this place. He has traveled over 400 miles in territory that he was unfamiliar with, and no doubt, from time to time, he wondered whether or not he would actually be able to find his relatives. Jacob is far, far away from his home. Therefore, finding people he is related to, so far from the Land of Promise, is quite an emotional situation for Jacob.

In vv. 10–12, we have a series of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs. Usually, this means a series of actions done in that order (some of which may be coterminous).

**Genesis 29:12** And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son. And she ran and told her father.

Jacob says that he is the *brother of her father*. *Brother* is the word 'âch (אָח) [pronounced *awhk*], and it means, *brother, half-brother; kinsman or close relative; one who resembles*. Strong's #251 BDB #26. So, he is simply saying that he is closely related to her father Laban (who would be Jacob's uncle through Rebekah).

This family knew about Abraham and about Isaac; and probably about Jacob. It is unclear if they had kept in touch or not. About 60–70 years have transpired since Rebekah lived there. She was brought to Isaac by Abraham's servant; and then there was a long period of time during which they did not have any children (20 years). And now, Jacob is at least 40 years old.

It has taken us 12 verses to get to the point where Jacob meets Rachel; and Rachel runs to tell her father that a relative from the west is there. The idea is, these details make up the first meeting between Jacob and Rachel—and Jacob remembers all of the details of that day, and so he records it. No one else would have bothered to record all of these details, as they are not important to anyone else.

Remember, Jacob has just traveled over 400 miles to get where he is. We do not have a single word about that journey (except for his dream). But now, suddenly, we have a whole host of details.

We do not know how Jacob *recorded* this information. It is possible that Jacob wrote this down—but it is also possible that this was committed to memory and that these words were passed down, along with the previous chapters of Genesis, verbally, to his sons. Jacob will work for his Uncle Laban 7 years, and during this time, he must have thought back on many occasions to his first meeting with Rachel. So this scene was probably replayed in his mind hundreds of times. He may have told his son Joseph about this day—and Joseph will be the next patriarch whose life we will follow (obviously, Joseph has not yet been born).

By the time we reach the era of Moses, writing exists, it is common, and Moses can both read and write. So, the 4 books of Moses (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) were clearly written down by his hand (there is internal evidence for this). However, regarding this book of Genesis—we do not know at what point it was committed to writing. If I was to venture a guess, then perhaps under the auspices of Joseph (a son of Jacob and Rachel) when he was prime minister of Egypt. All of these words would be preserved in some way or another throughout their 400 years of slavery. However, this is speculation on my part. I cannot find any confirmation of this.

**Genesis 29:13** And it happened when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.

Laban last met the servant of Abraham, and was quite impressed by his wealth. Still, meeting a member of this family is a very big deal to Laban. All of this is quite normal and what we ought to expect.

Laban's true colors will not be visible for another 7 years (at least, in the text of Genesis).

The things that Jacob tells Laban is about his family and his trip from Canaan to Padan-aram. Laban listens carefully, and comes to a conclusion.

**Genesis 29:14** And Laban said to him, "Surely you are my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

In that era, they say, "You are my bone and my flesh;" today we say, "You are my flesh and blood" when referring to a relative. Laban heard enough information to conclude that Jacob is really his nephew. Laban is confirming that he recognizes that Jacob is not just some guy off the street who is pretended to be related to him, but that Jacob is exactly who he claims to be.

This first month was just them getting to know one another. There would have been feasting; relatives from elsewhere would be called in. There would be a great deal of

visiting. Also, during this month, Jacob would begin to plan out just exactly what he was going to do. How much interaction occurs between Jacob and Rachel is not made clear. Based upon the culture of that time, this time at the well was probably the only time they are more or less alone together.

Although Jacob wants a wife, he cannot take a wife and then suddenly return to the Land of Promise. It would be too soon. Esau was still seething with hatred. So, even if Jacob takes a wife, he must remain there for a period of time. So, all of this must be worked out. God's timing is perfect, so it will be worked out.

Furthermore, the original plan was for his mother to send word to him and tell him to return home. That will not happen. Insofar as we know, Jacob never sees or hears from his mother, Rebekah, again.

**Genesis 29:15** And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my brother, should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me, what will be your wages?"

During this month, Jacob worked for Laban. He was not there on a holiday. Although there was no doubt feasting and celebration, Jacob would have begun almost immediately to help out with the flocks and herds. He may have even been given a herd to be in charge of. We do not know how much experience Jacob has in this; although we would assume some, inasmuch as his grandfather owned large herds and passed these along to Jacob's father, Isaac.

Laban is a smooth negotiator. He sounds fair and reasonable, which is essential in a negotiation. "Look, you tell me what you want, and I will see if I can make that happen." My guess is, he has observed Jacob over enough time to determine that Jacob will make a fair offer for his own services. And, even if Jacob quoted too high of a price, this gives Laban the ability to say, "I wish I could go that high, but I really can't."

**Genesis 29:16** (And Laban had two daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.)

In order to understand what Jacob proposes, we need to know the rest of the cast of characters. Laban has two daughters, and Jacob has clearly fallen in love with the younger daughter, Rachel. That Laban has two daughters is very much a part of this narrative.

Laban also has sons, but they are not relevant to this narrative. Furthermore, it is possible that Laban's sons have not been born yet or that they are quite young at this time.

**Genesis 29:17** And Leah was weak of eyes, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favored.)

This is an odd description to apply to anyone, calling them *weak of eyes*. Scripture tells us that the eyes of Leah are rak<sup>e</sup> (רַךְ) [pronounced *rahkh*], which means *tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid*. Strong's #7390 BDB #940. This seems to indicate



that her eyes are weak and timid. It is possible that her vision is simply weak. When there is a short description of anyone, this is the thing which Jacob saw first and remembered. Leah's *weak eyes*. Perhaps she was timid and shy and looked away; perhaps it was clear that her vision was limited. It is how Jacob perceived her, as this is his description of her.

This description could simply mean that Jacob did have a first impression of her, but he did not study her; he did not look her over carefully. His first impression was that she had weak eyes; but her younger sister Rachel really caught Jacob's attention.

Leah is not called ugly; but the description of Rachel is much more favorable, calling her beautiful and well-favored.

In fact, it is more accurate to say of Rachel: [Rachel \[had\] a beautiful \[eye-catching\] figure and an attractive appearance](#). This description clearly references her figure. First we have the feminine singular adjective in the construct form, *yâpneh* (יָפְנָה) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*], which means, *fair, beautiful, attractive; handsome*. Strong's #3303 BDB #421. This adjective is affixed to the masculine singular noun *tô'ar* (תֹּאֵר) [pronounced *TOH-ahr*], which means, *a striking figure, an eye-catching form, a form which stands out, which catches your eye, which gets your attention; a form*. Strong's #8389 BDB #1061. We have a number of phrases which are familiar to most of us (*built like a brick whatever*), but let's just stick with the idea that Rachel had a wonderful figure. Rachel was a runner (Genesis 29:12); and female runners tend to have marvelous figures. She seemed to be energetic and active; and this all contributed to her beautiful form.

Then *yâpneh* (יָפְנָה) [pronounced *yaw-FEH*] is repeated and affixed to the masculine singular noun *mar'eh* (מַרְאֵה) [pronounced *mahr-EH*], which means *the act of seeing, sight, vision; appearance, that which is seen; fair of form, handsome, attractive*. Strong's #4758 BDB #909. We might render this *beautiful to look at*. People looked at Rachel and they wanted to look again and again. She was a sight to see. This is why Jacob gives a somewhat more detailed description of Rachel right here; he looked at her and then he looked at her again.

This helps to explain a previous passage. These cattlemen (or shepherders) that spoke with Jacob, saw Rachel coming from afar, and they said, "Oh, look, here comes Rachel." Even from a distance, she would catch the eye of a normal male.

The description here suggests that Jacob's love is based upon Rachel's perceived beauty. He is very attracted to her; and it is likely that there was no time when they spent any time together alone. Although they have clearly conversed when they met; it is unclear how many times they have spoken since then. Given the culture, it is highly unlikely that they spent any time alone together—in fact, what we are reading today might represent the only time that they are together and away from family members.

The description of Rachel and Leah in vv. 16–17 is parenthetical. V. 18 picks up where v. 15 ([And Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my brother, should you then serve me for nothing? Tell me, what will be your wages?"](#)) left off.

Jacob has left Canaan and has come to Syria, where his Uncle Laban lives. He has been there a month, and he makes this proposal to Laban:

**Genesis 29:18** And Jacob loved Rachel, and said, “I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter.”

Jacob has two considerations—he needs to find a wife and he needs to stay out of the Land of Promise for awhile, or else his furious twin brother will kill him. However, Rachel is not simply a convenience, she is a happy blessing to him. In the text of Genesis 29, it will become clear that Jacob loves Rachel; and it is clear that she is an incredibly beautiful woman.

Jacob clearly states here which daughter it is that he wants. This will become an important point in the narrative of this chapter. There is nothing which could be misunderstood here. He names her by name and he calls her the younger daughter.

He also suggests that he work for Laban for 7 years for his younger daughter. This keeps Jacob there in Padan-aram, and far away from the anger of Esau.

There is a cultural consideration which should be addressed—when it came to marriage, the man seems to be holding nearly all of the cards in the ancient world. The deal for Rachel’s hand in marriage is made primarily between Jacob and Laban. We do not know how much interaction has occurred between Jacob and Rachel (besides what is in the narrative); or how much will take place over the next 7 years.

My guess is, if Rachel had any problems with this arrangement, she would have probably said something. The month of interaction between her and Jacob—however slight—would have led to Jacob wanting her as his wife. That is, there are signals given off between a man and a woman, even when the entire family is present and little is actually being said. Even if the only words Rachel and Jacob spoke were at the well, there is enough interaction between the two of them (be it only sideways glances at one another) where Jacob would have reason to ask for her hand (as opposed to Leah’s).

My point here is, Jacob asking for Rachel in marriage is not something completely out of the blue; nor will Rachel react, “Where the heck did he get that idea from?” On the other hand, how much obedience on the part of Rachel toward her father is involved here is unclear. Both Rachel and Leah are quite obedient to their father Laban, as we will later discover.

In any case, all of this is a cultural consideration. There is nothing that indicates that the Bible calls for a return to this precise culture. Although what we are observing here is clearly a part of this culture at this time—this narrative is descriptive; it is not prescriptive. And, as noted, it is not 100% clear exactly what say Rachel has in this matter. In my

opinion, she would certainly have the ultimate veto here—but, there were probably marriages of this era where the women had no say whatsoever.

In any case, although the Bible certainly indicates some changes from generation to generation in these cultures (Abraham arranged for the marriage of Isaac; Jacob chooses his own bride), the Bible never clearly lays out all the details of this culture regarding marriage. In my opinion, Rachel could have said, “No, I have no interest in this man.” However, at the same time, I would also suggest that there is far more obedience to the father than in today’s culture (which will be brought out in this narrative).

This does not mean that the Bible is calling for a culture where men make all the decisions regarding women, and that women just go along with it; nor is that what we necessarily find here. The text is obscure enough to suggest that Laban is primarily in charge here; but it does not indicate that Rachel has absolutely no say. The text is simply not explicit enough for us to draw any sort of conclusion.

Cultures change and evolve; cultures of the same people change and evolve over the years. Sometimes they degenerate, sometime they improve, sometimes they improve in one area but degenerate in another. The Mosaic Law was appropriate to that culture at that time. That does not mean that the entire Mosaic Law can be scrapped, but it does mean that some laws were related to or based upon that culture and customs of that day (particularly the laws found in Deuteronomy).

It is clear in our country (the United States in 2015) is far too promiscuous with too little regard for the institutions of marriage and family; and too few who adhere to the concept that the man in marriage is the one who is in authority (in the Bible, apart from the cultural norms, the man is clearly placed in charge of his marriage). There have been cultural changes in our culture, which include changes which are against Biblical principles.

In any culture, there are a variety of things which are sinful; and even many which are evil. This does not mean that we ought to return to the culture of Genesis 29; but we certainly could learn from it.

So, in this narrative, it appears as if Laban and Jacob are the ones making the ultimate decision regarding a marriage between Jacob and Rachel. Whatever input that Rachel has, has already been considered by Jacob during this first month of working for Laban. When Laban tells Rachel, I presume she could have said, *no*.

Could there be room for abuse in that culture or in ours? Of course! Just as there is great abuse regarding marriage and family in our culture today—where the children usually getting the short-end of the stick. Because man has a sin nature, marriage, even though it is a divine institution, can be distorted.

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Unless otherwise noted, the translation used is the ESV; capitalized.

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## The Biblical Approach to Marriage

1. Marriage, in Scripture, as ideal, is always presented as the union of one man and one woman.
2. Although there are marriages between one man and several women in the Bible; or marriages which include mistresses in the picture, this is not God's ideal, nor is this sort of marriage ever sanctioned or condoned by God. This is despite that fact that many writers of Scripture had more than one wife (Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon).
3. When explaining the problems with the divorce customs of the pharisees, Jesus said this, which sets the precedent: "**Have you not read that He Who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.**" (Matt. 19:4b–6; ESV; capitalized) This, therefore, specifies the structure of marriage, as *designed by God*: one man + one woman functioning as one unit (called here, *one flesh*). People try to claim that Jesus never said anything about homosexuality; but here, He rules out homosexual marriages (a fairly recent cultural invention) and polygamy. God set up the standard for marriage from the very beginning.
4. Marriage is one of the 5 divine institutions: the function of the soul of man (which includes volition), work, marriage, family, and nationalism. These 5 divine institutions are found in all dispensations and the same essential rules apply to each of them, regardless of what dispensation they are found in. That is, marriage is between one man and one woman, whether this is in the Age of Israel or the Church Age. Biblically, the man has the authority in marriage, no matter what the culture. We should expect attacks upon marriage in every dispensation and in every culture. We live in a fallen world; therefore, God's approach to things will constantly be challenged, belittled and/or undermined.
5. The events of Scripture all take place within a specific culture at a given time and place. Therefore, we need to separate cultural norms and standards from Biblical mandates in the examination of marriage. We are to interpret the Bible in the time that it is written, but without applying local customs and culture as though they make up the norms of God's Word.
  - 1) In Genesis 29, the details of marriage agreement are being hammered out between Jacob, the suitor, and Laban, the father. This does not mean that the Bible is telling us that the proper Christian marriage today requires all marriage agreements to be hammered out between the suitor and the father of the bride. This has come down to us today of a man asking a woman's father for her hand in marriage—which is a cultural norm in some societies.
  - 2) Several men in Scripture are said to have multiple wives: this includes Jacob, King David and King Solomon. These are actual personal histories; they are not legitimate options in marriage, nor are they presented as such.
    - (1) One of King David's great sins was chasing after a married woman

## The Biblical Approach to Marriage

and taking her (and then having her husband killed). This was a result of David collecting wives and allowing his lust for beautiful women to continue, despite having about 20 wives and mistresses at the time. Part of the discipline and pressure which came to bear against King David came from his sons that he did not bother to raise properly. David's sons from several marriages became criminals, rapists and revolutionaries, causing great harm to David's day-to-day existence. They were a disaster to nation Israel.

- (2) Solomon is said to have been led astray by his many wives and mistresses in 1Kings 11:3.
- 3) When you understand marriage, then you better understand what is legitimate and what is not.
6. The roles in marriage: the husband is the one in charge and the wife is his first lieutenant (Eph. 5:23 1Cor. 11:7–9 Genesis 3:16). The husband has authority over the wife and they both have authority over their children.
  - 1) Being in charge does not mean that the husband subjects his wife to close-order drill; it does not mean that he is free to abuse his wife; and it does not mean that he can do whatever is necessary to gain her obedience. Being in charge means that the husband is responsible for his wife and for his children. It is his job to see that they all have food to eat, clothes to wear and a roof over their heads. Eph. 5:25, 28 1Tim. 5:8 1Peter 3:7
  - 2) The wife is under the authority of the husband in marriage. 1Peter 3:1–2 Col. 3:18
  - 3) The amount of input that she has in the marriage should have been sorted out before they are married. However, once the discussion has come to an end, the husband makes the final decision regarding all aspects of their lives. There are exceptions to this approach: even though Paul taught that we are subject to the authorities that be in our lives, the Apostles would continue to evangelize and to teach Bible doctrine, regardless of what the authorities had to say. Similarly, the husband cannot require the wife to do something that is sinful or illegal. Nor can he prevent her from believing in Jesus Christ nor should he keep her from Bible class.
  - 4) This is a tricky balance. The wife *chooses* to submit to her husband; and the husband is the authority. However, this does not give the husband the right to bully his wife for not obeying him.
  - 5) There is equality in the bedroom. 1Cor. 7:3–5
7. The approach to marriage. The different roles of the man and the woman in marriage are key to the man and the woman's approach to a marriage. If two people cannot keep their hands off one another, that is not a basis for marriage. If two people are terribly in love and cannot stop thinking about each other, that is not a basis for marriage.
  - 1) The man needs to look this woman over carefully and decide, "Am I willing to protect and provide for this woman, no matter what, no matter how

## The Biblical Approach to Marriage

bitchy she gets; no matter what difficulties come in marriage? Will I see this woman as more important to me than my own self? Am I willing to work two jobs washing dishes to make certain that she has a roof over her head and food on the table? Am I willing to take care of her in all circumstances, in sickness and in health?" The man's choice is all about responsibility.

- 2) The woman's response should not focus on her feelings, but on her willingness to place herself under the control and authority of that man. Can she look at him carefully and decide that she respects him so much and trusts him so much that, she is willing to do whatever he says? Outside of marriage, a woman is only subject to her father (and that if she lives in his home). She is not under the control of men in general nor is she under the control of the man she is currently dating. In marriage, the woman *chooses* to put herself under the authority of that one man. Does she trust him enough to do that?
  - 3) Whatever negotiations need to be done, should be done prior to entering into marriage.
8. Recommended prerequisites for marriage:
- 1) A person should have a certain amount of physical and emotional maturity before they ever consider marriage. Note that Adam and Eve were created both physically and mentally mature as they were brought together.
  - 2) Teenage marriages today are at the least questionable and should not be encouraged.
  - 3) Beyond maturity, a person should possess a certain measure of stability in their life, both physical and spiritual. People, who together are not consistent in Bible class, rooted and grounded in Bible doctrine are candidates for troublesome marriages.
  - 4) People need to have some control over their sin nature prior to marriage. A person given over to vices and addictions is no candidate for marriage.
  - 5) In the physical realm, consideration should be given to financial responsibility and management. Financial support for the family and the ability to provide for more than ones self is a responsibility for the head of the house. This is a part of the man taking responsibility for the woman.
9. God designed marriage for happiness and maximum personal fulfillment in life. Gen. 2:18 [Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."](#) Eccles. 9:9 [Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life and in your toil at which you toil under the sun.](#)
10. God's timing is essential in marriage; so you should marry when it is God's time.
11. One of the reasons for marriage is to provide the correct environment for the raising of children. Obviously, when a man and a woman marry, there is always the possibility of having children. The authority structure of marriage is the proper environment for raising children. Now and again, children will be raised under



## The Biblical Approach to Marriage

other circumstances, but the ideal approach is one man, one woman, and one or more children.

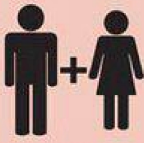
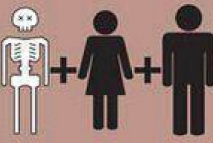
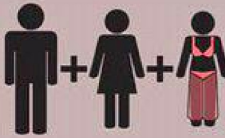

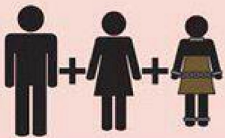
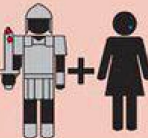
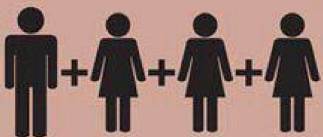
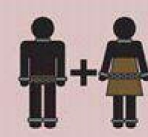
- 1) Understanding this proper structure of marriage helps us to understand the problems with having multiple wives. King David did not have time to raise the children of his many wives; as a result, many of them were out of control in their teens and early 20's. Essentially, these were welfare children. Their mother was given enough money by the state to live; but David did not act as a constant authority figure in their lives.
  - 2) Later in David's life, he concentrated upon Bathsheba. They had 4 children together and nothing is said in the Bible of David chasing after other women after this point in time (he did not add more wives or mistresses, insofar as we know). Much of the book of Proverbs is David teaching Solomon. They are Solomon's notes from these teaching sessions.
  - 3) Solomon fulfills the promise of Prov. 22:6 [Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.](#) (NKJV) Solomon made many mistakes in the middle of his life. However, he returned to the teaching of his father in his later years.
  - 4) Although we do not know much about the other sons of David by Bathsheba, they did not become revolutionaries; and one of them (Nathan—not the prophet) is in the direct line of Jesus Christ.
12. Warnings to believers:
- 1) Do not marry an unbeliever. 2Cor. 6:14 1Cor. 7:39 9:5
  - 2) The unbeliever can corrupt the believer in marriage (or in other close relationships). 1Cor. 15:33 1Kings 11:3
13. In marriage, there is a separation which occurs from the parents. This means that all decisions ultimate rest upon the husband; and upon the husband and wife as a team. There will certainly be interaction between newlyweds and their parents, which may even include financial assistance and advice. However, that should never reach the point of meddling. Genesis 2:24 Matt. 15:4
14. Marriages are designed by God to be permanent (Matt. 19:6, 8 1Cor. 7:10, 11, 39).

Some points are taken from:

[http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=278](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=278) accessed March 2, 2015.

We have just studied marriage; and when understanding the correct view of marriage, it is also a good idea to understand what marriage is not; and the use of historical narrative in the Bible to attack both the institution of marriage and the Bible.

# MARRIAGE =

<p><b>MAN + WOMAN (NUCLEAR FAMILY)</b> Genesis 2:24</p> <p>-wives subordinate to their husbands -interfaith marriages forbidden -marriages generally arranged, not based on romantic love -bride who could not prove her virginity was stoned to death</p> 	<p><b>MAN + BROTHER'S WIDOW (LEVIRATE MARRIAGE)</b> Genesis 38:6-10</p> <p>-widow who had not borne a son required to marry her brother in law -must submit sexually to her new husband</p> 
<p><b>MAN + WIVES + CONCUBINES</b></p> <p>Abraham (2 concubines), Gideon (1), Nahor (1), Jacob (1), Eliphaz (1), Gideon (2), Caleb (2), Manassah (1), Solomon (300), Belshazzar (&gt; 1)</p> 	<p><b>RAPIST + HIS VICTIM</b> Deuteronomy 22:28-29</p> <p>-virgin who is raped must marry her rapist -rapist must pay victim's father 50 shekels of silver for property loss</p> 
<p><b>MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN'S PROPERTY</b> Genesis 16</p> <p>-man could acquire his wife's property including her slaves</p> 	<p><b>MALE SOLDIER + PRISONER OF WAR</b> Numbers 31:1-18, Deuteronomy 21:11-14</p> <p>-under Moses' command, Israelites kill every Midianite man, woman and child; save for the virgin girls who are taken as spoils of war -wives must submit sexually to their new owners</p> 
<p><b>MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN + WOMAN (POLYGAMY)</b></p> <p>Lamech (2 wives), Esau (3), Jacob (2), Ashur (2), Gideon (many), Elkanah (2), David (many), Solomon (700), Rehoboam (3), Abijah (14), Jehoram, Joash, Ahab, Jeholachin, Belshazzar</p> 	<p><b>MALE SLAVE + FEMALE SLAVE</b> Exodus 21:4</p> <p>-slave owner could assign female slaves to his male slaves -female slaves must submit sexually to their new husbands</p> 

This is an anti-Biblical graphic which lists 8 *different* kinds of marriage found the Bible. These types of marriages are described; and, of course, the graphic indicates that the Bible is weird, sexist or whatever to approve of these kinds of marriages. This graphic confuses an historical record with the Biblical view of marriage; or it greatly distorts what is found in the Bible. In most cases, the distortion simply takes an historical incident and assumes that the God of the Bible must approve of it because it is found in the Bible.

The **Marriage Equality graphic** comes from this liberal marriage equality [website](#), accessed July 24, 2013. However, this particular graphic has been picked up and displayed upon hundreds of websites, if not thousands.

This doctrine is also posted online: **Marriage Alternatives Found in the Bible** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

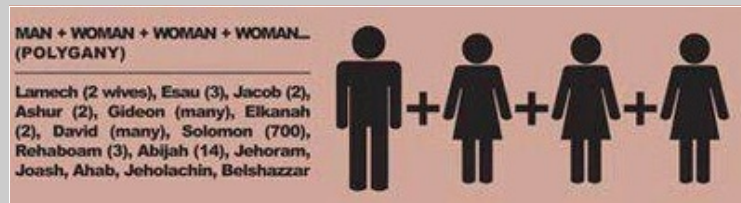
## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

1. The Bible will *a/ways* be under attack. As of late, the world does not like the idea of marriage between one man and one woman; they believe that it ought to include one man and one man; so graphics proliferate which attack the Biblical view of marriage. Graphics are often used to sway opinion on the internet, as they require little more than a slogan. They are the bumper stickers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The graphic above is much more detailed than most.

## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

2. Attacks on marriage include easy divorce; the incorrect approach to marriage; an incorrect view of the roles of the man and the woman in marriage; a misrepresentation of what is found in the Bible; and the introduction into society of unbiblical approaches to marriage (such as gay marriage or polygamy).
3. Here, we will focus on a dishonest graphic which has proliferated on the internet about marriage and the Bible.
4. The overall concept is fairly easy to understand: just because something is found in the Bible, that does not mean that God condones that action. For example, Cain kills his brother Abel. Just because this is found in the Bible, does not mean that God condones this act of murder. So it is with the many alternatives to marriage found in the Bible. They represent historical occurrences; but they do not necessarily represent God's concept of marriage.
5. There is also a point which needs to be made about the book of Deuteronomy: these are the words of Moses spoken to his people at a specific time in history. He took what he knew to be the truth (the Law of God) and made some specific applications to his people in that era. Therefore, the book of Deuteronomy has laws which are valid for the Jews in the Jewish dispensation; but were strictly related to that culture at that time. Moses acts very much like a contemporary judge when interpreting the Bill of Rights in the light of today's technology. What Moses said then was valid and binding for that era; but these laws do not necessarily have a place in our society. However, that does not mean that these laws are without meaning or application.

6. The Bible clearly deals with the *problems* of alternatives to His prescribed plan for marriage. We have the problem of polygamy as well as the problem of a man having a mistress (concubine):



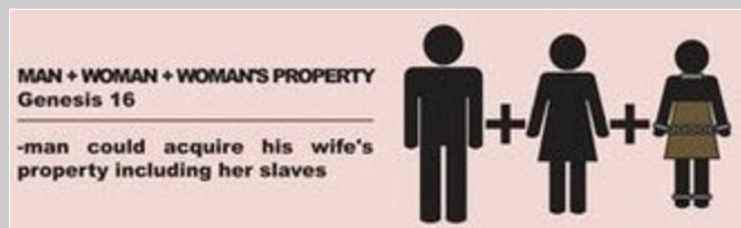
- 1) The graphic reads: **MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN + WOMAN... (POLYGAMY)** — [then several examples are then listed of those in the Bible who were polygamists]
- 2) It is certainly true that there were polygamists in the Bible; and that these included some great believers.
- 3) King David had around 10 wives and 10 mistresses or lesser wives (often called concubines).
- 4) Essentially, all of David's children became wards of the state—that is, the taxpayers of Israel paid for these children, much like welfare/section 8 housing/food stamps do today. Because their father David was distracted with being the king, with having too many wives and too many children, and with skirt-chasing, these children grew up to be criminals, committing

## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

several crimes, including rape and murder; and one led a full-scale revolution against King David. At no time was David's lifestyle condoned by God or held up as an example in Scripture as a legitimate alternative to marriage.

- 5) Rather than David's marriages being held up as a good thing, David was plagued for about 10 years with his lousy kids (as a part of his discipline for chasing after a military man's wife). This was a form of discipline that God placed on David; but much of it was simply the natural result of having many wives and children by those women.
- 6) King Solomon, David's son, had about 1000 wives and mistresses, and he still writes in the Song of Solomon of the frustration of not being able to score with just one more woman (the Shulamite woman).
- 7) Just because something occurs in the Bible, that does not mean that God approves of it. Kings David and Solomon's polygamous marriages were problems for both of these men. The Bible clearly tells us that Solomon was led astray by his wives and mistresses. 1Kings 11:1-4 reads: *And King Solomon loved many foreign women, even the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites; of the nations which Jehovah had said to the sons of Israel, You shall not go in to them, and they shall not go in to you; surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.* Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. And his wives turned away his heart. For it happened when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not perfect with Jehovah his God, as was the heart of David his father. (David never had his heart turned away from God, despite his many failures in life.)
- 8) David, Solomon, Abraham and Jacob all had more than one wife and they all wrote portions of the Bible. Not one of them ever held up polygamy as a valid form of marriage or as a type of marriage approved by God.

7. This graphic may be dishonest, but it may also be simply a misunderstanding on the part of the *marriage equality proponents*. However, marriage



equality proponents will not change their graphic or take it off their website, even if they find out that it is mistaken or dishonest. The dissemination of honest information is not their intention. They have two goals: (1) to promote homosexuality as a valid lifestyle and cultural norm to the point where grammar school children in public schools need to be exposed to the notion of homosexual relationships; and (2) to disparage the Bible. As we get further into this graphic, you will see that alternative forms of marriage are only part of what they are trying



## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

to sell. They will also suggest that these alternative marriages completely subjugated women.

8. These people suggest that there is a third form of marriage in the Bible where a man simply takes a slave girl as his mistress (this refers back to Abraham in Genesis 16). This *third* form of marriage on their list is not really a marriage, although they list it as one.

1) The graphic reads:

### **MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN'S PROPERTY GENESIS 16**

#### **•man could acquire his wife's property including her slaves**

- 2) Sometimes a family owned slaves, sometimes a family business owned slaves, sometimes the husband owned personal slaves and sometimes the wife owned personal slaves. The only reason for this being listed above is, the person who made this chart simply does not understand that this is nowhere presented as a marriage in the Bible. Perhaps it was added to have an even 8 *forms* of marriage.
- 3) I think part of what the author of this graphic wanted to do was, show slavery as being okay in the Bible.
- 4) Maybe they were trying to draw parallels between Biblical marriage and slavery?
- 5) Maybe they were suggesting that the man could have sex with his wife's female slaves? Whatever the purpose, it is clear in the text of the Bible that Abraham having a son by Sarah's personal maid was a Sarah's idea and it was a bad idea. God honored the fact that the son from Sarah's maid came from Abraham; but this made life complicated and miserable for Abraham and Sarah (and for the slave girl, Hagar).

9. What about men in the Bible who have wives and mistresses?

1) The graphic reads: **MAN + WIVES + CONCUBINES** — [Then a list of various men who had mistresses follows]

2) This is essentially a repeat of what we have above.

3) Abraham was talked into having sex with his wife's personal maid in order to produce



a child to fulfill the promises made by God (this was Sarah, his wife's idea, not his, and certainly not God's). Abraham agreed to this, and there were resultant problems in his marriage and in the interaction between the descendants of this son of this union (Ishmael) and the Jews, who are descended from Abraham and Sarah. Eventually, God had Hagar, the maid, and her son, separate from Abraham's family. Essentially, Hagar

## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

acted as a surrogate mother, something which is not encouraged in any way in Scripture.

- 4) This graphic says that Abraham had two concubines (this is old English for a mistress who lived with him). Actually, Abraham had one mistress (Hagar) who had relations with Abraham at the insistence of Abraham's wife, Sarah. The other woman in question (Keturah) was Abraham's wife after Sarah passed away.
- 5) Elsewhere in Scripture, there are marriages which include mistresses (concubines). This is *never* presented as God's ideal, any more than polygamy is (this is simply a form of polygamy).
- 6) The one person who could most easily collect wives is a king, and the Bible *specifically* forbids kings from taking several wives. This same passage also forbids a king from taking a huge amount of gold and silver to himself as well (also common temptations for a king). Deut. 17:17 **And he [the king] shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.** (ESV)

10. In the Bible, there is something known as a levirate marriage,

1) The graphic reads:

**MAN + BROTHER'S WIDOW  
(LEVIRATE MARRIAGE)  
Genesis 38:6-10**

**•widow who had not borne a son required to marry her brother in law  
•Must submit sexually to her new husband**



- 2) A favorite theme of those who oppose the Bible is to present the women as having absolutely no say in the matter of marriage or sex. You will note that the widow referenced is *required* to marry her brother-in-law. The graphic then adds that she *must submit sexually to her new husband*. However, that is not really what the Bible says. The person who wrote the text for this graphic is simply inserting his own made-up ideas into the Bible—an interpretation which is not supported by any text. The widowed wife is *not* required to marry her brother-in-law; nor is she required to sexually submit to him.
- 3) The levirate marriage is described here: **"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother**



## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

to her. And the first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, **that his name may not be blotted out of Israel**. And if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, saying, 'I do not wish to take her,' then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' And the name of his house shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal pulled off.' (Deut. 25:5–10; ESV mostly; emphasis mine).

- 4) You will note that it is the widowed wife who makes this demand—so, quite obviously, she has more than just a say in the matter. She *initiates* the levirate marriage. The graphic incorrectly states that she *must* marry her brother-in-law and she must submit sexually to him. That is obviously false according to a simple reading of the text.
- 5) Let me add one more thing: the term *brother* in the Bible is an inexact term, just as it is for us today. In the Bible, it referred to a close, living male relative.
- 6) This tradition is first mentioned in Genesis 38:6–10 **And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother." But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also.**
- 7) The passage in Genesis suggests that this was a long-standing tradition, but no information is given to how this was started. When it took place, there was no Mosaic Law. However, this tradition was practiced by more than just the Hebrews, and, in some cultures, it was required (which is not the case for the Bible).
- 8) As a general principle, it should be noted that the Law of Moses was given to a particular people at a particular time within the confines of a particular culture. When applying the Mosaic Law to today, one needs to examine if the principles still hold up in the New Testament or whether they simply regulate practices in the ancient world. If a particular culture norm or practice disappears from society, then there is no longer a need to regulate that practice. However, at the same time, there are principles for things no longer found in our country (slavery for instance) which can be applied to analogous situations (some of the principles of slavery can be applied to the relationship between the owner of a business and its

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- workers).
- 9) When it comes to the levirate marriage law, notice that this is not just for any set of brothers; these are brothers who *dwell together*; that is, they live in the same house or on the same compound. This could be applied by a family not living together, but the passage in Deuteronomy suggests this is the most common application.
  - 10) The reason for this is, Jewish families in Israel were given a specific piece of land as an inheritance. One of the applications of a levirate marriage is, every family retained that piece of land for time and eternity. That is, this land grant was something which is for eternity as well. That does not mean that the typical Jewish family will be resurrected right there, in front of their old house; but that the land is both a temporal and an eternal inheritance for the Jews. Therefore, a custom of the ancient world was given some spiritual significance.
  - 11) If a man is married, but dies before impregnating his wife, his brother is could be called upon to impregnate the wife, with the understanding that the son from that initial union would be as if he is the son of the man who has died, and by this, he would carry on his “father’s” name, inherit his “father’s” estate. It appears that the surviving brother would be responsible to some degree for this woman—if not married to her; and that the resulting son would be responsible for his mother when that time came. The way that this would work is, the first son would be heir to the husband who had died. The remainder of the children born would be heirs to their natural father.
  - 12) This would be just as if a man had a son, went to war, died in that war, and his brother took up for him in the marriage. With one slight exception: the son would actually have been fathered by the brother who is alive.
  - 13) When this was codified into Law by Moses, Moses was taking the long-standing concept of a levirate marriage (found back in Genesis from 400 years previous) and applying it to the concept of the continuing inheritance of Israel. That is, Israel had a real and eternal inheritance, because of their relationship to their father and because of their relationship to God. The Mosaic Law took several long-standing customs of that time period and gave them boundaries and limitations (slavery being an example of this).
  - 14) In the illustration of Onan above, the problem was not in exercising an improper method of birth control, but that he had agreed to raise up a son to his brother, but did not. He enjoyed the sexual union with his brother’s wife, but intentionally did not impregnate her. That was contrary to the custom of that time.
  - 15) In 2013 America, we have a very difficult time relating to this tradition, because so many men have married women who are not virgins. However, once a woman was taken in marriage, it was a rare situation where she would be considered by another man for marriage. She would

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not be a virgin, and that was, in most cases, a deal breaker. You may like this and you may not, but that was reality for millennia. Women having sex with several men has become much more widespread beginning in the 1960's. However, prior to this, marriage between two virgins was actually quite common. In some geographic areas, a marriage between virgins was the norm.

- 16) In the past, the union of just one man with just one woman was seen as God's design for all mankind; so that once the husband or the wife passed, the remaining person had already tasted and enjoyed this unique relationship. In most cases, there was no second wife or second husband after the death of a spouse.
  - 17) This levirate tradition preserved the name of the husband who had died and provided for the woman of the husband who had died. This was a testament to a future, eternal inheritance.
  - 18) It should be clear that in the Law, this was not compulsory, but there was strong social pressure *on the brother* to fulfill this duty (if the wife of his deceased brother insisted on it).
  - 19) It should be clear by the narrative in Genesis 38 that, this was something which the woman, Tamar, truly wanted (I did not complete the narrative as it went too far afield of this study).
  - 20) If the woman did not desire a child in this way, then a levirate relation was not pursued.
  - 21) An application of levirate marriage is found in the book of Ruth, where a relative, Boaz, preserved the inheritance for Ruth, whose husband died before he could father children by her. He was her *kinsman-redeemer* and a relative of her deceased husband, but not his brother. As her kinsman-redeemer, Boaz was a picture of Jesus Christ. The woman, Ruth, is not forced to do anything. See exegesis of the **Book of Ruth** ([HTML](#)) for further information.
  - 22) Clearly, in the book of Ruth and in Moses' recitation of the principle, the woman's volition was integral to this ancient tradition.
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11. A idea that the Bible supports a man marrying his rape victim is simply not accurate at all.
    - 1) The graphic reads:  
**RAPIST + HIS VICTIM**  
**Deuteronomy 22:29–29**  

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      - virgin who is raped must marry her rapist
      - Rapist must pay victim's father 50 shekels of silver for property loss

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- 2) Do you see what this dishonest graphic is trying to say? In the Bible, a woman is just a possession, no different than a slave. If a man r a p e s a woman—no problem.



- 3) There are several pertinent passages, which need to be taken together. Ex. 22:16–17 "If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins." Deut. 22:23–29 "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her. If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes [= takes] her and lies with her, and they are found, then the man who lay with her shall give to the father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated [= humbled] her. He may not divorce her all his days."
- 4) In Ex. 22:16–17, the man seduces the woman and takes her virginity. Her father makes the final determination whether a marriage will be allowed. The logic of the father making the decision here is, if the young woman allowed herself to be seduced, she may not have the most objective viewpoint. No doubt there would probably be some input from the young woman. Furthermore, there is no rape involved.
- 5) In Deut. 22:23–29, there are three different situations proposed; and three different outcomes.
- (1) The first has a woman betrothed to be married, but before the marriage, she is sexually taken by a man. Because this occurs in the city, both she and the man are stoned to death because she could have protested loudly if this was rape so that others could have heard her.

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- (2) In Deut. 22:25–27, a man has sex with a woman who is a betrothed virgin. There is a verb here used to indicate that force was used; and because the woman could not call out and receive help, being out in the country, the man is stoned to death.
  - (3) Finally, in Deut. 22:28–29, it sounds as if it is a similar situation to those previous verses, but there are several differences: (1) she is not betrothed to be married, but she is a virgin; and (2) the second verb used is different, which does not necessarily mean that this woman is raped.
- 6) The verb found in Deut. 22:25 is clearly rape; but the verb found in v. 27 is not necessarily rape. So what are the options?
- (1) Ex. 22:17 is applicable if she is seduced, which allows the father of the woman to make the determination of allowing them to get married or not. Ex. 22:27 tells us that, if she is raped, the man should be stoned to death.
  - (2) Deut. 22:29 is not a new law, but it simply designates the amount that the man must pay to marry her. So the woman of Deut. 22:28–29 has *not* been raped. The man may have been quite aggressive here, but she has not cried out that she is being raped (as in v. 27), and yet they are still *discovered*. Therefore, this occurs in a populated area. In v. 29, she is said to be *humbled*. This is because she was a virgin and now she is no longer a virgin. In our society, this is something very difficult for people to understand. In any case, *this is **not** a woman who has been raped and the rapist now gets to marry her.*
  - (3) Sex outside of marriage was far more rare in that era than it is today; and the way that society thought about women who are not virgins is much different than today. There is nothing more complex here than figuring out how does a father deal with his daughter who is no longer a virgin, and, therefore, no longer marriageable.
- 7) A reasonable objection at this point is, *what about my Bible translation? It has the word “rape” in it?* That is simply an inaccurate translation. See the Addendum in **Marriage Alternatives Found in the Bible** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)), where this passage is exegeted word-by-word. It will be clear in the exegesis that this is not rape.

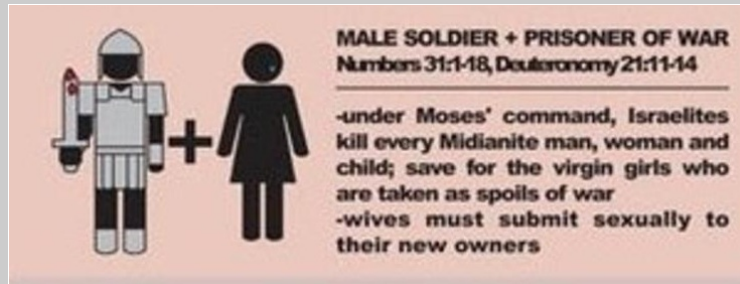
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12. The male soldier and the prisoner of war (which is, when all is said and done, one man + one woman).

1) The graphic reads:

**MALE SOLDIER  
+ PRISONER OF  
WAR**

**Numbers 31:1–18, Deuteronomy 21:11–14**



**•under Moses' command, Israelites kill every Midianite man, woman and child; save for the virgin girls who are taken as spoils of war**  
**•Wives must submit sexually to their new owners**

- 2) Num. 31:1–18 is about taking vengeance against Midian. God gave Israel a direct order concerning Midian, which would suggest that God knows what He is doing. All of the Midianites were to be killed, except for the women who were virgins, who could be taken as wives. This indicates that the souls of the virgin women were capable of responding to their Israeli husbands.
- 3) The general principle is found in Deut. 21:10–14. "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God gives them into your hand and you take them captive, and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and you desire to take her to be your wife, and you bring her home to your house, she shall shave her head and pare her nails. And she shall take off the clothes in which she was captured and shall remain in your house and lament her father and her mother a full month. After that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. But if you no longer delight in her, you shall let her go where she wants. But you shall not sell her for money, nor shall you treat her as a slave, since you have humiliated her." In war, if a man is taken by the beauty of a woman, she may be taken to his home to be married. In the war, this means that her family has been killed. The man is to spend a month with her, after she has shaved her head, cut back her nails, and has mourned for her parents. This woman would look her worst and feel her worst. If after this, the man still desires her as his wife, he may take her as his wife. If he, after this month's time, is no longer enthralled by her, then the soldier must allow her to leave freely. She cannot be sold into slavery or kept as a slave.

(1) Some points need to be made here. When Israel came to the Land of Promise, everyone knew who they were and who their God was. What God had done for these slaves was unprecedented in history. The Jews were not some unknown entity. God's power in their



## So-Called Biblical Alternatives to Marriage

- recent history was well known to the peoples of the land.
- (2) As the Israelites moved along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea, the other peoples could have brought them food and allowed them to pass through; or they could have caused the Jews trouble. The Midianites caused the Jews trouble, so they are beat down by the God of the Jews. The negative volition of the Midianites indicates negative volition toward the God of the Israelites. The story of the Jews becomes common knowledge among the people of that region. How they feel about the Jews is how they feel about the God Who made them.
  - (3) When the Jews entered into the land, the various peoples there could make war with them or make peace with them. In some cases, individuals from an enemy group would ally themselves with the Jews.
  - (4) When a nation decided to go to war against the Jews, they were doing this with the full knowledge that the God of Israel had delivered them out of Egypt against one of the greatest armies of that time; and that all who opposed the Jews when they came up the King's Highway were defeated.
  - (5) Rejecting the Jews was tantamount to rejecting the God of the Jews. Therefore, those who rejected the Jews would face warfare on earth and eternal damnation. Those who accepted the Jews were received with peace and blessing, and most of these are in Abraham's bosom right now.
  - (6) God allows the Jew soldiers to keep virgins alive for themselves, as long as certain steps were followed. In ancient wars, whether waged by Jews or by some other group, almost the entire population would either be killed or placed into slavery (a notable exception would be when a country is conquered and afterward they pay a tribute to the conquering country for the next few years or decades, as in the first few verses of Genesis 14).
  - (7) This Bible-enshrined tradition was *not* was an opportunity for a soldier to take home a woman from every battle, have sex with her for a month, and then cut her loose. It was after a month that they chose to become married; and that would involve sex *at that time*. Engaging in sex was tantamount to becoming married. That is what made them married.
  - (8) I would guess, in most circumstances, the man would explain to the woman what the options were. It would be logical that some women, based upon the circumstances, would absolutely reject the Jewish soldier. That means no marriage and she goes free.
  - (9) The only analogous situation that we have today are men who have fought in Vietnam or in Korea or in the Philippines at various times who have taken a wife from that area. In some cases, these were

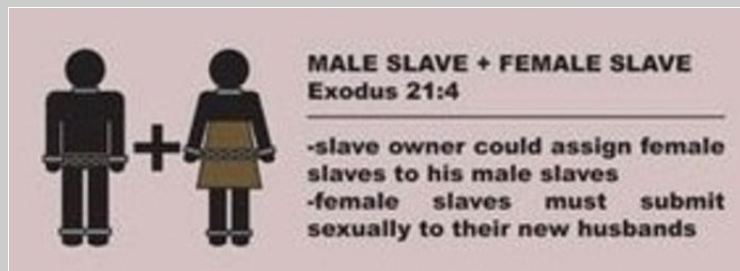
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women who came from those who opposed the Americans; but such women chose to ally themselves with the Americans. While this is not an exact parallel, in an historical context, it is very similar. No one would look down on the marriage of a soldier and a woman from North Korea or North Vietnam. Similarly, a man who takes a bride from the enemy camp was not an unusual thing for that era (one would have to assume that there is some willingness on the part of the woman).

- (10) Throughout this liberal graphic, the free will of the woman is presented as not being an issue. However, that is not necessarily the case for the passages noted or anywhere else in the Bible. The Bible does speak of living with an unhappy woman. Prov. 27:15 reads: *A wife that always wants to argue is like water that never stops dripping on a rainy day.* (ERV) Similar passages are found here: Prov. 19:13 21:9, 19 25:24. Any man who has forced or even coerced a woman into doing something that she did not want to do has rarely found a good result. In the Bible, when you married a woman, you wanted her *onboard*. You did not just take whatever woman, and that was that. Secondly, the actual examples given in Scripture (like Ruth and Boaz) clearly involve the woman's volition. The repeated refrain in this false marriage graphic, that *the woman must submit sexually to him*, is simply false. Marriage was not akin to slavery; women were not property in Scripture; and the volition of women was not ignored. Now, there is probably a much greater expression of a woman's volition in today's society, but that is a societal norm, not a Biblical norm. The only clear Biblical norm is, a woman who enters into marriage from then on, subjugates herself to her husband. This does not make her a slave; but it does place her under the authority of her husband. A woman who does not want this should not get married.

13. A male slave and a female slave (which is one man + one woman).

- 1) The graphic reads:  
**MALE SLAVE + FEMALE SLAVE**  
**Exodus 21:4**



- slave owner could assign female slaves to his male slaves
- female slaves must submit sexually to their new husbands

- 2) Ex. 21:4–6 *If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or*

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daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out alone. But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever. Essentially, this is one man and one woman in marriage, with the added fact that they are both slaves.

- 3) There were strict laws placed upon the institution of slavery under the Mosaic Law. There was a time period for which a slave could be owned and there were other constraints. There were also cultures where there were no restraints on a slave owner.
- 4) It ought to be noted that, in slavery, the owner was to provide for the slaves. Here, the slave owner is providing a marriage partner. Note that the slave has the choice here of leaving or remaining, once his time is up. Incidentally, notice that there is a time limit on Jewish slavery.
- 5) Note that there is nothing said here about the female slave being required to submit to the male slave; nor are they required to marry. Also take note of the significant difference of the language. In the graphic, the slave owner *assigns* a female slave to the male slave; however, in the text of Exodus, the slave owner *gives* a female slave to the male slave. These are very different words in the Hebrew. The misleading language was added by the gay marriage proponent in this dishonest graphic. Liberals understand the power of hyperbolic language.
- 6) In slavery, the slaves belong to their master. If the master has male and female slaves, they may become interested in one another. It reads that the slave owner *gives* the female slave to the male slave. This does not mean that the slave owner has required the marriage; it simply means that, since he owns the female slave, he gives her to her betrothed—as a father would do.
- 7) Although nothing is said in Exodus about the volition of the woman, that does not mean that she had no say in this matter. The focus of this law is upon a male slave being provided a wife by his master. There is nothing to indicate that a female slave has absolutely no say in this matter.
- 8) Being the slave of a good master was a good position in life. Abraham's top slave had a great deal of power and responsibility (see Genesis 24). Joseph, as a slave, rose to the position of prime minister in Egypt. So, being a slave was not necessarily a lousy position in life nor was it necessarily a dead end job. Being a slave in that era was better than being a minimum wage worker in this era. The master had to provide food and shelter for his slaves; minimum wage workers rarely make enough to pay for those things. A slave had every bit as much upward potential as a worker on the ground floor today. A smart slave owner could recognize a good slave and promoted him (or her) accordingly. Abraham's slave in Genesis 24 managed all of Abraham's finances, which were considerable

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- in that era.
- 9) As an aside, what we think of as slavery was not allowed in the Bible. You could not go out, find a few men, capture them, and then sell them as slaves (Ex. 21:16). That was not allowed in the Bible; that is known as *man-stealing* and it was a sin. However, a person could work off his debts as a slave; and a person captured in war could be allowed to live and to serve as a slave.
  - 10) Slaves to Jewish families had a much better time of it than slaves to a nation such as Egypt, because slavery was tightly regulated by the Mosaic Law. The Mosaic Law took a societal practice (slavery) and regulated it in order to protect those in slavery.
- 
14. In short, there are 3 general problems with many of these characterizations of marriages which are found in the Bible:
- 1) Just because something is found in the Bible, that does not mean that God condones it.
  - 2) Some of the “marriages” listed above are misrepresented in the description. Whether honestly or dishonestly, I cannot say. But, I can pretty much guarantee that, if they read this and understand the correct interpretation, they will not take down or revise their inaccurate graphics. No one who has posted this graphic will write below it, “Okay, I understand that *marriages* #3 and 5 are not really represented accurately in this graphic.” They will not even write, “There are different interpretations of this passage.” They are not interested in truth; they are interested in changing minds in favor of gay marriage and against the Bible.
  - 3) Finally, in many cases, proponents of gay marriage who distribute these graphics completely ignore the historical context and apply all current norms and standards to these ancient cultures. Such proponents would not like to see this reversed on them, or they would be executed (homosexual behavior was not just a sin but a crime punishable by death in the Old Testament).

Whenever a sin is promoted as legitimate; there are often attacks upon the Bible as well.

### Lesson 336 Genesis 29:15–23 Laban’s Deception/Moses did not write Genesis

Jacob pulled one too many fast ones on Esau, his twin brother; and so he had to quickly leave Canaan or else Esau would have killed him. He traveled to the east where their cousins lived. Jacob found them and stayed for a month. After that month, Laban, his uncle and boss, said that they should work out a salary schedule so that Jacob was not working for him for nothing.

[Genesis 29:15–18](#) Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you are my kinsman, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Now Laban had two

daughters. The name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful in form and appearance. Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." (ESV)

Jacob met Rachel on that very first day and fell in love with her. We have no idea how much interaction occurred between them in the intervening month, but it would have been limited, due to the culture of that time.

**Genesis 29:19** And Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

Laban looks at this from his own point of view. It makes sense to him to give his daughter—Jacob's cousin—to him in marriage, for the amount of work specified. For a normal father, there is rarely a man who is good enough for his daughter; but Laban reasons that Jacob is probably better than any other prospect. Furthermore—and this is not referenced here—Jacob comes from a well-to-do family. Laban no doubt still remembers the gifts and the wealth presented to him and his family decades ago from Abraham's servant. Having her marry into a wealthy family might be good for him.

However, one has to take into consideration that, Jacob has not shown up to Laban's home with 10 camels loaded with stuff. He has arrived possibly with his mother's nanny, and little else by way of supplies. It could be that Jacob has simply arrived at the right time with a proposal that appeals to Laban.

Very little of Laban's devious nature is revealed at first. For the next 7 years, he is going to seem like a good boss and a good father to Leah and Rachel. Jacob will also seem like a changed man, working hard and honestly for Laban.

**Genesis 29:20** And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, but they seemed to him a few days, because of the love he had for her.

This is a passage which is quite personal. No historian would look back and write these words. Moses as an editor might preserve these words, but he would not write this himself as part of an historical narrative. In an historical narrative, it would not occur to someone, 400 years later, to write such words. Moses is called by nearly all commentators the author of Genesis. If he is the author, how do you explain an observation like this? And just as obviously, how would Moses know anything about Jacob, let alone this?

Jacob would write these words as a man deeply in love with Rachel. Jacob, as a man who remembers every single detail of the day that they met, would write these words. For 7 years, he anticipated his marriage to Rachel, and the hard work that he did just kept him focused on the woman that he loved. For him, the work was nothing. He likely saw Rachel every day, and every day his love grew for her. He would have seen her under the auspices of family meals. It is hard to say if there would have been much direct contact between these two; and there would have been no alone time for them. So, for 7 years,

he looked at this woman every day or he thought about this woman every day, and his love for her continued to grow. The beauty and the wonder of this 7 years of anticipation gave Jacob great motivation, and the years passed by quickly. One of the things which is unknown to the current generation is the custom of courtship and engagement. This can be one of the most wonderful periods of time for a man and a woman in love. There is great anticipation and hope between two people in love like this.

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This is a summary of points taken out of an **Introduction to Genesis** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### Moses is NOT the Author of Genesis

1. Throughout most of the book of Genesis, we follow one patriarch; we see through the eyes of one patriarch. From Genesis 12 and forward, most of this book is written from the view of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob or Joseph. The change from one man's viewpoint to the viewpoint of his son is generally quite clear, even though they each present themselves in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person (which is not unusual, even in an autobiographical work).
2. Historically, Moses is understood to have written Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
  - 1) Moses is called the author of the book of the Law of Moses in Joshua 8:31 2Kings 14:6.
  - 2) Moses is called the author of Leviticus in Ezra 6:18.
3. Jesus acknowledges that Moses is the author of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
  - 1) The Old Testament is referred to as *Moses and the Prophets* in Luke 16:29, 31 and as *the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms* in Luke 24:44.
  - 2) Jesus told His audience that they do not really believe Moses' writings because they do not believe Jesus' words (John 5:45–47).
  - 3) Furthermore, Moses is called by Jesus the author of Exodus (Mark 7:10 12:26 John 6:32), the author of Leviticus (Matt. 8:4 Mark 1:44 Luke 2:22 5:14), the author of Numbers (John 3:14) and the author of Deuteronomy (Matt. 19:7–8 22:24 Mark 7:10 12:19)—or, at the very least, his authorship is clearly implied in these passages (in each of those passages, a quote from that book is attributed to Moses).
4. Jesus never speaks of Moses as writing Genesis.
  - 1) Jesus speaks of God creating man as male and female (quoting Genesis 1:27), but he never cites Moses as the author. Matt. 19:3–9.
  - 2) Jesus explains that circumcision came through the patriarchs and not through Moses. So, aspects of the Mosaic Law actually preceded Moses and did not come from him (John 7:20–23). If Moses wrote Genesis, this parsing of history would have made less sense. John 7:22–23 **Then Moses gave you the rite of circumcision -- not that it had its origin with Moses but with your earlier forefathers [= the patriarchs] -- and you circumcise a male child even on the Sabbath. Well, if a male child**



## Moses is NOT the Author of Genesis

undergoes circumcision on the Sabbath, to keep the **law of Moses** from being broken, are you angry with me for making a man perfectly well on the Sabbath? Jesus' point is, they circumcise children on the Sabbath, so how can they complain about Him doing good works on the Sabbath? However, as an aside, He also states that circumcision predated Moses and comes from the patriarchs. Jesus could have said, "Did not Moses tell you that the patriarchs began circumcision?" But, He did not say that because Moses did not tell us that (that is, Moses did not author Genesis).

5. Similarly the Apostles referred to Moses as author of the Law (Acts 13:39 15:5 28:23 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 9:19 10:28), of Exodus (Rom. 9:15—where God is said to have spoken to Moses 2Cor. 3:13–15), of Leviticus (Rom. 10:5 Heb. 9:19), of Deuteronomy (Acts 3:22 7:37 Rom. 10:19 1Cor. 9:9 Heb. 10:28 12:21); and Moses is associated with the book of Numbers in Heb. 3:2, 5. However, when given the chance to call him the author of Genesis, the Apostles did not in Acts 3:25 7:1–16 Rom. 4:1–3, 9–23 9:6–12 (Moses is, however, mentioned in association with Exodus in v. 15) 1Cor. 6:16 Gal. 3:5–9, 15–18 4:22–26 Eph. 5:31 Heb. 6:13–15 7:1–6 11:8–21 James 2:21–23 1Peter 3:5–6.
6. In most of those passages, a direct reference to Genesis often reads something along the lines of: **And the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the nations by faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham: "All the nations will be blessed" "in you."** (Gal 3:8 quoting from Genesis 12:3; Green's literal translation). When the source for Genesis is mentioned, it is always *it stands written* or *the Scripture says*; in every instance referring back to Genesis, it is never, *and Moses wrote* or *and Moses commanded (said)*.
7. Verses that we have studied are intensely personal (such as Genesis 29:20) and make sense if recorded by the person who experienced this (in this case, Jacob), but would have had no place in an historical narrative prepared by some author 400 years later.
8. There are even glosses found in the book of Genesis which are more appropriate to having been added 20, 50 or 100 years later; but not 400 years later. Genesis 19:38 **The younger also bore a son and called his name Ben-ammi. He is the father of the Ammonites to this day.** (ESV). *Giving birth to the son* fits in with the narrative; calling this baby the father of the Ammonites would have been added many years later—but not necessarily 400 years later.
9. If Moses were the author of Genesis, there would have been problems with the timing. The Jews at the beginning of the book of Exodus are calling upon their God to deliver them. Now, if Moses wrote the book of Genesis, how do the Jewish slaves know about their God?

At one time, I thought I was the only person who saw the book of Genesis as having been written mostly by the patriarchs, but, because of the internet, it has become clear that quite a number of commentators believe the same thing. Answers in Genesis, while disputing the JPED theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch, also list the various [authors of Genesis](#) (about  $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>ths</sup> of the way down).

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Other examples and a chart of the authorship of Genesis can be found in the **Introduction to Genesis**.

**Genesis 29:20** And Jacob served seven years for Rachel, but they seemed to him a few days, because of the love he had for her.

And, interestingly enough, Jacob, although not much of a decent human being at times, turns out to be a man more than willing to work and to put in a good day's labor for his wages. He was also a man who could experience great love for a woman.

7 years pass.

**Genesis 29:21** And Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, so that I may go in to her."

Jacob kept track of the time. Laban probably did not. For Laban, if he got 8 years of free work from Jacob, that would have been fine too. Laban used other people. He used his own daughter to build up his own business. He will also cheat Jacob in this whole marriage business as well—very much like Jacob cheated Esau.

Jacob was certainly mindful of the time. And he wanted this woman. He wanted Rachel.

**Genesis 29:22** And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast.

To celebrate the nuptials, Laban throws a feast. You see here that he gathers together the men of the place. That means, this was a bachelor party, of sorts. At this feast, it is likely that some drinking took place.

Jacob does not realize, but Laban is gathering up witnesses. Laban is going to paint Jacob into a cultural corner.

Before we go on to the next verse, I want you to think back on why Jacob is there in Padan-aram. At the direction of his mother, Jacob went to his virtually blind father and pretended to be Esau, his brother. He pretended to be Isaac's other son and he deceived his father in this way, taking the blessing that Isaac had meant for Esau.

God's plan is not moved forward on deception. God's people are not advanced in life by duplicity. This scheme was not what allowed God's blessing through Isaac to fall upon Jacob, but a dishonest act by an adult man who should have known better.

God is able to bring His will to pass, despite the deception and evil that men do. God works all things together for the good. This theme will be continued even here.

**Genesis 29:23** And it happened in the evening, he [Laban] took his daughter Leah and brought her to him [Jacob]. And he [Jacob] went in to her [Leah].

Laban apparently made some arrangements with Jacob; and this may have been the standard way of doing things. Laban brought Jacob's wife to him in the evening. However, Laban brings Leah to him rather than Rachel. We will reasonably assume that it is pitch dark, Jacob might be a little tipsy, and that was part of what Laban planned.

As a result, Jacob consummates his marriage to Leah, thinking he is consummating his marriage with Rachel. More on this to follow in the next lesson.

## **Lessons 337–338: Genesis 29:21–31      Laban's Deception of Jacob/Barrenness**

Jacob had been with his Uncle Laban for a month, and Laban asked him what sort of wages did he expect. Jacob answered:

Genesis 29:18 **Jacob loved Rachel. And he said, "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel." (ESV)**

Laban gives this serious thought and then answers:

Gen. 29:19 **Laban said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to any other man; stay with me." (ESV)**

Despite his many failures as a human being, Jacob was a hard worker, and Laban agreed to his conditions of working 7 years to marry his daughter.

Gen. 29:20 **So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her. (ESV)**

We know from this that Genesis was recorded by those who experienced these events and not by someone like Moses, who came along 400 years later.

Genesis 29:21–23 **Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed." So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (ESV)**

Jacob had agreed with his Uncle Laban that he would work 7 years in exchange for Rachel, that he might marry her. However, in the night they were to be married, Laban saw to it that Leah, Rachel's older sister, was delivered to Jacob. Clearly it is dark and clearly Leah does not reveal who she really is.

Laban had deceived Jacob.

Do you see the parallel? Rebekah, Jacob's mother, orchestrated a deception, where her husband, Isaac, gave a blessing to Jacob, thinking that he was giving a blessing to Jacob's brother, Esau. Now, Laban (Rebekah's brother), the father of Rachel,

orchestrates a deception. He brings Leah to Jacob rather than Rachel, deceiving Jacob with the wrong daughter. Rebekah caused Jacob to deceive his father by pretending to be Esau. Now, Laban causes Jacob to be deceived by bringing Leah to him, who will pretend to be Rachel. Both deceptions are the result of the planning of brother and sister, Laban and Rebekah. Jacob pretended to be his brother Esau; Leah will pretend to be her sister Rachel.

<b>Parallel Deceptions</b>		
	<b>Rebekah's Deception</b>	<b>Laban's Deception</b>
Orchestrates the deception:	Rebekah	Laban (Rebekah's brother)
The deception:	Rebekah prepares a feast for Isaac, so that he thinks he is eating wild game killed by Esau.	Laban prepares a feast for Jacob, making him think that he will marry his daughter, Rachel.
Participants	Rebekah and her son, Jacob, collude to deceive Isaac.	Laban and his daughter, Leah, collude to deceive Jacob.
The one deceived:	Isaac	Jacob (his son)
The deception:	Jacob will pretend to be his brother Esau.	Leah will pretend to be her sister, Rachel.
The pawns:	Rebekah will deceive Isaac and she will leave Esau out in the cold.	Laban will deceive Jacob (and possibly Rachel); Leah is used as a pawn to further her father's interests. Rachel is left out in the cold.
The loser (s):	Esau will think he has lost out on the blessing.	Jacob will think that he will not marry Rachel. Leah is potentially stuck in a loveless marriage.
The result:	Despite the deception, Isaac's blessing of Jacob stands.	Despite the deception, Jacob's marriage to Leah stands.
God blesses out of grace:	Esau will become the father of a great ancient kingdom (Genesis 36).	Jacob will still marry Rachel and he will become the father of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Do you see how rich this story is with irony and deception? Everything that Jacob did to deceive his own father has come back on him.

Let's pull all of this together now:

## Conclusions that we can draw from this deception

1. We must reasonably assume that, Rachel and Leah had similar figures; Jacob's description of Rachel focused on her figure, for the most part (not easily discerned in most translations); so Jacob had an idea as to Rachel's shape.
2. On the wedding night, Leah would have been brought to Jacob while in the dark; whether by tradition or the plan of Laban, Jacob does not actually see his bride.
3. Also, on this wedding night, Leah would have to say nothing. She would have been complicit in this ruse. There is no other way that this could be pulled off without her desiring what Rachel was going to have. At no time does Leah stop Jacob and say, "Listen, I am Leah; I am not Rachel. If you want to stop; we can stop."
4. I cannot come up with a plausible way for Leah not to be a part of this deception. It is imperative that she not speak on her wedding night or Jacob would know. So the deception has to be intentional on the part of Leah.
5. Leah would have also seen Jacob day after day; so to deceive Jacob, she must have been willing.
6. We do not know where Rachel was during all of this; and it is even possible that Laban got her (and Leah) away from their residence for a week or so, while all the festivities were going on. It would have been easy for Laban to say, "Your wife-to-be is preparing herself for your marriage; and her sister is there with her and helping her."
7. It is not clear why Rachel is not there. However, one can come up with several reasonable explanations: (1) she was ordered by her father to stay away; (2) she was told by her father that Jacob changed his mind and wanted Leah; (3) she possibly thinks that her wedding night is later than it really is. Whatever the reason, it is sure based upon Laban's deceptive plan.
8. Laban is clearly in charge and he clearly has a plan. Jacob is simply a pawn in Laban's game, in order for him to get what he wants.
9. With what follows, it will be clear that Laban thought all of the details through.

Laban and his daughter, Leah, are clearly a part of the deception; just as Rebekah and her son, Jacob, were clearly a part of the deception of Isaac.

[Genesis 29:24](#) And Laban gave Zilpah his slave woman to his daughter Leah for a handmaid.

This may seem to be a very odd verse to be placed right here. We have a series of actions which are consecutive; they are imperfect verbs held together with wâw consecutives, which generally indicates that there is series of consecutive actions. This occurs from v. 18 pretty much through to the end of the chapter. However, there are only imperfects and wâw consecutives in vv. 22–25a.

So, what is this all about? Why do we have the wrong daughter being sent to Jacob in the middle of the night; Jacob and Leah consummating their marriage, and suddenly a maid

is given to Leah? The placement of this thought should seem to be pretty random to you. However, there is probably a very specific purpose here.

What is likely occurring is, the maid will come in to collect and save the bed sheets. They will stand as a testimony to the consummation of Jacob and Leah's marriage. There will be two witnesses to the sheets—Leah and her maid. The stained bed sheets were typically collected by the father of the bride as proof of the consummation of the marriage between the husband and the virgin bride (see Deut. 22:13–17). Essentially, this traps Jacob. No matter what he says or does, he took the virginity of Leah on their wedding night (and there were perhaps dozens of men who celebrated his upcoming marriage at the bachelor party). Therefore, Jacob cannot simply cast her aside.

Furthermore, during this grand party to celebrate his marriage to Laban's daughter, Laban need only speak of the impending marriage of his daughter. Even though Jacob was quite specific about marrying Rachel, there is no need for Laban to have even spoken of her by name at this party. So, all of those at the party would be celebrating the upcoming marriage between Jacob and the daughter of Laban. This is a cultural trap. All that is occurring is what the culture requires. Jacob, unless he is a complete cad, cannot really back out of this situation. He is now legally and culturally bound to Leah.

**Genesis 29:25** And it happened in the morning, he saw that [lit., *behold*] it was Leah! And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you tricked me?"

Jacob is furious. He has been in love for 7 years with Rachel. He expected to wake up the next morning and see the woman whom he loves, and he sees Leah instead.

Apparently, Jacob shoots out of their bed and goes right to Laban and yells at him. This happens so quickly that we do not even have verbs saying, *and he got up and he exited the tent and he went to speak to Laban*. No. He saw Leah and in the next instant, he is vigorously lodging a complaint with Laban. Leaving out all of the stuff in between, suggests that Jacob was in a hurry and that he is furious and that he raced from his bed to Laban's tent.

Meanwhile, Zilpah, Leah's maid, comes in and collects the sheets and delivers them to Laban (or to a predetermined place, where they will be stored). Zilpah is a witness to these sheets the next morning; and, quite obviously, so is Leah.

Jacob has no way out of this marriage. That he consummated his marriage to Leah has witnesses and physical evidence. Now, so that you understand, none of these things are in the narrative—the bed sheets, the maid viewing the stained bed sheets and then fetching the bed sheets, the placing of these bed sheets into storage—but this is very likely the way that things went down. This would explain why the maid is mentioned and these cultural norms are confirmed by Deut. 22:13–17.



Jacob thinks back to the night before, and the witnesses there are these men who are all beholden to Laban; and Laban never speaks the name of his daughter; he only makes reference to *my daughter*. So, no one can claim that Laban spoke of Rachel; and Leah and her maid Zilpah both would testify to the willing consummation of their marriage.

Again, much of this is conjecture, but it all holds together. These additional details help to explain what is actually going on.

In other words, Jacob is legally married to Leah. It does not matter how it all happened; it does not matter that he was deceived. Just like Isaac's blessing to Jacob when Jacob deceived him. It does not matter that Isaac was deceived; the blessing still stands. Similarly, it does not matter how Jacob was deceived; the marriage still stands as well.

My guess is, Jacob never appreciated the irony of these circumstances, but we are able to.

**Genesis 29:26** And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our country, to give the younger before the first-born.

Laban's explanation is, "Look, I don't know what your customs are there, but here, you cannot marry off the youngest daughter first. That just is not done." Laban and Jacob have already established the price for marrying a daughter. Laban got that price; he marries off his least attractive daughter; and he is certainly willing to agree to the same contract for Rachel.

**Genesis 29:27** 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 Laban makes the deal which he had planned on all along. "Look, you can still marry Rachel. I won't stand in your way. Just work another 7 years for her." Laban will get 14 years of service from Jacob, for his two daughters. Actually more, because Jacob will not have earned anything in all of that time. That is, after 14 years, Jacob will have nothing in his name, apart from Laban's two daughters. In other words, Jacob cannot just take his two wives at this point and leave. He will work an additional 6 years after this in order to put together a nest egg.

**Genesis 29:28** And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week. And he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also.

Most of the time, when we have a narrative with *wâw* consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, we have a series of actions which are consecutive. However, these actions can also be coterminous. How can we tell?

V. 28 has 3 *wâw* consecutives (and *wâw* consecutive is literally translated *and so*) and 3 imperfect verbs. The first is the verb *to do*; the second is the verb *to fulfill*. These are essentially the same action, but viewed in a different way. So Jacob *does* what Laban

required and Jacob *fulfills* the conditions necessary to marry Rachel. Since these actions are coterminous, then Laban giving Rachel to him as his wife is not necessarily done *after* the requirements are fulfilled. Rachel can be given to him as his wife *while* Jacob begins to fulfill the requirements of their marriage in working for Laban. Imperfect verbs can be used to describe actions which are coterminous. BDB allows for the wâw consecutive to be translated *when* on occasion.

Laban knows that Rachel is more beautiful than Leah. This does not take a genius. And Jacob, from the start, was in love with Rachel. So Laban has to figure out how does he marry off both daughters and get the maximum amount of work from this man. He can get 7 years of work easily for Rachel. But he cannot get this for Leah. However, he cannot vary these terms for a deal later on. What Laban does not want is a daughter who will live with him for the rest of his life—another dependant. Laban wants to collect on his daughters; he does not want to lose money on one daughter and gain money on the other daughter. That is not good business.

Therefore, Laban's ideal solution is to cheat Jacob, collect the bed sheets so that he is trapped in the marriage, and then to propose a second marriage.

Chiseler Jacob has been out-chiseled by his smarter and more devious Uncle Laban. Laban blind-sided him. Jacob was so much in love that he was blind to what Laban might do to him. He just assumed that they had made a deal and that Laban would stick to it. It never occurs to Jacob that his own uncle would con him—but he did.

Do you see this poetic justice? All of his life, Jacob has been cheating others in order to get what he wants, and he learned this from his mother. But here, he gets schooled by his mother's brother, who is every bit the con-man that Jacob is, and more so.

**Genesis 29:29** And Laban gave Bilhah his slave woman to his daughter Rachel, to be her handmaid.

The wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs continue now from vv. 28–32a. Since we have reason to believe that these are concurrent actions rather than consecutive from the beginning of this set of verbs, we may consider the rest in a similar way.

If Jacob recorded that he worked for 7 years for Rachel, but it only seemed like a few days to him (which he did), then logically, he records everything else here. He is upset, and when you are upset, you mix everything together. What happened over the next 7 years was more of a blur. Jacob just throws it all together. This is how a person who is upset remembers things; they are all mixed together.

You will note how everything is made equal. 7 years for one daughter; 7 years for another. Leah gets a handmaid (personal servant girl) so Rachel also gets a handmaid.

**Genesis 29:30** And he also went in to Rachel. He also loved Rachel more than Leah, and served with him still seven more years.

Again, we have a series of wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs, in the order that you see them above. So, if taken as consecutive actions, Jacob consummates his marriage to Rachel; he loves Rachel more than Leah; and Jacob then serves Laban for another 7 years.

I am assuming, because of this verse and some others, that Laban figured out that he ought to give Rachel to Jacob almost immediately. He did not want Jacob to suddenly disappear, taking Rachel with him, leaving him with a daughter he could not get rid of. And he figured that Jacob, if he promised to work for Rachel, that he would keep to this promise.

Furthermore, Laban is not paying Jacob for this work. Jacob is working for the daughters. He receives room and board; but Jacob has limited means by which to run off. Until the second 7 years are complete, Jacob will have no money or negotiable wealth put aside.

However, given that both Jacob and Rachel were cheated on this deal, who knows if they might plan something together, and take much of Laban's property (his flock) with them.

Therefore, I have made the assumption here that Laban gave Rachel to Jacob in marriage early, as he believed that would cause the fewest problems. That would likely keep Jacob on the ranch, working off his debt to Laban.

Because Jacob has not made any money yet, he is hardly in a position to make a run for it, with or without Rachel. Depending upon Jacob's personal character—which was actually superior to Laban's—Laban was fairly certain that Jacob would not desert Leah. So, there is no concern by Laban that any of this would blow up in his face.

**Genesis 29:31** And when Jehovah saw that Leah was hated, even He opened her womb. But Rachel was barren.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> time we have had the situation where a woman was barren, and all 3 of these women are wives in the patriarch line of the Jews.

### **Robert Dean's Take on Barrenness**

- 1) The significance of barrenness is not some sin on the part of the woman. None of the women in the Old Testament were barren because of sin in their life, it was because of something that God was teaching through their barrenness.
- 2) These were the women who are said to be barren in Scripture: Sarai, the wife of Abram; Rebecca, the wife of Isaac; and Rachel, the wife of Jacob. It is interesting that the wives of the three patriarchs of Israel are all barren women—at least barren for a time. That should be the first clue that there is something going on here related to God's development of the nation Israel. There is also barrenness associated with the mother of Samson; Hannah; Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist in Luke chapter one.
- 3) Exodus 23:26 gives an insight. The absence of barren women would indicate that

## Robert Dean's Take on Barrenness

Israel was spiritual, indicating Israel's positive spirituality and divine blessing. But the presence of barren women in Israel indicated Israel's carnality and divine judgment. It was a sign. "There shall be no one miscarrying or barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days." (Ex. 23:26; NASB)

- 4) Thus we see that the barren womb in these women picture the emptiness and lifelessness of mankind apart from God and apart from Jesus Christ. The fact that they were barren was a picture of spiritual barrenness. It was also a picture of spiritual death. What is it that distinguishes Abram from the culture around him? He is a Gentile, like everybody else, from Ur of the Chaldees but he is a believer in the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ and is regenerate. He is going to have a couple of boys, Ishmael and Isaac, and what distinguishes them is regeneration. God is illustrating this life from death in the womb of the matriarchs of Israel. That is what sets them apart, that the foundation of this nation of people is miraculous. There is a 90-year-old woman who is going to give birth. It is a picture of how God gives life where there is no life.
- 5) There is a right time for a child to be born, just as there was an exact right time for Jesus to be born. Even though He had been promised to the woman after she and Adam had sinned, the final fulfillment of this promise would not come until thousands of years had passed.
- 6) In each case God miraculously brings forth life where there is death or there is no life. This is a picture of regeneration. The point is that only God can solve the problem of spiritual death by providing spiritual birth. And all of the six women are foreshadowing one individual: the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 7) The barren womb is also a type of the virgin womb of Mary, and there the solution to the barren womb is the new life in the incarnation of the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

From Robbie Dean's [Genesis-092b](#) Hagar: The Human Solution is a Defective Solution. Genesis 16 05/24/05. Edited.

### Lessons 339–340: Genesis 29:21–35 30:1–13

### Jacob's First 8 Sons

Gen 29:21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife that I may go in to her, for my time is completed."

Gen 29:22–25 So Laban gathered together all the people of the place and made a feast. But in the evening he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and he went in to her. (Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah to be her servant.) And in the morning, behold, it was Leah! And Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Did I not serve with you for Rachel? Why then have you deceived me?"

Gen 29:26–27 Laban said, "It is not so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also in return for serving me another seven years."

Gen 29:28–29 Jacob did so, and completed her week. And Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. (Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel to be her servant.)

Gen 29:30–31 So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years. When the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.

Remember, the barren womb is an illustration. God will give life where there is no life. This describes regeneration for the believer. We are dead in our trespasses and sins; we are born with a sin nature that separates us from God. So, before God, we are dead; but God gives us life where there was no life.

Jacob now has two wives, the sisters, Leah and Rachel. All of this came about as a result of his dishonest uncle deceiving Jacob, much the way Jacob deceived his own father.

**Genesis 29:32** And Leah conceived and bore a son. And she called his name Reuben [= *behold, a son!*], for she said, “Surely Jehovah has looked upon my afflictions. Now therefore my husband will love me.”

Leah is somewhat caught in the middle of all this; and Jacob should have been able to recognize that. After all, when Jacob deceived his father for the blessing, this was at the encouragement of his mother. Leah has essentially done the same thing to him, but as a result of the encouragement of her father. She is responsible for her actions; but it is her father who orchestrated all of this. She is probably much younger than Jacob and acting in part out of obedience to her father. Jacob, on the other hand, was a 40 year-old man when his mother convinced him to deceive his father.

We do not even know if Laban has deceived both of his daughters, as the negotiations for Rachel to be married to Jacob took place between Laban and Jacob. However, if Leah entered into this based upon deception, she still did not talk on her wedding night, which suggests that she was in on the deception. What woman would be absolutely silent on her wedding night? If she spoke, Jacob would have known who she was.

Leah, like many women, believes that giving her husband a son will change his affections toward her. In the names which she gives her children, it is clear that Leah is desirous of Jacob’s friendship, respect and affection.

She bears Jacob his first son. The name *Reuben* means, *look, a son; check it out, a son; behold, a son*. This is exactly what is in her thinking. “Look at this, I produced a son for you!” Her hope is for Jacob to think of her in a more positive light.

Reuben, as the firstborn, ought to receive all the blessings of the firstborn—a double portion and the like. However, Reuben, in at least two future situations, will show himself not to be a leader. As the firstborn, Reuben was to provide leadership for his younger

brothers; but he failed in doing this. He will be bypassed as the principle tribe to come from Jacob.

**Genesis 29:33** And she [Leah] conceived again, and bore a son, and said, “Because Jehovah has heard that I was hated, He has therefore given me this son also.” And she called his name Simeon [= *hearing, one who hears*].

Quite obviously, Leah is not hated. There are two women living under their roof (at least, on the same property), and it is clear that Jacob prefers Rachel. However, Leah cannot have children apart from Jacob’s participation. Therefore, Jacob *hates Leah* only in comparison to Rachel. In a sense, this is an anthropopathism, where Jacob is assigned emotions which he does not actually have. He obviously has some affection for her; hence his fathering her children. However, just as obviously, his affection toward her is limited and she knows this.

Based upon things which will happen later, it is possible that Rachel even encourages Jacob, from time to time, to impregnate her sister (she does later on; we don’t know about this time).

*Simeon’s name* is built upon the verb *to hear*. God has heard that Jacob hates her, and therefore she names her second son, *hearing, one who hears*. With each child, Leah has a theme in her mind—and this theme is often related to her relationship to Jacob. No doubt, she has made her concerns known to Jacob (perhaps she said, “You never listen to me, but God hears you and He hears me.”)

Simeon, ought to be there to take over in case Reuben is not quite up to the job; but he will overreact when his sister Dinah is raped (I know that it seems incongruous that a brother can overreact at the rape of his sister, but he does, and he will kill many innocent people).

When all of the brothers decide to sell Joseph, their youngest brother into slavery, it is Reuben who saves Joseph from being killed, but not from being sold into slavery. Simeon’s name is not mentioned in this incident.

Eventually, the tribe of Simeon will appear to be subsumed by the tribe of Judah (who will be Leah’s fourth-born).

**Genesis 29:34** And she conceived again, and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will return to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore his name was called Levi [= *joined to*].

There is a certain psychology to all of this. Leah did marry Jacob first, even though it involved some duplicity. She believes that his feelings for her should be strongest or at least equal to his feelings for Rachel. You will notice that with every name Leah gives to each son, she is thinking about Jacob and her relationship to him. So, for her, despite how their marriage came about, it is still a marriage.



She names her third son *Levi*. The name *Levi* means *joined to*. So, like the previous two names, his name relates directly to her relationship (or lack of same) with Jacob. She did not feel *joined to* her husband; but this is what she desires. She wants to feel joined to her husband. Perhaps a 3<sup>rd</sup> son will cause them to be better joined to one another.

3 children into this marriage—even if Rachel is also married to Jacob—makes Leah think that there ought to be a greater connection between her husband and herself.

Levi, like Simeon, will overreact to their sister being raped, and many innocent men will die as a result. So he will not be a leader in this family.

It ought to be noted that these 12 patriarchs (the sons of Jacob, 4 of whom have been born) are not great spiritual giants (with the exception of Joseph, the youngest). We have already seen how Jacob has his own shortcomings, to say the least; his sons will also be deficient in many ways. The Jewish race is based upon God's grace and God's promises; it is not based upon the patriarchs being great people. God made promises to Abraham; He reiterated those promises to Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, His promises will be fulfilled.

The tribe of Levi will have the spiritual inheritance; but they will not inherit any specific plot of land.

**Genesis 29:35** And she conceived again, and bore a son; and she said, "This time I will praise Jehovah." Therefore she called his name Judah [= *praised, to be praised*], and quit bearing.

She names him *Judah*, which means *to praise, to be praised*.

This is a big change for Leah. For the other previous three children, she named them in such a way to indicate that she was concerned about Jacob's feelings for her. Her eyes were focused on the wrong thing. However, with Judah, Leah's focus is changed. She puts her focus upon God. She praises God for this son.

It is a mistake to go through life with your eyes on yourself, on other people or on things. Your eyes ought to be on God (which is *not* some mystical experience; it is knowing Who God is and trusting in His Word, as God *reveals* Himself).

So, at this point, we have 4 sons: Reuben (*behold, a son!*), Simeon (*to hear*), Levi (*joined to*) and Judah (*praised*); all from Leah. You will note that this portrays the gospel message.<sup>33</sup> Behold, a son! Hear (or *listen and obey*) [Him]; [with the result that we are] joined [to Him]; [with the result that we may] praise [Him].

We do not know why she stops bearing children. I believe that with these first 4 children, we have the gospel message, which is complete. Therefore, God temporarily ceased

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<sup>33</sup> Taken from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/gab/view.cgi?bk=4&ch=34> (Arno Gaebelein's Annotated Bible); accessed May 25, 2015.

blessing their marriage with children. Obviously, if Jacob stopped having relations with her, she would no longer bear children. However, that does not appear to be the reason (which will be made more clear as we continue in this chapter).

Jacob was fooled into consummating marriage with Leah, a woman that he had no interest in marrying in the first place. All of this took place at night, and the proof of her virginity was most certainly collected and taken to Laban to store.

Jacob agreed to 7 more years of labor in exchange for Rachel's hand in marriage; and he was apparently granted her hand in marriage before completing this 7 years of labor. Although this is never carefully laid out, Jacob appears to come to an agreement with Laban where Jacob is given Rachel as his wife in addition to Leah—and he owes Laban 7 years more years of service (which he will faithfully give).

There is a chapter break, at this point; but Genesis 30:1 will continue the topic of Jacob's children. This will continue through v. 13, insert some related narrative after that. Up through v. 24, Jacob will continue to father sons.

**Genesis 30:1** And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister. And she said to Jacob, "Give me sons, or else I will die."

During this marriage, Leah and Jacob continued to have relations, even though she was not the favored wife; and she bore him 4 sons. Rachel is envious of her sister and she asks Jacob to give her sons. Essentially, she is blaming Jacob somehow for not giving her a son. Isn't this just like a woman? I meant to say, *doesn't this sound true to life?*

For any man who has been married, there will be times that your wife blames you for this or that thing with which you have nothing to do. That is what Rachel is doing here. Jacob is not the problem here. He is having relations with Leah, and these relations are producing children. He is having more relations with Rachel, but these are unfruitful. No children are being produced. Obviously not Jacob's fault.

There is the distinct possibility that, when Rachel was not pregnant by Jacob, that she sent him back to Leah for a night or two just to make sure everything was working right. Obviously it was, as Leah produced 4 children.

**Genesis 30:2** And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel. And he said, "Am I in God's stead, Who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Jacob is upset with Rachel, and he asks her, "What do you think? Do I have the power of God? I am somehow preventing you from having children? Give me a break, woman." In other words, he is saying, "I cannot keep you from having children; only God can do that."

And, 4 times, Jacob has impregnated Leah.

Ultimately, only God can give life.

There is also something else going on here. We will find out in the future that pregnancies are hard on Rachel. She will die when giving birth to her second son. So, her *not* getting pregnant allows her and Jacob more time together. God knows best. We may want to have X, but God gives us not-X instead. This is according to His plan; and this is often for our benefit. The believer needs to learn to appreciate what God has given. In the illustration, you may want more children (or you may want fewer children); but God gives life and God preserves life. Whatever it is in life that you think you need, but you don't have; do not worry about it. There is a reason for it. The more doctrine that you know, the better you understand God's plan. The better you understand God's plan, the more you appreciate what God has given you; and the less you are concerned about what it is you believe you lack. Again, you do not focus on things; you focus on the Person of Jesus Christ.

[Genesis 30:3](#) And she [Rachel] said, "Here is [lit., *behold*] my slave woman Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear [a child] upon my knees, and, as a result, let me be built up from her."

You may recall that Sarai, when she and her husband Abram were unable to conceive, she suggested that he use her personal maid, Hagar, in order to bear a child. This was apparently not unusual for that time period. That is, some women were wealthy enough to have personal maids; and sometimes, the husband would impregnate the maid (at the insistence of the wife) in order to have children. The children would be considered children of the husband and wife.

Like many things in the Bible, you have to distinguish between the cultural norms of the day, which are related to us in narrative; and eternal truths. In that day, it was not unusual for a wife to use her maid as a surrogate. Whereas, we do not have the exactly same thing today, we do have similar things which are done for childless couples.

In anti-Bible circles, women of the Bible are often portrayed as having absolutely no free will; and that their men did with them as they pleased. The record of Sarai and Hagar; and of Rachel and Bilhah present a different picture. Here, Rachel directs her husband to impregnate her maid, and that would be their child. In both cases, it is the wife who makes the request. So, whenever you read disparaging remarks about Scripture which suggest that wives in the Bible have no free will; these instances indicate such thinking to be faulty.

[Genesis 30:4](#) And she gave him her slave woman Bilhah to wife. And Jacob went in to her.

Rachel's personal maid is Bilhah, and she gives her maid to Jacob. They have relations. Jacob gives in to Rachel's demand. Note that this is all done at the behest of Rachel; and note that Jacob is never said here to be married to Bilhah (although she will be called his wife later on in Genesis). So, she would be considered a secondary wife, of sorts. Jacob did not seek her out; Jacob does not have continued relations with her; but he does have a child by her (in fact, he will have two children by her).

## Genesis 30:5 And Bilhah conceived, and bore Jacob a son.

Quite obviously, Jacob is not the problem. He is fathering children by Leah and by Rachel's maid Bilhah.

Those who are against the Bible love to point to passages like this and suggest that this is somehow God's approved marriage—a marriage of two sisters to the same man; and their personal slaves as surrogates. However, this is simply recording the events of Jacob's life. Both Rachel and Leah think about God; and all of them (including Jacob) speak of God in one way or another during this chapter (vv. 2, 6, 18, 20). Furthermore, God does give children to Leah (Genesis 30:17) and Rachel (Genesis 30:22). However, none of this means that this is somehow the ideal marriage in God's eyes. The Bible never presents a polygamous marriage in a positive light. At best, we have a situation like this where the Bible does not comment at all upon the state of their marriage. What will become clear is, this is not an ideal situation. This chapter and others will indicate that polygamy is not the best sort of relationship between the principles.

**Application:** This ought to be a warning to missionaries, however, who try to impose *Christian* standards wherever they go. If they are in a culture where some men have more than one wife, this passage suggests that they should *not* change that. They should not try to talk this or that man into giving up all but one of his wives. That should not be a part of the Christian message that they teach. They are to give the gospel of Jesus Christ; and they are to ignore the unusual marriage configurations (as the husband would remain responsible to the care of his several wives). Along the same lines, for future relationships, a missionary would encourage marriages between one man and one woman. This would come out in teaching Scripture.

**Application:** Modern society has brought to us a brand new wrinkle: *gay marriage*. First of all, no matter what the state or the federal government says, there is no such thing as a gay marriage. There might be a 40 year relationship between two persons of the same gender who also have relations; but that is not marriage.

**Application:** Missionaries are to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to a people. A portion of their ministry would logically involve teaching Bible doctrine to this same people. Part of that teaching includes the laws of divine establishment. There needs to be an asterisk and a reference to this passage. Ideally, marriages ought to be one man paired with one woman. However, a man with several wives is not told to abandon his other wives. Conversely, a marriage between two men or between two women is not a marriage. But, in any case, you teach the principles; you do not get personally involved to the point where you are telling individuals what to do—even in a church. Missionaries, like pastors, are not to live other people's lives for them, no matter how tempting that might be. So, if faced with the oddball situation that you end up with two women in the congregation think they are married, you do not get up in their grill and tell them that they need to separate. You teach the principles and allow them to make the decisions. Personally, I would draw the line at displays of public affection anywhere in or around the church. Obviously, the church

would never take part in recognizing two men or two women as legitimately married any more than it would recognize and/or celebrate a polygamous marriage as legitimate.

**Application:** I say all of this because there are gay Christians. Anyone can believe in Jesus Christ, and faith in Christ makes them saved. It is not impossible to imagine a circumstance where both persons in a gay coupling come to the Lord around the same time. So, the pastor or missionary should still teach Bible doctrine; they should not hold back in their teaching. On the other hand, it is not up to the pastor or the missionary to follow people around and tell them what to do and what not to do.

**Application:** Homosexual relations are sinful; but then, so are some heterosexual relations. It is up to the pastor to teach the principle and to allow those in his congregation to apply what they learn. It is never up to the pastor to follow his parishioners around and to demand sinless behavior from them.

God could have appeared to Jacob at any time and said, “You can’t be married to two women; ditch Leah.” God works with the situation that Jacob is in; and nation Israel is actually blessed despite this unconventional marriage arrangement. At any time, God could have stepped in—on Jacob’s wedding night, in fact. But God allows everyone’s free will to play out (including Laban’s free will). God allows for our interaction within this fallen world.

So, Bilhah, Rachel’s maid, bears a son to Jacob. Jacob, having two wives and two surrogate mothers, will father children by all of them.

[Genesis 30:6a](#) And Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son.”

We are given the bare-bones discussion between Jacob and Rachel. No doubt, this was a matter that they discussed on several occasions. We are given the summation of what they had to say to one another, as if they had one conversation, and this is how it went down, with Rachel doing all of the talking. That was not how it happened.

Probably over a period of years, the topic of no children was discussed on many occasions. I am speculating here, but it is possible that Rachel said, “Are you sure you are potent? Go back to my sister again and prove it.” And Leah would have another child.

In the end, Rachel has what she believes is a solution—Jacob will take Bilhah, her maid, and have children by her; and Rachel will raise them as her own. It is likely that Jacob, when this was suggested, said, “Listen, Rachel, that is not a good idea.” But she keeps insisting. She eventually got her way in this matter, whether it took a few days, months or years.

[Genesis 30:6](#) And Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son.” Therefore she called his name Dan.

Rachel names this son *Dan*. The name *Dan* comes from the verb *dîyn* (דַּיַן) [pronounced *deen*]. *Dîyn* means *to judge, to correctly evaluate, to evaluate, to condemn, to vindicate; to defend [the right of anyone]; to rule, to regulate; to contend with*. Strong's #1777 BDB #192. So no matter what she and Jacob said to one another (and, remember that Jacob is not some spiritual paragon), she says here, "God has *judged* me and, observe, I turned out to be right." What married woman has not thought or said something similar to this to her husband?

**Genesis 30:7** And Rachel's slave woman Bilhah conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son.

Rachel decides that she needs to have another son by means of her maid, and she choreographs this again.

What seems to be the case is, Rachel has certainly accepted the idea that she is married with Jacob and her sister. Therefore, additional relations with her maid are not as difficult for her and Abram's (Abraham's) relation with Hagar was for Sarai (Sarah).

**Genesis 30:8** And Rachel said, "With the wrestlings of God I have wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed. And she called his name Naphtali."

She names this young man *Naphtali*, which means *wrestling, contention, a battle*. He is, therefore, the result of many disagreements that Rachel had with Leah and with Jacob. Even with sisters, marriages are not smooth with two women under the same roof.

You will notice that the marriage dynamic is quite interesting. Leah was thinking about her relationship to Jacob when naming her children; but Rachel was thinking about her competition with Leah when naming her surrogate children.

The Bible again gives us the actual situation regarding Jacob, Rachel and Leah. There is no paradise here of Jacob being married to two sisters, and interacting with their maids. When Rachel names her surrogate son *wrestling, contention, a battle*; you know that things are not running smoothly in this household. This is not Ozzie and Harriet (or William and Mary). Having two wives and two mistresses is not a smooth ride.

Rachel wants to have children herself; she is not producing children; and she feels angry at Leah and at Jacob for this. She takes this anger out on Jacob, accusing him of somehow not giving her children. Then she decides, "You will give me a child by my maid, Bilhah." This no doubt caused more family discussion. Jacob appears to have intelligently bowed out of these discussions; and the strife appears to have been between Rachel and Leah, as she speaks of *wrestling with my sister*.

**Genesis 30:9** When Leah saw that she had quit bearing, she took her slave woman Zilpah and gave her to Jacob to wife.



Leah, while observing all of this, and certainly knowing that she is no longer producing children, decides, “Two can play at this game. If Rachel thinks that she is having children by her maid Bilhah, then I can have children by my maid Zilpah.”

Therefore, she insists that Jacob impregnate her personal maid. Given all that has happened, neither Jacob nor Rachel could have come up with any reason to not to do this; so Jacob agrees to this.

Again, you will note that this is at the insistence of Leah, the wife. The Bible does not present women at completely and totally oppressed, under the thumb of their husbands.

**Genesis 30:10** And Leah's slave woman Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

For some men, this may seem like a paradise. Jacob has married two sisters; and they each have young maids. And Jacob is required to have sex with all of them. I can guarantee you that the relationship between Leah and Rachel was not easy. Once and awhile, arguments would break out between them. This would not be pleasant. It is not impossible to imagine that months might pass during which these sisters are at odds with one another.

Some men have this idyllic notion of having more than one wife. Even here, the Bible does not really pass judgment against Jacob—but it makes it clear that life is not easy for Jacob. This is not fun. Few things are worse than listening to women argue, who are constantly trying to drag you into the argument and to take sides. And, even though Jacob was very much in love with Rachel originally, she has not been the easiest person to live with over the past few years. She originally blamed Jacob for her not being pregnant.

Throughout the Bible, even in portions written by men like David and Solomon (both of whom had many wives), a marriage between one man and one woman is always presented as ideal. Furthermore, this one right woman for a man is considered a great blessing to him. At no time are many wives presented as a great (or greater) blessing to any man. *We never find the verse which reads, If one wife is a blessing, two are even more so.* This is despite the fact that several polygamists wrote Scripture (Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon—because they are polygamists, they knew better).

When there is more than one wife, the Bible presents this objectively—but not in such a way as to suggest this ought to be the way things are done.

Jacob, David and Solomon all wrote Scripture and any one of them could have written: *a man with one wife is blessed; and a man with two wives is double-blessed.* But they did not. David appears to have confined himself to one wife at the very end of his life—to Bathsheba. Solomon never seems to be happy in marriage (he had 1000 wives and mistresses) and one book of the Bible is devoted to Solomon being unable to persuade woman #1001 that he is really attracted to, to become his wife (or lover).<sup>34</sup> And Jacob—

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<sup>34</sup> We don't really know what number she was; but we know Solomon wanted her and did not get her.

are now studying Jacob's life—finds himself involved in all of these arguments over having children—these arguments could not have been pleasant to him. What man wants to work all day and come home to strife?

**Genesis 30:10** And Leah's slave woman Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

So far, there are 4 sons by Leah, 2 by Bilhah, and now a 7<sup>th</sup> son by Zilpah.

**Genesis 30:11** And Leah said, "With fortune." And she called his name Gad.

Most say that *gad* means *good fortune*. However, it is possible that the word *gâd* means *troop*. Leah is either saying that this is good fortune that this child is born to her; or she may be suggesting that this is one in an army of children.

**Genesis 30:12** And Leah's slave woman Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.

So Jacob was pressed into service once again; and he impregnated Leah's personal maid once again.

**Genesis 30:13** And Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." And she called his name Asher.

Leah names the child by Zilpah *happiness*. Leah sees this as an extension of her own sons.

Leah's attitude, over time, seems to have changed. At the beginning of her marriage, she was very much concerned about her relationship with Jacob and that she was not getting the full love from him that she believed that she deserved. However, with these past 3 sons, given their names, she seems to have a much better attitude toward life. Judah means *to be praised*; Gad means *great blessing*; and Asher means *happiness*. These are all good names which indicate a much better attitude.

So far, if my arithmetic can be depended upon, so far, Leah has had 4 children of her own, her personal maid has bore 2 children for Jacob and Rachel's personal maid has given birth to 2 children for Jacob.

## Lesson 340 Addendum: Genesis 29:1–35

## A brief review of Genesis 29

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 29:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord,

JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

### The Subsections of Genesis 29:

vv. 1–14	<a href="#">Jacob Travels to Haran and Meets Rachel and Laban</a>
vv. 15–20	<a href="#">Jacob Agrees to Serve Laban Seven Years for Rachel</a>
vv. 21–25	<a href="#">The Deceiver is Deceived</a>
vv. 26–30	<a href="#">Jacob Works Seven More Years for Laban to Marry Rachel</a>
vv. 31–35	<a href="#">Leah Give Jacob Four Sons</a>

Because of some deceptive things that Jacob did with his family, he was sent east to Haran in order to find a wife. This also kept his older brother Esau from killing him (although this was not stated specifically as a reason for sending Jacob east).

While on his way, Jacob stopped in Bethel and saw, in a dream, a ladder between heaven and earth, with angels going up and down this ladder. All of this is recorded in Genesis 28 ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### Jacob Travels to Haran and Meets Rachel and Laban

Genesis 29:1 [And Ya'aqob \[= Jacob\] moved on and came to the land of the people of the East.](#)

Jacob arrives at his destination in Haran. We do not know who he traveled with, but he did not come with a massive dowry and a servant representing his father brought 40 or 50 years earlier.

Genesis 29:2 [And he looked and saw a well in the field, and saw three flocks of sheep lying by it, for out of that well they watered the flocks, and a large stone was on the well's mouth.](#)

Jacob could find Haran well enough, but now he needs to find his Uncle. The logical place for Jacob to get specific information about his Uncle Laban and how to find him would be

available at this well. People from this area would come to this well. Laban is a prosperous rancher with many sheep (I would assume that Jacob knows this), so hanging out here is the best place to find out exactly where Laban lives.

Genesis 29:3 And all the flocks would be gathered there, then they would roll the stone from the well's mouth and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

Jacob observes how things are done. The well is capped with a large stone. The large stone keeps impurities from falling into the well.

Genesis 29:4 So Ya'aqob said to them, "My brothers, where are you from?" And they said, "We are from Haran."

Jacob approach the men at the well and it turns out that they are from Haran.

Genesis 29:5 And he said to them, "Do you know Laban son of Nahor?" And they said, "We know him."

Jacob asks, "Do you know Laban ben Nahor?" and they did.

Genesis 29:6 So he said to them, "Is he well?" And they said, "Well. And see, his daughter Raḥēl [= Rachel] is coming with the sheep."

Jacob asks about his health/welfare, and he is doing well. Then the men point out that his daughter Rachel is off in the distance coming with the sheep.

Genesis 29:7 And he said, "See, it is still high day, not the time for the livestock to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed them."

Jacob says, "I don't want to take up any more of your time. Obviously, you need to get your sheep some water."

Genesis 29:8 But they said, "We are not allowed until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth, then we shall water the sheep."

However, there was apparently a custom established by the people who dug the well (probably Laban). All the flocks needed to be gathered there, and then the stone could be moved and water fetched.

I assume that would mean the least amount of time for the rock to be off of the well. The less time that the well is uncovered, the less change it will become contaminated.

It is very possible that the various shepherds worked together to water their sheep. These animals would stay at a distance from the well. Away from the well—let's just say 100 ft. or more—there would be troughs. Water would be transferred from the well to the troughs

and the shepherds would take turns bringing their sheep to the troughs for water. No one want these dirty sheep to get too close to the well itself.

Genesis 29:9 While he was still speaking with them, Raḥēl came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess.

As Jacob spoke to these men, Rachel arrived with her father's sheep.

Genesis 29:10 And it came to be, when Ya'aqob saw Raḥēl the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Ya'aqob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.

The relationship of everyone is established here. Rachel and Jacob are first cousins. Rachel's father and Jacob mother are brother and sister.

Rachel waters her sheep first, suggesting that the well belonged to Laban. The shepherds there probably had a contract of some sort established with Laban to use the well. These shepherds would have a route which would take their sheep through green fields, and one of the stops would be at this well. Let me suggest that they arrive early so there is no chance that they might miss out on the use of the well.

Genesis 29:11 And Ya'aqob kissed Raḥēl, and lifted up his voice and wept.

Jacob kissing Rachel here is a kiss between relatives.

Jacob cries, presumably because he has been led by God to his family in Haran. Remember that Jacob has never gone out of Canaan, let alone travel all the way to Haran. We do not now if a few servants accompanied him or not (seems like I recall a future chapter which reveals that he has servants—but I could be wrong about that).

Genesis 29:12 And when Ya'aqob [= Jacob] told Raḥēl [= Rachel] that he was her father's relative and that he was Ribqah's [= Rebekah] son, she ran and told her father.

Jacob tells Rachel exactly who he is and who he is related to. She runs home to tell her father, Laban, about this.

Genesis 29:13 And it came to be, when Laban heard the report about Ya'aqob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. Then he told Laban all these matters.

When Laban hears about this, that his nephew has come, he runs out to the well and embraces Jacob and kisses him. Then Jacob is brought home. Jacob tells Laban what has taken place. It is my assumption that he simply speaks of his mother, Rebekah, and his father Isaac; and how things are for them in Canaan.

Maybe Jacob mentions his twin brother Esau, but he would not have mentioned the Hittite wives. Furthermore, he would not have blurted out, "I am looking to marry one of your daughters." My assumption is that Jacob's approach much more subtle than that. Likely the only marriage mentioned was that between Isaac and Rebekah (which would have certainly interested Laban).

Genesis 29:14 And Laban said to him, "You are indeed my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a new moon.

When Laban says, "You are indeed my flesh and bone," he is making this statement based upon Jacob's physical appearance and what he knows about his family in Canaan. All of this lines up with what Laban knows.

### **Jacob Agrees to Serve Laban Seven Years for Rachel**

Genesis 29:15 Then Laban said to Ya'aqob, "Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for naught? Let me know, what should your wages be?"

The way I picture this is, this conversation from vv. 15 on was held on a different time. I believe that Jacob had been there for one month, and he simply started working for Laban.

Laban, recognizing that Jacob is a hard worker, says, "Listen, I can't just have you working for me for free. What should I pay you?"

Let me suggest, whether it has been said or not, Jacob has been thinking about Rachel for much of this time. He has strong feelings for her already, even though only a month has passed.

Genesis 29:16 And Laban had two daughters, the name of the elder was Lě'ah, and the name of the younger was Raḥěl.

Recall the Jacob is *writing this* (he did not actually write these words down, but he would recount these events later on in his life). His mind is on one of Laban's daughters, so he describes Laban's two oldest daughters (maybe his only daughters?) for us. Leah was the oldest.

Genesis 29:17 And Lě'ah's eyes were weak, but Raḥěl was beautiful of form and beautiful of appearance.

One of the most beautiful things about a woman is her eyes, and the 2009 Scriptures tells us that Leah's eyes were weak. The word is the adjective rak<sup>e</sup> (רַך) [pronounced *rahkh*], which means, *tender, delicate, soft; infirm; weak, weak of heart, timid*. Strong's #7390 BDB #940. I lean toward this meaning that her eyes were less attractive than Rachel's. She knew this, and was shy about it, always looking away.

Rachel was beautiful with a wonderful figure.



Genesis 29:18 And Ya'aqob loved Raḥēl, so he said, "Let me serve you seven years for Raḥēl your younger daughter."

For Jacob, there was no difficult choice here; Rachel appealed to him greatly. Leah did not.

Genesis 29:19 And Laḅan said, "It is better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me."

Concerning any potential marriage prospects, Jacob would have seemed to be head and shoulders above the rest (as Rachel would have seemed to him).

Genesis 29:20 So Ya'aqob served seven years for Raḥēl, and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her.

This is one verse which certainly came from Jacob's heart and soul. He worked for seven years, but it was nothing, because at the end of those seven years, Rachel would be his wife. To him, it only seemed to be a few days. That is a very subjective statement that only the man who experienced this seven-year wait could make.

I point this out in order to give evidence that the book of Genesis was not written by one man, Moses, hundreds of years after the fact. First of all, there are many styles of writing found throughout the book of Genesis. You may recall Genesis 24, which was so repetitive (which we do not find anywhere else in Genesis). There is a lot of information about Abraham and (as we will see) about Jacob; but nearly nothing about Isaac. Abraham had a lot to say; Jacob had a lot to say. Isaac did not. That is simply their personalities working out through their writing. This v. 20 is clearly giving us Jacob's specific feelings, something that someone writing years or centuries later would not have said.

I have mentioned this in the introduction to Genesis that Moses did not write the book of Genesis. The people found in this book wrote about these events. We can be certain that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Reuben, Simeon or Levi, Judah and Joseph wrote everything from Genesis 15 and forward (although Ishmael and Esau may have given their genealogical lines to their relatives, which genealogies are placed into the Bible).

Who wrote the Scriptures prior to Abraham? For this, we can only guess. Maybe Noah, maybe Shem, maybe even Adam.

And the way that this was done is as follows: the people of God would gather—and this could be any size group—and the patriarch would speak everything from Genesis 1:1 to his place in history, and he would add the events of his life to the mix. Then, if his son or sons or grandsons were old enough, then they would stand, one-by-one, and add their part. This would have been quite amazing when Jacob and his family was in Egypt, because Jacob and at least four of his sons would stand up and give the narrative, which I often call, *The History of God and Man* (an alternate title to Genesis). Perhaps even

Benjamin gave his point-of-view a few times (making it five sons who would participate in this reading).

I keep using the words *writing* and *reading*, but there was no book or set of scrolls to read. The various men stood up and spoke these words. Knowing that, after their deaths, someone else would speak their words, the text would have been standardized on the fly (they would speak of these various events and develop a way to keep their reading consistent).

This explains a marvelous change that takes place in the person of Jacob. He was a cranky, self-centered, deceptive, manipulative and often depressed man, who would have been a difficult person to like (he had his good points, but he had so many bad points as well). Yet, when he dies in Egypt, he is beloved, even by the Egyptians, and they make a big to-do about his death, giving Jacob great honor. So, what happened? How did Jacob go from the jerk he appears to be in Canaan to someone who is highly honored in Egypt?

Jacob, in Egypt, had all of his sons, they were all alive. He was very happy about that. But, how did he win the hearts of so many Egyptians? Periodically, whether this be every week or every month, he would stand and give *The History Between God and Man*, and more and more Egyptians would attend this reading (they did not read; they spoke from memory); and because this was the Word of God, people were moved in their souls. Many Egyptians believed in the Revealed God, the God of the Hebrew people, as a result. How do we know this? God sent Jacob and his entire family to Egypt. That means that there was positive volition in Egypt. There were many Egyptians who were ready to hear the gospel and they were ready to respond in faith. God sends the gospel message to wherever there is positive volition. So, all of Jacob's family going to Egypt was not just a place for them to stop and hang out for awhile; it was a response to the positive volition which was in Egypt, during the time that Jacob was alive. As a result of these readings, more and more Egyptians would believe in the God of the Hebrews and, as a result, Jacob became one of the most beloved men in Egypt. At least one generation of Egyptians loved Jacob and loved his message from God.

Now, let's return to the context of Genesis 29:

### **The Deceiver is Deceived**

Genesis 29:21 Then Ya'aqob said to Laban, "Give me my wife, for my days are completed, and let me go in to her."

It is now seven years later. At this point, Jacob and Laban do not use the name Rachel. For Jacob, this is understood. However, Laban has a plan. Jacob says, "Give me my wife," to Laban, and Laban will do just that.

Genesis 29:22 And Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast.

Laban holds a great wedding feast—a bachelor’s party if you will. There are no women there. Let me suggest that, at the end of all this, Jacob has overeaten, he is tired, and maybe a little drunk.

Genesis 29:23 [And it came to be in the evening, that he \[Laban\] took Lě’ah his daughter and brought her to Ya’aqob. And he \[Jacob\] went in to her \[Leah\].](#) Jacob did not realize that this was Leah.

Laban has told Jacob, “Go to your tent” (or to your room) “and I will bring your wife in to you.” Things would have been pitch black at night. In case Jacob wants to light a lamp or something, Laban discourages him, saying, “Your wife is very shy. Let her have some privacy this first night.” (I am speculating here).

Whatever the reason, Jacob is waiting in bed in the pitch black. Laban brings his wife to him (Leah and not Rachel). We do not know what Leah and Rachel were told. It is possible that neither daughter knew what Laban was doing. Now, how could that be? Perhaps a few nights earlier, Laban told both of them, “Jacob wants Leah, because she is the eldest.” So it is possible that Laban duped his daughters as well as Jacob.

In the darkness, where possibly no words were exchanged, Jacob went into Leah (that is, they had sexual intercourse), and that made them married. No matter what the circumstances were, Jacob and Leah were now married.

Genesis 29:24 [And Laban gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Lě’ah as a female servant.](#)

Why is Zilpah mentioned here? Someone must fetch the sheets which were used, and these sheets reveal that Leah is a virgin. The sheets would be stored in case any issue was made of the first night. Zilpah would have grabbed up these sheets and delivered them to Laban.

Genesis 29:25 [And in the morning it came to be, that see, it was Lě’ah. So he said to Laban, “What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Raḥēl that I served you? Why then have you deceived me?”](#)

In the morning, Jacob realizes that Leah is in his bed, and he just blows his cork. He goes to Laban, seething with anger. He did not see this coming. Laban completely deceived him; Laban completely manipulated him. Jacob did not know that deception and manipulation were on the table and he is furious. Remember how Jacob pulled a switcheroo on his father in the previous chapter? Well, Laban pull a switcheroo on him.

### **Jacob Works Seven More Years for Laban to Marry Rachel**

Genesis 29:26 [And Laban said, “It is not done this way in our place, to give the younger before the first-born.](#)

Laban calmly explains, “We cannot give away the younger daughter before the firstborn. That is something that everyone knows.”

Genesis 29:27 "Complete the week of this one, then we give you this one too, for the service which you shall serve with me still another seven years."

Laban is ready with a solution. “Work for seven more years and Rachel is your wife as well.”

Genesis 29:28 And Ya'aqob did so and completed her week. Then he gave him his daughter Raḥēl too, as wife.

Jacob agrees to this and he works for another seven years in order to marry Rachel as well. This time, there is no deception.

Genesis 29:29 And Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Raḥēl as a female servant.

Bilhah would have also fetched the wedding night sheets for saving.

Genesis 29:30 And he also went in to Raḥēl, and he also loved Raḥēl more than Lě'ah. And he served with Laban still another seven years.

Three times, this additional seven years is spoken of. For Jacob, this would mean a much longer time than the first seven years, and so he says it three times.

### **Leah Give Jacob Four Sons**

Genesis 29:31 And הוהי [= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah] saw that Lě'ah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Raḥēl was barren.

I am unclear as to when Leah began to have children. Did this happen in between Jacob's first and second marriage? Or did Jacob begin to father children after fourteen years of service to Laban?

Genesis 29:32 And Lě'ah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Re'ubēn, for she said, “For הוהי [= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah] has looked on my affliction, because now my husband is going to love me.”

Leah gives birth to Reuben, her firstborn. She believes by producing a son for Jacob that Jacob will love her. Apparently, Jacob eventually develops an affection for her—but that takes place many years later.

Genesis 29:33 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Because הוהי [= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah] has heard that I am unloved, He gave me this son too.” And she called his name Shim'on [= Simeon].

Leah, somewhat sad over the circumstances, is given a second son, his name is Simeon.

Genesis 29:34 *And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband is joined to me, because I have borne him three sons.” So his name was called Lěwi [= Levi].*

Leah gives birth to a third son, Levi.

Genesis 29:35 *And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Now I praise יהוה.” So she called his name Yehuḥah [= Judah]. And she ceased bearing.*

Leah bears Jacob a fourth son, Judah.

The children being born to Jacob are going to be continued in Genesis 30 (which certainly makes us wonder, why break up the chapters right here?). Obviously, there is more to be said, but this chapter ends abruptly.

## Lessons 341–342: Genesis 30:14–43

## Polygamy

The first Mormons along with various offshoots of the Mormon cult supported polygamy. We are currently studying Jacob, who is clearly a polygamist, and his various wives will be the mothers for the 12 tribes of Israel. Marriage Equality proponents often point to polygamy in the Bible in order to justify societal acceptance of gay marriage. For these reasons, we should stop for a moment and study the doctrine of Polygamy.

Jacob originally wanted to marry Rachel. He was deceived into thinking he consummated his marriage with Rachel, when it turned out to be Leah. Both women insisted that he impregnate their personal maids, so that Jacob ended up fathering children by 4 different women, all of whom lived together (but in separate tents).

A more complete **Doctrine of Polygamy** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

- I. First, we must acknowledge that there are several instances of polygamy in Scripture:
  1. The first recorded instance of this is Genesis 8:19, where Lamech, also the writer of the first outlaw, bad-boy song, married two women. Lamech was a descendant of Cain, and he also killed another man. In other words, the first instance of polygamy is not a poster boy that we ought to emulate.
  2. Abraham had one wife Sarah, but her maid Hagar became his mistress, and Abraham fathered a child by her—at Sarah’s insistence, by the way. The end result was a great deal of conflict and stress within the household, to the point where she and her child were sent away (once this son was old enough). This was very difficult for Hagar and her son Ishmael is

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called a *wild-ass of a man*. There are a lot of single mothers today who are raising the same kind of young man—this describes their sons to a T. Genesis 21

3. Jacob obviously had two wives, and one might even find him more justified here than in any other case. He worked 7 years for his uncle Laban in order to take his daughter, Rachel, in marriage. Laban had Jacob marry the older sister, Leah, instead (apparently, Jacob did not find out until the next morning who he had been with). After marrying and having sex with a woman, even though Jacob did not realize who she was, means there were no *take-backs*, and Jacob was stuck with Leah, the older sister. He worked another 7 years for Rachel. When he separated from Laban entirely (given Laban's behavior with regards to his daughters, it is reasonable to suppose that Laban took advantage of Jacob in many ways), Jacob also ended up with the personal servant for each of his wives. Having children became more of a competition than the natural outgrowth of a marriage, and they ended up with 12 children, all 4 women participating as mothers. God still allowed these 12 sons to make up the Jewish race, but we are told that God is able to work all things together for good (Rom. 8:28). To give you an idea as to how dysfunctional Jacob's family was, the brothers banded together to sell their youngest brother into slavery because they did not like him. Genesis 35 37
4. It is not clear whether Moses was a polygamist or not. His first wife left him, then she returned; and then we don't hear about her at all. At an advanced age, Moses marries an Ethiopian woman (a Cushite), which irritates Miriam and Aaron no end (Moses' sister and brother—Num. 12:1). I think that it is likely that Moses' first wife had deserted him by this time or had died. Her father seemed to be spiritually mature, but there is no indication that Moses' first wife ever was. In any case, there appears to be nothing wrong with what Moses did; and God even upbraided Miriam for being snitty about this marriage (it is possible that she was just concerned that this Ethiopian woman was from a different race; however, this was not her call to make). I digress.
5. David had a number of wives. He married two women before ruling in Hebron; and he married several women in both Hebron and Jerusalem. Now, even though to a man, this might appear to be the life; David has power, he has money and he has several wives; this is not necessarily the case. It will be clear that many of David's problems came from his many children whom he sired but obviously did not spend much time raising. Obviously, as king, David is spread pretty thin; furthermore, he had 20 or so sons and daughters, which made things doubly difficult for him to have a fatherly influence over them. 2Sam. 3:1–5 5:13–16
  - 1) Okay, you are now convinced as to the importance of the nuclear family; now, *why does God allow David to have several wives?* God is a gentleman and He respects our volition. God allows us to



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sin; He allows us to make grave mistakes. With David, this is a matter of teaching by example: if David, a man of great spiritual integrity and with almost unlimited resources, cannot control a half-dozen kids by as many wives, then it should be clear to us that we will be unable to properly raise our own children outside God's pre-designed family unit. I am sure that this has been said before, but *it does not take a village to raise a child; it takes a mother and a father.*

6. The most famous example is Solomon, David's son, who has 1000 wives and mistresses. There were several problems: Solomon's foreign wives turned him away from God and to their own idols. Also, there was obviously little or no true happiness found here, as Solomon pines over the Shulamite woman in Song of Solomon. Can you imagine Solomon suffering from unrequited love when he has 1000 women to choose from? There is no possible way that Solomon could have gotten to know the souls of half of these women.
7. God does not completely restrict the free will of His people. That is, a person does not enter into marriage with a second wife and then immediately get struck down by lightning. However, simply because we find cases where God tolerates sin, that does not mean that it God sponsors sin. A simple example is: drunkenness is a sin, but many of us have the wherewithal to spend the remainder of our lives drunk. Now, God might remove us from this life via the sin unto death; but there would clearly be a period of time where God indulges our overindulgence. At no time should we interpret this lack of immediate discipline as God condoning this practice. So, simply finding instances of polygamy (and other sins) in Scripture does not condone polygamy or the other sins. The Bible is a book of true human history, and we observe man, warts and all, within its pages.

II. Since it is obvious that God has allowed polygamy in the past, why can't we get some of that?

1. To summarize, just because men in the past have had multiple wives does not mean that God approves of polygamy or that polygamy is as valid a life choice as monogamy. God made Eve for Adam; God did not make Eve, Sally, Jessie, and Molly. By making and creating



Taken from: [http://student.ucr.edu/~smara002/cs6/all the questions/the thousand wives.jpeg](http://student.ucr.edu/~smara002/cs6/all_the_questions/the_thousand_wives.jpeg)

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Eve, God established a precedent. Throughout Scripture, principles of marriage are applied to one man and one woman; and some categories of men, e.g., kings, are specifically prohibited from having multiple wives. Furthermore, despite what we men might see as advantages in having more than one wife, are clearly outweighed by the disadvantages. You may recall the wives of Elkanah. First of all, he had a favorite wife, which is inevitable. Because of this, his second favorite wife gave his favorite a hard time—she found the one area in which she excelled and the favorite did not, and she rubbed that in. That caused continual tension in the household and the favorite wife was generally unhappy. When Elkanah's favorite wife was unhappy, Elkanah was also unhappy. These circumstances did result to the birth of Samuel, but it was not the circumstances of having two wives which actually led to this birth—that was God's will based upon a prayer of Hannah's. Our focus for this study is upon the obvious and continual tension within this household.

2. In my life, I have known a lot of women; and most of them appeared to be a handful, so to speak. I have even had two female roommates at one time, and, whenever one of them was out of kilter, the household was out of kilter as well. Knowing the little beasties as I do, women tend to get out of kilter quite a lot. When there are 2 or more women, the effect seems to be more exponential than cumulative. In other words, a man might have two or more wives and things just go along swimmingly, but then, one day, one of those women gets a bit out of kilter. This changes everything in the household. For every additional woman, that is one more person that can, at any moment, for any reason, suddenly get out of kilter. Do you see how this might not be much fun for the man?
  3. As we will see later on in David's life, his having several wives did not cure him of having a roving eye; and he got himself in serious trouble over a married woman, despite the fact that he had 10 wives and 10 mistresses. The same was true of Solomon. Having a roving eye is a common male sin. Giving in to that temptation does not solve anything or make that sin go away. In many cases, in a monogamous relationship, it destroys the relationship. If this roving eye results in one more woman being added to the stable, ala polygamy, then, again, there are increased problems in the household (or households), and the roving eye is not quenched or satisfied.
  4. Giving in to the lust pattern does not satiate the lust. This helps to explain the addictive nature of pornography.
  5. We have also seen that, even with their unlimited resources, having several wives was still difficult for David or Solomon to manage.
- III. Spirituality by imitation:
1. One of the principles of Scripture is, we don't simply pick a person in the Bible and copy them. This goes for the Old Testament, the gospels and the book of Acts. Some of the worst cults in history have been the result of simply copying the life or actions of this or that person in the Bible. The most prominent example of this is the charismatic crowd. They observe

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that a few people *get the ghost* in the book of Acts, that many of them speak in tongues, and so, they try to imitate this experience. Now, this may seem harmless enough; after all, *the men who spoke in tongues, who received the Holy Spirit, were great men, for the most part, and shouldn't we make an attempt to follow in their footsteps?* But here is where things fall apart:

- 1) Paul, in his epistles, does not tell any church or any individual, *you know, you have no real spiritual life; you need to get the Spirit.* Neither did John in the book of Revelation when addressing the lukewarm church. In fact, there are no mandates anywhere in any epistle for us to seek out God the Holy Spirit and to *get Him*. We are told to be *filled with the Holy Spirit*; and that is a command; but that is to be restored to fellowship. It is for those who already have God the Holy Spirit.
  - 2) Secondly, and this is completely ignored by charismatics, the means by which they get the *spirit* bears no resemblance whatsoever to the New Testament historical narrative. They want to have this experience; they want others to share this experience, so you have them leaning their heads back, just letting sounds come out of their mouth, until they feel it or get it. Sometimes there can be an intense group pressure to get the *spirit*; sometimes not. But, in any case, the mechanics never match with what we find in the book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, and there did not seem to be any sort of decision which they made to get the Holy Spirit.
  2. Now, I have gone off on a tangent here, but the simple principle is, you obey the *mandates* of Scripture; you do not try to imitate this or that experience or this or that person. I can guarantee you that, between naming your sins to God, learning the Word of God from a good pastor, and obeying the mandates which you come across, there is not going to be any time for you to try to imitate anyone. It is going to be completely irrelevant to your life.
  3. In other words, even though you read that David had many wives and that David was a man after God's own heart, this does not mean that you will be a man after God's own heart if you marry several women. David had the husband of a Bathsheba murdered; a woman that David took in adultery. This is clearly anti-God; so, despite the fact that David was a man after God's own heart, we still do not get to commit adultery whenever we have a chance or kill off various people that will cause us inconvenience.
- IV. Causes of polygamy:
1. Simple sexual lust on the part of the man. David had a lot of things on his mind when he was king; so he did marry several women, but not as many as he could have. What appears to be his final marriage, to Bathsheba,

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is clearly preceded by lust for Bathsheba.

2. When David appears to get his head straight, near the end of his life, he appears to have a singular marriage to Bathsheba. He continued having his other wives, but only in the sense that he supported them.
3. A large percentage of women, despite what we find in the media, desire a family and children. Under circumstances of war, particularly when a nation has been completely subdued in war, the women significantly outnumber the men. Either the men who have conquered them or the men (men of substance) who remain marry several women in order to fulfill the desire of the woman and to perpetuate the people. Even in these circumstances, all that I have said about polygamy still applies.

V. Let me interject a general principle here: God has an ideal, and this ideal is designed both for individuals and for society as a whole. God does not rail against human pleasure, and therefore, bans everything that might be fun: polygamy, extra-marital sex, homosexuality, drugs, drunkenness, etc. There is a balance, and within that balance, there is room for relaxation and human pleasure. When satisfying human lust becomes the focus of a person's life, the end result is drug addiction, alcohol addiction, sexual addiction and a myriad of other addictions. These people who fall into these addictions, who attempt to satisfy their every lust, are not happy, they never satiate the lust which plagues them, they are a blight on society, they ruin their own personal lives, and they cause great dysfunction within their own extended families. Quite obviously, this does not occur all at once; it is a gradual process where pleasure becomes more and more the focus of one's life, to the exclusion of all else and all others. God puts parameters upon human conduct, which parameters serve to increase one's happiness, not decrease it. It's like a football game. You cannot have a game where anything goes. A team cannot just choose to have a 5<sup>th</sup> down because they really, really want it. A dozen men cannot physically brutalize a member of the opposite team to death, even if they really want to. Quarterbacks cannot take the ball into the stands, and run through the stands to make a touchdown. There are parameters to the game which makes it enjoyable to the sports fan and to the participants. Anytime these parameters are pushed or disregarded, there are problems. However, these parameters—these rules and regulations—are a part of what makes the sport enjoyable. You cannot simply put an arbitrary number of participants of varying sizes on a field, with arbitrary equipment (whatever they might have lying around the house), and then tell them to play ball (or whatever). There must be rules, guidelines, strategies, parameters. All of life is the same way. Although we stupidly blame oil companies when they make huge profits, this should not concern us. However, if these profits are achieved by lying, deceit, and murder, then we should become concerned. There must be parameters—ethics—in business. You simply cannot walk into the office of your biggest competitor and decimate their workforce. Even your diet and what you eat has parameters. I personally love deserts with chocolate, but, I cannot simply eat chocolate all day long. I would reduce my lifespan and suffer a myriad of



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health problems. There must be parameters on what I eat and when I eat. The same is true of marriage and family. Graphic from [Utopian Polygamy](#).

VI. You might say, *you can't legislate morality!* (a misunderstood saying if there ever was one) Virtually all legislation is morality. With respect to the

illustration of business above, there is legislation which determines what is fair and ethical in business. In fact, we have even determined that, even if a business does so well as to shut down all of its competition, we cannot allow a monopoly either. That is a moral decision our society has made. Taxation and who pays what, is a moral decision. Personally, I think our tax structure is immoral, and that the high tax brackets for the rich is incredibly immoral. Personally, I'd rather see all taxes to range from 10–20%, and that even the poorest among us would have to pay taxes, because I think that it is moral that if they think the government must pay for this and that, that they understand that some of that money is coming right out of their pockets. You may completely disagree, but, the key here is, we are making moral decisions here with regards to taxation. We are legislating what we believe to be moral and right. When we can kill and when we can't is a moral decision. Some believe that, with regards to medical care, if someone wants this or that procedure, no matter how slight the chance is for survival, they should get it, without regards to cost, and any hospital or insurance carrier which disagrees is bad. All attempts to preserve life should be allowed; however, we have tolerated, as a society, the destruction of fetuses/babies in the womb. Without any scientific evidence whatsoever, we have, as a society, supported the whim of a mother (or *right of a mother*) to kill her child (or, *to terminate her pregnancy*). The very language that we use is designed to make us sound correct in our own *moral* judgment that we make. So, yes, you can legislate morality, and yes, we do it with each and every law that we pass. Therefore, we even have legislation which deals specifically with marriage and family.



VII. There have been other faiths which have believed in polygamy. Joseph Smith, a founder of the Mormons, claims that God gave him divine revelation concerning the rightness of plural marriage, which is found in Doctrines and Covenants 132:61–62: *And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit*

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*adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.* This is not Scripture, by the way; this is Mormon Scripture, so-called. They have other *scriptures* which reject polygamy: Jacob 1:15 2:27 Ether 10:5.<sup>1</sup>

1. We don't have confusion like that in the Bible; even though there are men who are polygamous and that is never hidden; neither is it justified or praised. As we will see in this doctrine, Scripture condemns polygamy.
  2. One of the fascinating things about the books which Joseph Smith transcribed, is that he wrote them in King James' English several hundred years after King James. This language was used in churches, but not among common people; so, Smith's *holy books* are also written in a church-y language.
- VIII. Biblical statements concerning polygamy: We have briefly looked at a few instances of polygamy, and, during narratives, rarely do we find a practice clearly disparaged in the narrative. However, in other areas of Scripture, we should be able to find Scripture which seems to support or reject polygamy.
1. God specifically designed one woman for one man. When Adam had been created, he observed, after naming the animals, that there was no corresponding creature for himself. God created a woman, a help designed for him, whom Adam named Eve. God created only one woman for Adam. God did not create several women for Adam nor did God create another man for Adam, thus precluding polygamy and homosexuality by divine precedent. Genesis 2:18–23
  2. Although the Bible records several instances of polygamy, in each and every case, where we know more about the relationship apart from it simply being polygamous, is that there were great problems as a result of polygamy.
    - 1) Sarah insisted that Abraham throw her maid and his son out of the house.
    - 2) Jacob's sons became so jealous as to sell their own brother into slavery.
    - 3) Even with many wives, David and Solomon both continued to lust after other women. David's sons and daughters caused huge problems for each other (including incest and murder) and for David; and it is clear that David was not there for them as a guiding light. Solomon's polygamy just about financially bankrupted Israel (along with his other projects).
  3. The person most able to have a polygamous marriage is the king of Israel, and early on—in fact, hundreds of years before Israel even had a king—God made it clear that kings could not have multiple wives. Deut. 17:17: **A king must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won't go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself.** Two things a leader should not do: overtax and indulge his lusts. Here, here!
  4. Something which is rare in the Old Testament: narrative is combined with



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a moral judgment when it comes to Solomon's wives: King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women from the nations that the LORD had told the Israelites about, **"Do not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn you away from Me to their gods."** Solomon was deeply attached to these women and loved them (1Kings 11:1–2).<sup>2</sup> Much of the narrative in Scripture refrains from making moral pronouncements. In the case of Solomon, his violation was so flagrant as to require it. Furthermore, this should indicate to us that polygamy is against God's plan.

5. Once a marriage was established, regardless of the number of participants, God did not break it up. That would have put the lesser wives in a vulnerable position. In the ancient world, if a woman was put out, this could prematurely end her life.
  6. The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He answered them, **"Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate"** (Matt. 19:4–6 Genesis 2:24). Although our Lord is not dealing with polygamy directly here, but divorce, the principle is, the two (one man and one woman) become one flesh. ***What God joins together, man should not separate.*** This indicates that marriage is a divine institution, and that a man and a woman are meant to be permanently joined. This at least implies the exclusion of same-sex marriage, polygamy and divorce.
  7. The one husband-one wife principle is upheld in the epistles of Paul: **But because of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. A husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. Equally, a husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife does** (1Cor. 7:2–4). Although Paul's topic here is not polygamy, it is clear that God designed one man for one woman and vice versa.
  8. Church leaders are to be the husband of *one wife* (1Tim. 3:2, 12).
  9. There is an obvious parallel between Christ and His bride, the church (and, in all analogous instances, the church is seen as one body). Eph. 5:31–32
- IX. Other reasons for monogamy in marriage:
1. All populations produce approximately 50% males and 50% females. Even nature (which is the design of God) devised the human race to pair off.
  2. In a polygamous marriage, the wife is seen primarily as a sexual object, a breeder and the one to handle the children (as the husband will likely not have the time). Even liberated women would object to this sexist

## The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

- emphasis.
3. According to ISBE, *Polygamous nations have never been industrial inventors, have contributed little to science. They have usually ruined the fertility of the lands they have occupied. They have been heavily weighted with the lethargy of a system that appeals to nothing but the most primitive instincts and vices of man.*<sup>3</sup> I can't think of any polygamous nations off the top of my head. Perhaps there are scattered tribes or groups where this is the case? They add: *Rome conquered the world while she was monogamous, and lost control of it when she dropped to the moral level of the sex corruption of the peoples that she had conquered.*<sup>3</sup> ISBE then notes two exceptions in civilization: *There may seem to be two exceptions - the establishment of the Mogul empire in India and the subjugation of Western Asia and Eastern Europe by the Turk. That in both cases there was great success in war is granted. They were authorized by their religion to exhibit the frenzy of bloodshed and indulge in lust. Indeed, enjoyment of the latter was a bright hope for the life to come. But when they had possession of a country, and massacres and ravishing were over, what then? For what is mankind indebted to them?*<sup>3</sup>
  4. For most men, the draw of a polygamous marriage is a sexual one. Sex should not be our motivating factor in marriage or to marry. It is obviously a factor, and one to which Paul defers (1Cor. 7:2); but when one places personal sexual gratification at the top of one's priorities, the end result is not a union of any sort, but a vehicle for personal sexual gratification. We do not indulge sexual lust simply because we have it. Obviously, there are times when it is strictly forbidden: with children, with animals; and, in today's society, times when it ought to be forbidden: outside of marriage, with a person of the same gender. Paul counsels on sexual relations within a marriage one time—in 1Cor. 7: the woman's body belongs to the man and the man's body belongs to the woman. All other marriage counseling which Paul does deals with the souls of the two participants.

<sup>1</sup> There is a list of Mormon contradictions here: [http://www.mormonchallenge.com/ref\\_ldscontra.htm](http://www.mormonchallenge.com/ref_ldscontra.htm). Some are apt and some are not. The Scripture quotation came from the LDS website, and, surprisingly enough, I had to make two corrections in their text.

<sup>2</sup> The rest of this passage goes into detail about Solomon turning against God.

<sup>3</sup> *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Polygamy.

### Lesson 343: Genesis 30:14–21 The Wives of Jacob/Two Sons and One Daughter

We are now up to 8 sons—4 by Leah, and two each by personal maids Zilpah and Bilhah. Leah began to bear sons immediately. And, although we are not given any specifics on it, Jacob has to take part when it comes to the conception of Leah's children. In the

chapter, we are about to see interaction between the two wives of Jacob, to understand how they dealt with one another and their polygamous marriage.

However, let's look back on Leah's 4 sons: Reuben (*behold, a son!*), Simeon (*to hear*), Levi (*joined to*) and Judah (*praised*); all from Leah. Essentially, we have the gospel message embedded in the names of these boys.<sup>35</sup> Behold, a son [the Son of God]! Hear (or *listen and obey*) [Him]; [with the result that we are] joined [to Him]; [with the result that we may] praise [Him].

Rachel has not yet given birth to any sons. Because of this, she has given her maid to Jacob, and her maid gave them two sons (this was apparently a common custom in that era). When Leah stopped having children (which suggests that she spent time with Jacob, her husband), she offers up her maid. These maids are, essentially, secondary wives to Jacob. In a later passage, they will be called *Jacob's wives* (literally, *women of Jacob*).

So, we pick up this narrative at a point where Rachel has not given Jacob a child; and Leah appears to have stopped bearing children.

**Genesis 30:14** And Reuben went out in the days of the wheat harvest, and found love-apples in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. And Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's love-apples."

Jacob will continue working for Laban for a total of 20 years. He is given Leah after 7 years of work. Therefore, Reuben must be less than 12 years old (subtract 7 years of work + 1 year of pregnancy from the 20 years he will serve Laban). Since Leah will have two more children before Jacob leaves, subtract off two more years. So Reuben is perhaps 9 or 10 years old here.

Concerning these *love-apples*, Keil and Delitzsch write: *The yellow apples of the alraun (Mandragora vernalis), [also known as the] mandrake very common in Palestine. They are about the size of a nutmeg, with a strong and agreeable odour, and were used by the ancients, as they still are by the Arabs, as a means of promoting child-bearing.*<sup>36</sup> There is actually a great deal of discussion in commentaries about these apples, but I don't see it as being that important.

We do not know if this particular fruit had any sort of stimulative effect or not. Based upon the narrative, I would assume that it did. We know that there are some natural products which are stimulative. Furthermore, when a food is thought to have such properties, there is an added psychological affect when it is eaten.

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<sup>35</sup> Taken from <http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/gab/view.cgi?bk=4&ch=34> (Arno Gaebelein's Annotated Bible); accessed May 25, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

You will recall that there was a tiff between Rachel and Jacob because Rachel blamed Jacob for not having any children. Like many men, when faced with an accusation, that, on its face, is irrational, Jacob was frustrated and argued with Rachel because of it. It is even possible that relations between the two had broken off for awhile.

At this point, Jacob has been married to Leah and Rachel for about 4–7 years (he has 4 sons by Leah and 2 by Zilpah and 2 by Bilhah), so there is newness which has gone out of their marriage. Jacob has also been having problems with Laban (which will be discussed later, but would have been ongoing). All the children and the 3 other partners would also be a factor.

Having a lot of children was what was done in the ancient world. In fact, children have been seen as a blessing from God until most recently. Therefore, we would expect Leah to want to have more children. Jacob would not be opposed to this, even though he had been hoodwinked by his Uncle Laban to marry Leah in the first place.

With this incident, we further understand more about the interplay between the two sisters in the marriage arrangement, something we really have not seen until this chapter. Obviously, Jacob is having relations with both wives, as Leah has had 4 sons by Jacob; and Leah and Rachel, at this point, are not having children. The way this is presented is, it is not for a lack of trying.

God allowed for polygamy, but, as we have studied, it is never presented as God's best. One man with one woman is presented as God's best. However, once a polygamous marriage is established, there is no Biblical procedure or encouragement to dissolve it. Later in the Law, a man is not allowed to simply cast his least favored wife aside (Deut. 21:15–17).<sup>37</sup>

**Genesis 30:15a** And she [Leah] said to her [Rachel], “Is it a small matter that you have taken my husband? And would you also take my son's love-apples?”

We are never clear in what Laban did behind the scenes with Leah and Rachel. Here, Leah accuses Rachel of taking her husband. What Leah says could refer to Rachel marrying Jacob soon after her marriage to Jacob; or it could be a reference to recent events. Given the conversation, it appears that this is somewhat recent, and that Jacob spends most of his free time with Rachel. At the same time, remember how the woman's mind works. When discussing problems, the woman will often go back to the very beginning, which could then refer to Rachel marrying Jacob soon after Leah did.

As we have discussed previously, there were probably a great many arguments in this household, because polygamy does not work. And, as most men have experienced, often an argument with a woman will involve her going back to the beginning of your relationship and bringing up anything that you have done wrong for however many years it has been.

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<sup>37</sup> This passage actually deals with inheritance of the firstborn, but the husband cannot favor the firstborn of his newer, more favored wife, the implication would be, he cannot simply cast his first wife aside.

Here we have two sisters, whose history therefore, predates Jacob. So, during an argument, they no doubt have a great deal to discuss. The Bible mercifully spares us most of what they have to say.

Leah is saying, “You’ve taken my husband and now you want my son’s love-apples?” The interpretation is, *this is unfair and you need to take me into consideration.*

Regarding these love apples, Dave Guzik writes: *We don't know if the effect of the mandrakes was something biological, or if it functioned more as a placebo. But under the guiding hand of God, the mandrakes seemed to "work" in the case of Leah and Jacob. Whatever strange agencies God may allow to be used (such as mandrakes), the real factor is His sovereign will.*<sup>38</sup>

**Genesis 30:15b** And Rachel said, “Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's love-apples.”

Rachel acknowledges that this is unfair, so she agrees that she will get the love-apples and Jacob would stay with Leah that night.

This implies that months or even years might go by where Jacob and Leah were not intimate. Given that not many years have passed, since Jacob married Rachel, she is probably no less physically attractive, but Rachel’s anger and frustration has no doubt cooled Jacob’s desire for her.

Rachel, making this decision, suggests that she seemed to have much of the say in this marriage. It is an interesting dynamic, as Rachel feels badly because she has not produced a child; yet, at the same time, she appears to be determining who Jacob will cohabit with.

**Genesis 30:16** And Jacob came out of the field in the evening. And Leah went out to meet him, and said, “You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's love-apples.” And he lay with her that night.

We have no idea as to exact the sleeping arrangements. His two wives had their own living quarters (probably their own tents). Their personal maids were probably living with them in those tents. At this time, Jacob was not particularly fond of Leah and he was mad at Rachel. Their personal servants were used only as surrogates; Jacob would not have slept with them for companionship. Jacob would have had relations with their maids only when prompted to—based upon this chapter, twice each maidservant.

What was likely the case is, Jacob, Leah and Rachel each had their own tents. However, it is less clear what happened once Leah has had children; and once the maids were brought into the picture. Were the maids in charge of all the children? Leah certainly was

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<sup>38</sup> David Guzik’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:14–18.

involved in the raising of her own sons, as little Reuben brings the mandrakes to her. Yet, they are all close enough, so that Rachel knows about the mandrakes.

As agreed to by the sisters, Leah met Jacob and told him that he would be staying in her tent that evening.

It is certainly possible that these mandrakes are a sexual stimulant of sorts; and possibly even helpful to a woman desiring to become pregnant. The actual efficacy of this fruit is unknown to us; but, what we do know is, Leah had another son—and maybe she did use the mandrakes; and Rachel did not have any children and she used the mandrakes. Why was Leah able to have another child? The Bible tells us: [And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.](#) (Genesis 30:17; ESV)

[Genesis 30:17](#) And God listened to Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob the fifth son.

One of the many things that we learn by statements like this is, God allows life and creates life individually. Leah has been praying to have another son, and God answers her prayer.

As a result of their union—perhaps it had been awhile since they cohabited—Leah became pregnant and bore Jacob another son. This is his fifth son *by Leah*.

[Genesis 30:18](#) And Leah said, “God has given me my hire, because I gave my slave to my husband.” And she called his name Issachar.

The name *Issachar* comes from the word *sâkâr* (שָׂכָר) [pronounced *saw-KAWR*], which means *remuneration, hire, wages*. Strong’s #7939 BDB #969. So, Leah did pay for the night with her husband; with her love-apples. However, she announces that this is because she gave her personal maid (her slave) to Jacob.

She says, “...because I gave my slave to my husband.” Obviously, this refers to her personal maid Zilpah, who had 2 children for Jacob. Bear in mind, what Leah says is not necessarily divine commentary on what is going on. Leah gave her maid, Zilpah, to Jacob. Two sons were born to Zilpah as a result. So Leah appears to be saying that God has blessed her because she gave her maid to Jacob. I realize that her reasoning may not make a great deal of sense; but also bear in mind that this is a pregnant woman who has just given birth. Furthermore, the Laban women are not known for their clear thinking or logic. Recall that Rachel was very mad at Jacob for not giving her a son; and yet, he had impregnated Leah and Rachel’s maid. It should have been obvious that Jacob was not the problem.

Giving names like this could simply mark a point in time in their lives. Perhaps Leah was saying, in part, that this child Issachar came along *after* she gave her personal maid to Jacob. The name might mark a period of time as well as anything else.



At this point, the love-apples are no longer a part of this narrative. We have no idea about their use; and we can only infer from the text that very shortly after Leah was with Jacob, that Jacob returned to Rachel. Rachel will bear a child; but we have no idea if this is related to the love-apples or not.

Meanwhile, Leah will have another son by Jacob.

**Genesis 30:19** And Leah conceived again, and bore Jacob the sixth son.

We are not given the circumstances by which Leah and Jacob had relations again. Let me suggest that Leah did not make her previous night with Jacob into some sort of a confrontation. Leah, based upon what she said to Rachel, was moderately unhappy; but here she is with Jacob having another child.

Let me suggest that Leah has become less of a headache for Jacob. Given the situation of his marriage, *that* would have been a very pleasant change of circumstance for Jacob, who is used to getting crap from both of his wives. Given how Leah names this next child, it appears that she is in a somewhat better place, emotionally; but there is still inordinate competition going on between the two wives.

**Genesis 30:20** And Leah said, “God has given me a good present. Now my husband will live with me, because I have borne him six sons.” And she called his name Zebulun.

The first sentence has the verb *zâbal* (זָבַל) [pronounced *zaw-BAHL*], which is said to mean *to exalt, to honor; to dwell with*. However, this verb is found here only, so its meaning is uncertain. *Zebulun*'s name is based upon this verb. Strong's #2074 BDB #259. It is logical to think that this means *to dwell with*, based upon her saying, “**Now my husband will live with me.**”

There is obviously a disagreement about who Jacob should be staying with; and Leah is asserting that Jacob will continue to live with her, as she has produced 6 sons for him. This assertion indicates that the two women live in different tents.

It is not clear whether Jacob is staying with Rachel or whether he stays in his own tent. In any case, he is not living with Leah. Leah announces that a sixth son would encourage Jacob to live with her (or to spend more time with her). Therefore, we continue to have competition between the two wives.

As was noted when we studied polygamy, a polygamous marriage is not a good thing. Here we are 7 or so years into this marriage, and the wives are still in competition with one another—and I can guarantee you, that is not a happy household for Jacob.

It is clear that Jacob did spend more time with Leah, because next we read:

**Genesis 30:21** And afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Leah continues to have relations with Jacob and she bears him a daughter as well. Her name is Dîynâh (דִּינָה) [pronounced *dee-NAW*], and it is based upon the verb *to judge*. Strong's #1783 BDB #192.

And it becomes apparent that Jacob continues to cohabit with Leah. Let me suggest that perhaps Rachel, since she was not having children, became somewhat difficult. However, Jacob did continue to spend time with Rachel and to cohabit with her as well.

Despite Jacob cohabiting with both women, so not think that this is some kind of a paradise. In this chapter, it is clear that Rachel is angry with Jacob for not giving her a son; and the Leah is angry with Rachel for taking her husband from her. Furthermore, Rachel seems to be calling the shots of which tent Jacob stays in. My point being, the overall household is rarely pleasant. There always appears to be hurt feelings, arguments, disagreements and blame.

Dinah is the only daughter mentioned by name, and part of the reason for this is there will be a narrative which centers on her. However, Jacob appears to have fathered other unnamed daughters. Genesis 37:35 reads: *All Jacob's sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I will go down to Sheol to my son [Joseph], mourning." Thus his father wept for him.* At this time, Jacob believed that his son Joseph was dead (but he was not). In any case, we find out that he fathered more than one daughter. We do not know when or by whom these daughters were born.

#### **Lesson 344: Genesis 30:14–43 Rachel Gives Birth/Laban Offers Wages to Jacob**

So far, Jacob's first wife, Leah, has given birth to six sons and one daughter. There was a gap of time between son #4 and son #5. Rachel's maid has given birth to two sons and Leah's maid has given birth to two sons. At least one additional daughter is born, but we do not know anything else about additional daughters in Jacob's family.

The wife that Jacob loved, Rachel, has not given birth to any children until now.

**Genesis 30:22** *And God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.*

The order in which these births are recorded are probably the order in which these women gave birth. There will be later indications that Rachel's two sons will be the youngest of Jacob's sons. As we have seen in other situations, most of Genesis appears to be in chronological order (with the exception of passages where one or two generations of a family are named all at once).

Rachel has, no doubt, been praying to God—and we are told that God remembered her and listened to her prayer. That is, of course, an anthropopathism. God did not forget all about Rachel, and suddenly say, "Oh, Jacob is also married to Rachel. I completely forgot

about her.” This is how it seems to Rachel, as if God forgot about her, but that is not how an omniscient God functions.

An anthropopathism takes the actions of God and explains them by using human thinking, emotions and actions. God did not forget about Rachel; He did not remember her suddenly.

Definition of an **anthropomorphism**: the ascribing of human characteristics to God. Although this is properly the ascribing of physical characteristics to God (e.g., the *hand* of God), this word is also taken to mean, the ascribing of mental and emotional characteristics of man to God. These are characteristics which God does not possess, but are used in order to explain divine action through the use of a human attribute.<sup>39</sup>

Definition of an **anthropopathism**: the ascribing of human emotions, passions or thinking to God which do not inherently belong to Him. The Webster definition is: *The affections of man, or the application of human passions to the Supreme Being*. My point in quoting Webster is, this concept has been around for a long time; I did not just suddenly invent it in order to explain this passage.

Rachel was the weaker of the two sisters, and, as this narrative will later bear out, pregnancy will take away much of her strength. God gave Jacob and Rachel a maximum amount of time with one another by holding back on giving life to her womb.

**Application:** When believers in a marriage find themselves pregnant; or when they are having difficulties having children, they ought not to panic. God knows what He is doing and God gives the life when it is time and appropriate.

**Genesis 30:23** And she conceived and bore a son, and she said, “God has taken away my reproach.”

Rachel has not had any children as of this time. This is her first child. She believed that there was some kind of reproach against her by God, and now it has been lifted away. She did not realize that God was giving her more time with Jacob by withholding children from her.

**Genesis 30:24** And she called his name Joseph. And she said, “May Jehovah add another son to me.”

The name *Joseph* is *Yôwçêph* (יֹזֶפֶד) [pronounced *yoh-SAYF*]. It means *he adds, he increases*; and it is transliterated *Joseph*. Strong’s #3130 BDB #415. So, already, Rachel’s thoughts were on having another son after Joseph. After all, her older sister has

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<sup>39</sup> There is an alternate understanding of this word, which refers to the thinking of those who actually believe that God possesses these human characteristics (Mormonism is an example of this doctrine, as they believe that God the Father actually possesses a human form and is on some planet taking care of business).

produced 7 sons for Jacob. Or, the idea is, Joseph is added to their family (she considers the sons of her personal maid as her own sons). At this point, he is the youngest child in the family.

Interestingly enough, there is no *j* in the Hebrew or the Greek. So the names *Jacob*, *Joseph*, *Joshua*, etc., which are transliterated into the Greek and later into the English, did not begin with *j*'s originally.

**Genesis 30:25** And when Rachel had borne Joseph, it happened that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away so that I may go into my own place and to my country.

Jacob knows that the land of Canaan is given to him and to his sons. Now he has a boatload of sons; so it is time to return to his home. He has also fulfilled his contract to Laban. So at least 14 years have passed. However, there is nothing in what Jacob says which makes us think that this is what is on his mind. There is nothing that he says which indicates that Jacob full-on understands the plan of God. In the next chapter, Jacob will apparently be giving God more thought, but also in the next chapter, God will speak to him. Now, if there is anything to recharge Jacob, if only briefly, it is another interaction with God.

Since Jacob married Leah after 7 years of work; since she has had 7 children; and since there was a period of time between child #4 and #5; let me suggest that this is at least year 16 or 17 (this is making the assumption that Jacob goes to Laban *after* 12 children are born). These 12 children are born over a period which is less than 12 years. Jacob works for Laban 14 years for his two daughters; and then he works an additional 6 years. Subtract out a year of pregnancy for Leah, and this gives us 12 years (for producing children after marriage).

We do not know when Jacob began thinking about leaving Laban's ranch. Logically, if Leah has 7 children, with a gap of time between #4 and #5; and if all of the children are born as listed above, Jacob's expressed desire to leave would have occurred between years 16<sup>40</sup> and 18.<sup>41</sup>

**Genesis 30:26** 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 you."

It seems clear that Jacob has worked well under Laban. He is ready to go, and Laban recognizes that Jacob has been helpful to him. So Laban will persuade Jacob to stay. We don't know for how long, but all of this would take place at least 16 years after Jacob began to work for Laban.

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<sup>40</sup> Jacob marries Leah in year 7 and she has 7 children. That would take at least 8 years. If there is a gap between two children, then figure 9 years, taking us to year 16.

<sup>41</sup> There needs to be a period of time during which Laban is not honest with Jacob about his wages, and this must occur over a long enough period of time for Jacob's wives to agree with him.

**Genesis 30:27** And Laban said to him, “Please, if I have found favor in your eyes, stay. For I have seen omens, that Jehovah has blessed me for your sake.”

Laban recognizes that he has been blessed because of Jacob. He had a so-so business before; and now his business (ranching) is booming. He appears to understand, to some degree, blessing by association.

*I have seen omens* is the Piel verb *nâchash* (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAHSH*], which means, *to practice divination, to divine; to observe signs or omens; to communicate with demons; to whisper*. Strong's #5172 BDB #638. We know very little about Laban and the things which he believed. We will later find out that he has small manufactured gods, which his daughter Rachel will take. Did Laban see some kind of wizard? Did he attempt to communicate with the spirits? This seems to be the suggestion; but it is not outright stated, apart from the use of this word and the pagan statues that we will find later.

As we have seen, Jacob did not start out by being the greatest person in the world; and as we study his life more, that will continue to be the case. However, he is a good worker. It is typical for a person to have good points and bad. It is typical for the Bible to reveal positive and negative aspects of individuals.

This suggests that all of this is taking place almost exactly 14 years later, after Jacob fulfilled his obligation to Laban. Laban wants him to remain, and will try to work things out between them. Perhaps Laban, after 14 years, stated what he would pay Jacob; and that has been their agreement up to this point.

There is nothing which requires all of Jacob's children to be born; and then Jacob goes to Laban about his wages. There could be some overlap here, where some children are born after this talk with Laban. However, in general, I would assume that this information is given in chronological order—the births and the renegotiation of wages. Furthermore, we have the birth of Joseph tied directly to Jacob wanting to leave and speaking to Laban. Since he is the youngest child, we must assume that the other children have all been born already.

Many lessons ago, I suggested that Rachel was given to Jacob prior to him working for her. This is further supported by the time factor in this narrative. If she became his wife in year 14, and gave birth in year 15 or 16, then she would not have been panicked about having no children. However, if she watches her sister have children, one right after the other; and the two maids, then her concern of her barrenness is appropriate.

**Genesis 30:28** And he said, “Appoint your wages and I will give.”

Here, we have an circumstance where Laban appears to be telling Jacob, “Look, I recognize that you are worth whatever wage you want to command. Tell me what you want to be paid, and I will pay you that.” Bear in mind that Laban is the man who cheated Jacob in his marriage, substituting Leah for Rachel. So, even though Laban recognizes

Jacob's importance as an employee, that does not mean he is going to start treating him fairly. He has worked Jacob to his own advantage and will continue to do so.

Even though Laban has a bunch of grandchildren by Jacob, Laban is not changing his opinion of Jacob. Laban will continue to work Jacob like a mark.

**Genesis 30:29** He [Jacob] said to him, "You know how I have served you, and what your cattle have become with me.

Clearly, Laban's herds have increased dramatically under Jacob. Laban will clearly admit this to Jacob. He has no problem about being honest here. Laban has already admitted to recognizing that he is blessed because of Jacob.

When it comes to lying to someone, this needs to be mixed with some truth. Con men will do such things; they will admit to whatever truths are mutually obvious.

**Genesis 30:30** For you had little before I came, and it has now increased to a multitude. And Jehovah has blessed you since my coming. And now when will I provide for my own house also?"

Laban's wealth has increased dramatically; and he clearly recognizes that. However, Jacob basically has his wives and children; but very little by way of personal wealth. Jacob needs to consider the future and the care of his wives and children.

Again, this suggests that Jacob has recently completed his 14 year commitment to Laban (7 years for each daughter), and he now needs to provide for his own family.

There is the possibility that this conversation took place shortly after the 14<sup>th</sup> year and before all of Jacob's children just listed were born; but there is no compelling reason to think that this is out of chronological order.

**Genesis 30:31** And he said, "What will I give you?" And Jacob said, "You will not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flock.

There is a little curt exchange between the men. Laban says, "What do I need to give you to stay?" Then Jacob comes up with an offer he believes to be reasonable.

**Genesis 30:32** I will pass through all the flocks today, taking out all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all of the black sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and the speckled among the goats. And these will be my hire.

There has to be a way to separate out what would belong to Jacob and what would belong to Laban. The lambs and goats that are all white would be Laban's; and lambs and goats with spots, blotches or are black—those will be Jacob's. Therefore, it will be easy to separate these animals and to distinguish between them.



What Jacob is suggesting here is a bit confusing. These spotted and speckled sheep that he is culling out of the flock—those are not his. Those will all be given to Laban. Jacob is going to reduce his flock down to white sheep only. Then, any sheep who are not all white, born all these white sheep, will be Jacob's.

Jacob is saying, to some extent, "We will let God decide what my wages will be." When he says, *these will be my hire*; he is referring to these categories of sheep.

Now, Jacob also has a plan; he is going to try to outsmart Laban at this point. Or, so he thinks. Bear in mind, both men will try to work situations and circumstances to their own advantage. Both men will look for whenever an advantage over the other can be taken.

**Genesis 30:33** And will my righteousness answer for me in time to come, and it will come for my hire before your face. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, will be counted stolen with me."

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge suggests<sup>42</sup> inserting *if found* before *with me*, which would give us:

**Genesis 30:33** And will my righteousness answer for me in time to come, and it will come for my hire before your face. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, will be counted stolen [if found] with me."

When Jacob refers to *my righteousness*, this further suggests that he is telling Laban, we will see which one of us God chooses to bless.

These sheep and goats with various markings will be Jacob's; and those that are pure white in his herd will be considered Laban's. However, Jacob will begin with an all white herd.

**Genesis 30:34** And Laban said, "Yes, truly let it be according to your word."

And Laban agrees to this. Laban and Jacob both have plans on how to deal with this. They have their agreement; but, besides that, each man has figured out a way to make this agreement work in their own favor.

## Lessons 345–346: Genesis 30:25–43

## Jacob's Wages

What we will cover in these two lessons is a very controversial passage. It has been attacked as anti-scientific; and it has been supported historically with less-than-scientific arguments. Therefore, we will try to cover this passage as a whole.

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<sup>42</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:33.

We have come to the point where Jacob has worked at least 14 years for Laban, which was the amount of time that they had agreed upon for Laban to give his daughters in marriage to Jacob (which two daughters, Jacob had already married in the 7<sup>th</sup> year).

Gen 30:25–26 As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go, for you know the service that I have given you."

In the previous lesson, I spent a great deal of time working through the years and the children born; however, this may be at 14 years or 14 years and a few months. That is when this discussion would have logically taken place. This does allow for enough time for all of the children to have been born. Even though we have a period of time that Leah had not given birth, this may just have been for a period of a year.

Gen 30:27–28 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it."

We have two interesting words in this passage—to *find favor* means *to discover grace*. And the verb which follows that is *nâchash* (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAHSH*], which means, *to practice divination, to divine; to observe signs or omens; to communicate with demons; to whisper*. Strong's #5172 BDB #638. You may recall that, in Genesis 24, this family showed great respect to the servant and to his pronouncements based upon his prayers to the Living God (this is the servant sent by Abraham to secure a bride for Isaac). His proclamations concerning that appeared to be taken at face value. "We cannot argue with that—not if it comes from the Lord."

However, in this verse, Laban appears to have used some sort of divination; and we will later find out that Laban has small, household idols, which his daughter Rachel will steal from him. This suggests that, although the faith of Y<sup>e</sup>howah was preserved in Abraham's direct line, these relatives in Paddan-aram were falling from the faith. At this point, they seem to be involved in syncretism, which is *the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought*.

We have two very common examples of syncretism today: (1) many people attempt to reconcile the book of Genesis and the Christian faith with evolution; and so they take the *days* of Genesis to mean *ages*. The problem with this is actually very fundamental: death and deterioration are introduced into evolution from the very beginning; death and deterioration do not become a part of the lives of Adam and Eve until they sin (we don't know how long that took). (2) Communists introduced the concept of *Liberation Theology* to South America so that they could take over countries in South America which were heavily Catholic. What this is, is communist propaganda is sold as being Christian; it is sold as being what Jesus taught. Catholics strongly opposed communism and communism could not get a political foothold against Catholicism. However, when communism was presented as a form of Christianity, they made great inroads into South America. Whereas, communism used to take over a country through revolution; now

communism/socialism uses democratic elections in order to push their agenda of state control of the economy. This could not happen anywhere unless a significant number of Christians and Catholics believed that the goals of socialism were the goals of Christianity. That is what Liberation Theology has done. It has taken two different schools of thought (Christianity and socialism) and has combined them in order to influence Christians and Catholics.

This is what appears to have happened in the Laban household. Although he is not entertaining the merits of communism, he was (and still is) involved in the worship of Y<sup>e</sup>howah; but he has supplemented this faith with the false beliefs of the heathen of his area.

Gen 30:27–28 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it."

When that which is false is combined with that which is true, this leads a person astray (in this case, an entire family). This does not mean that every conclusion that the wandering person comes to is false. Laban has come to the true conclusion that God has blessed him because of Jacob.

Therefore, Laban appears to be almost subservient to Jacob here, telling him, "Look, you tell me what you want to be paid and I will pay you that amount." But, remember, Laban is a con and Jacob is his mark. Laban is still going to try to work everything towards his own personal advantage.

Gen 30:29–30 Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?"

Before naming a price, Jacob reminds Laban of what he clearly knows—that Jacob has been a good man and a good employee. Furthermore, God has blessed Laban greatly at the hand of Jacob. Both men agree to this.

When you are looking to take advantage of someone (as Laban is of Jacob), it is a good idea to acknowledge the obvious. That is what Laban does.

Gen 30:31a He said, "What shall I give you?"

Gen 30:31b Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." (ESV)

Jacob has probably this whole thing worked out in his head. He has figured out how to dupe Laban, and he has already worked all of the details out in his head. He tells Laban that he will keep any newly born spotted, speckled or black sheep and goats; and everything else will be Laban's. Jacob would begin by removing all of those of the herd who are spotted, speckled or black.

This section of Genesis 30, is one of the most controversial passages in Scripture. Unbelievers often quote from this chapter in order to ridicule the Bible.

One critic of Scripture lists this as the weirdest of all the weird Bible stories, adding this personal observation: *Now, we'd all expect this idiotic plan to fail and Jacob to learn a lesson about something or other, but no it actually works. The cattle give birth to striped young, and Jacob is happy. What on earth is going on here? Anyone with the most basic understanding of genetics knows that this is bunk. The odd thing is that this story seems to have no purpose and moral - it's just there.*<sup>43</sup> These are reasonable objections.

And, of course, there are innumerable memes which have been posted, denigrating this passage. The most common theme is, trying to put the Bible at odds with science, such as **How did animals get their stripes?** From [Gospel Doctrine for the Godless](#); accessed June 9, 2015. These anti-Bible graphics all carry the same message: the science of genetics says one thing; the Bible says something else. Therefore, the Bible is wrong here (and, as a result, the Bible is probably wrong everywhere else).

These attacks on the Bible tend to be fairly short and without nuance or careful examination. Essentially they say, "Here is what the Bible says; and modern science tells us today that is all a lot of bunk. So the Bible is stupid."

Gen 30:31b–33 [Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and](#)

**How did animals get their stripes?**

<b>SCIENCE!</b>	<b>Bible</b>
Over a long period, any one animal has small changes in their coloring. Some color changes allowed animals to survive better than others of their species. These small changes piled up over time resulting in a coloring scheme that helped the animal survive and reproduce. This is how animals got their stripes and other color schemes.	Jacob carved stripes and spots into a tree and put his herd in front of them when they mated. When they gave birth, their babies had stripes and spots!

Genesis 30:37-39

**Now, which would you choose?**



<sup>43</sup> From [ListVerse](#), accessed June 9, 2015. There is a lot of discussion which followed, which soon went off-topic.

spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." (ESV)

Gen 30:34 Laban said, "Good! Let it be as you have said." (ESV)

Laban immediately agrees to this. Laban is a very smart man—possibly smarter than Jacob—and he is already developing a counter-plan. Bear in mind that, when two people are looking to con each other, they are not friends.

All of the oddly marked sheep and goats from Jacob's herd will be removed. Any new ones which are born will belong to Jacob—they will be his wages. Laban knows that, by removing all of the oddly colored animals from the herd, that will lessen the number which are born with stripes and splotches. Laban has been a shepherd for a very long time, and he will certainly know about breeding, to a limited extent, through personal experience.

**Genesis 30:35** And that day he [Laban] took out the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black from among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Even though Jacob said that he would do this chore, Laban apparently chose to do this himself. He wanted to make certain that he left Jacob with no blotched or spotted or black sheep. Then Laban gives these sheep to his sons.

This is the first time that we find out that Laban has sons. As discussed previously, these are all probably younger than Leah and Rachel, and were not yet born or they were very young when Jacob came first on the scene. But, by this time, Laban's sons are old enough to take care of a herd of sheep or goats. These sons are, therefore, quite young, and very loyal to their father, and not really friendly toward Jacob. Furthermore, they are Laban's heirs, so they are looking to inherit all that is Laban's at some point in time (and Laban is fairly old at this point in time). Whatever Jacob keeps is wealth that they will not get.

Laban removes all of the blotched and colored animals and he gives them to his sons. The idea is, these animals already belong to Laban. They should not be included in Jacob's wages. Therefore, Laban removes them and takes them far away from Jacob. However, Laban's intention is to decrease the breeding of such colors within Jacob's herd.

Now there is the possibility that this passage is being very specific. I have taken it to simply mean that, whatever animals that would be considered Jacob's were removed from the herd—so all blotched, spotted and black animals were removed. There is the possibility that the words used above were meant to be very specific: of the male goats, only the striped and spotted were removed; of the female goats, only the speckled and spotted and those with some white were removed; etc. Even if this is the case (and I don't think it is), everything else in this narrative remains the same. That is, even if you put a very restrictive understanding of the text, by inserting the word *only*, nothing else is really changed throughout the rest of this chapter. Most commentators understand this passage



as I have presented it; the imperfect sheep would belong to Jacob; and all the imperfect sheep are first removed by Laban.

**Spotted Sheep** (a photo) from [Ask Dr. Brown](#); accessed June 9, 2015. Daniel Kolenda writes: *Jacob had a get-rich-quick strategy. He made a deal with Laban, his father-in-law that rather than being paid in cash for his shepherding services he would receive as payment all of the imperfect members of the flock; all the striped, speckled and spotted cattle, sheep and goats. Laban preferred the beautiful ones anyways. He was glad to be rid of the imperfect members of the flock and agreed to Jacob's pathetic idea of remuneration. But soon Jacob's motley flock had exceeded Laban's and the lowly farmhand had grown more rich and powerful than his master.*<sup>44</sup> Kolenda may be exaggerating the result here. I think that it is clear that the rate of increase will strongly favor Jacob; that Jacob ends up with a greater herd than Laban is not necessarily the case.

**Genesis 30:35** And that day he [Laban] took out the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black from among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.



**Genesis 30:36** And he set three days' journey between himself and Jacob. And Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Laban tells his sons to separate the mixed-colored sheep from Jacob's flocks (those that he was taking care of for Laban). Laban's plan was to take all of the sheep and goats out of Jacob's flock who would produce striped, spotted and blotched-colored sheep and goats. Laban and Jacob had been breeding lambs and goats for a long time; and they certainly understood that, much of the time, baby lambs will look like their parents.

Laban's plan and Jacob's plan both indicate that these men knew a little about genetics, because they were in the sheep business and could have observed what would happen. Jacob's approach will clearly be more goofy and less prone to success (from a human point-of-view).

This *three day's journey* is significant. This is what will eventually give Jacob enough time to leave Laban, without being immediately noticed. In the past, there would be no worries

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<sup>44</sup> From <http://www.voiceofrevolution.com/2010/02/02/reaching-out-to-the-striped-speckled-and-spotted/> accessed June 9, 2015.



about the various herds evening intermingling. However, once Laban removes all of the spotted and blotched sheep, he wants to make certain that they are so far away, that Jacob cannot easily sneak into these other herds and steal some of them for breeding purposes. So, even though Laban recognizes that Jacob has done well by him, he has little or no trust in Jacob. People who are dishonest do not trust others.

A very big deal is made about what Jacob does, by critics of the Bible. But what Laban does is not at all effective either. Here is what Jacob does:

**Genesis 30:37** And Jacob took rods of green poplar, and of a fresh tree, and the almond and plane tree. And he peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

Now, at this point, Jacob thinks that he will outsmart Laban. This is the old Jacob that we remember. Jacob has a plan. He probably knew that he would do this from the very beginning.

I want you to notice that God is not involved in this plan. God did not tell Jacob to do any of this stuff. What the Bible records is often simply history. This history, even when participated in by God's people, does not mean that they are doing God's bidding. Jacob is going back to his old ways in order to get the better of Laban. Jacob has wanted to get his revenge upon Laban for cheating him (giving him two daughters for 14 years work, which included 1 daughter that Jacob did not want); and now he has his chance.

Remember how Jacob put one over on his own father, pretending to be his brother Esau? This is Jacob is pulling off another scheme. This approach will be how he thinks that he will get the better of Laban.

**Genesis 30:38** And he set the rods which he had peeled by the troughs, by the water troughs, where the flocks came to drink, across from the flocks, and the flocks were in heat when they came to drink.

Jacob thinks that if he puts up various tree branches which have been peeled to be striped and the like, that he will be able to influence the result breeding of the animals. Jacob is not acting under the direction of God. This is his own plan.

Bear in mind that believers and unbelievers do a lot of stupid things. Also bear in mind that God often overrules our own stupidity.

Jacob deceived his own father in order to receive a blessing meant for Esau, Jacob's twin brother. He will still receive that blessing, despite using deception to get that blessing. Jacob's herd will increase, despite his goofy plan that he uses.

**Genesis 30:39** And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth striped cattle, speckled, and spotted.

Jacob has flocks of all white sheep and goats. However, as they breed, there are striped, speckled and spotted animals that result from his breeding scheme. What is occurring is normal genetics; and God may have a hand in it. None of this is occurring because of the branches that Jacob has cut and peeled. Jacob thinks it is his scheme which does the trick, but it is not. It is God Who is looking out for Jacob; and Jacob will acknowledge this in Genesis 31:9 (Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.—ESV).

**Genesis 30:40** And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped, and all the black in the flock of Laban. And he put his own flocks by themselves, and did not put them with the flock of Laban.

Jacob separates out his animals. Those which are all white belonged to Laban; the rest were Jacob's. Jacob began with a flock of all white sheep and goats.

**Genesis 30:41** And it happened when the stronger flocks conceived, Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flocks in the troughs, so that they might conceive among the rods.

Jacob now chooses the stronger and more healthy animals to breed, and he has them drink from the water and stare at the branches, believing that he has outsmarted his uncle.

**Genesis 30:42** But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in. And usually it came to be, the weak ones were Laban's and the stronger ones Jacob's.

This is how genetics work. The more inbreeding there is, the more certain characteristics hold (like being all white) and the often the weaker the animal is.

By choosing the stronger animals, Jacob was getting a greater DNA range.

His plan with the rods has nothing to do with it.

**Genesis 30:43** And the man [Jacob] increased exceedingly, and had many flocks, and maidservants, and male servants, and camels, and asses.

Jacob's increase came because he was the grandson of Abraham; and the child of promise. None of this came about because of his scheming. This all occurs despite Laban's schemes; and despite Jacob's schemes.

This has been the story throughout Jacob's life. He continues to be blessed of God, despite his many schemes to outsmart others. Remember back—he traded for his brother's birthright because his brother was starving. Later, he took a blessing meant for Esau because he pretended that he was Esau (at the urging of his mother). Now he has this scheme going where he has his animals look at almond branches.

Jacob does not receive blessing because of his schemes; he is blessed because of his relationship to Abraham.

Jacob was *not* the recipient of the greater birthright because Esau sold it to him; and he was not blessed of God because he deceived his own father to give him Esau's blessing. Similarly, he is not being blessed with many sheep because of his goofy scheme here. They all fit the same pattern. Jacob thinks he is the smartest person in the room; he tries to take advantage of circumstances and he tries to work circumstances so that they benefit him. However, he is blessed because God blesses him; and God continues to bless him, despite his schemes.

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Quite a lot is made of this passage by critics of Scripture. These critics rightly point out that, the offspring of sheep are affected by the genetics of the sheep, not by almond branches which have been peeled into various patterns.

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### **Jacob, the Peeled Branches and the Bible**

1. The Bible accurately records the thoughts, motivations and actions of various individuals throughout history.
2. Although the Bible does offer some prescriptive behaviors, it is clear that the Bible also requires some thinking and evaluation on the part of the reader.
3. This passage describes the mistaken notion of Laban and Jacob when it comes to the breeding of animals.
4. Laban believed that if he removed all of the spotted, striped and blotched animals from Jacob's flocks, that such young would not be produced. He was wrong, but he was more correct than Jacob.
5. Jacob believed that if he placed various tree branches in front of and in the water of his flocks, that he could somehow influence their breeding. He thought if the branches were striped, spotted or blotched, then the young that his flock produced would also be striped, spotted or blotched. He was wrong; there was no such causal relationship.
6. The Bible records the actions of these two men accurately. Even though they are both wrong, it is Jacob who would be prospered. The animals of Laban which he was overseeing would produce a great many striped, blotchy and spotted animals.
7. Go back and remember the duplicity of Jacob in order to be blessed by his father; he would receive such blessing, but not because he duped his own father.
8. This in no way tells us that this ought to be our approach to breeding. Nowhere in this narrative do we find God communicating with Jacob, saying, "Okay, I have this great idea." All of this is 100% Jacob's idea. God is only involved in prospering Jacob, which is what God has done all along, despite Jacob being so hard-headed.
9. Therefore, even though Jacob believed that these branches would affect the breeding of his sheep, that does not mean that God thinks this; nor does this mean that the Bible is teaching this about genetics.

So, the final conclusion is, this is a scheme that Jacob came up with—a scheme which did not work—and yet God blesses Jacob anyway. We have seen these same pattern throughout Jacob's life. Jacob has tried various schemes to get the upper hand over those around him; but God still blesses Jacob, despite his scheming.

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The application to us should be obvious. We are very imperfect people. We sometimes give our sin nature full reign over our lives, sometimes for minutes, sometimes for hours, and sometimes for days. Whenever you sin and neglect naming that sin to God, then you are out of fellowship until you eventually rebound (name your sins to Him). Now, does God remove all of His blessings to you while you are out of fellowship? He does not! If this persists over a period of time, God may begin to discipline you, but He does not take away your wife, your job, your wealth, etc.

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So this is what is happening with Jacob. He is still the schemer; he is still trying to get the upper hand over Laban; he is probably still mad at Laban because of the whole marriage thing.

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Throughout your life, people are going to treat you unjustly; people are going to get the upper hand and cheat you. You will suffer things that you do not deserve. For a believer, you simply move on. You do not carry a grudge; you do not put this in your memory bank in order to strike out against the offending party when given the chance; you simply move on and you let God sort things out.

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Now, in some cases, you do retain this information when it will affect others. If someone has worked for you and they stole from you or they cheated you—it is reasonable to hold on to that information, in case you are asked for a reference. However, you do not run around and tell all of your mutual friends that Charley Brown stole from you (unless, of course, they are in danger of him stealing from them). In other words, you use Bible doctrine in order to determine what are the appropriate steps to take after being treated unjustly. In many cases, the appropriate step is to put that in God's hands and move on. *Never* bear a grudge; *never* carrying around a load of mental attitude sins toward the person or persons or have mistreated you.

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I have, on two occasions, been fired from my job for a set of unjust circumstances.<sup>45</sup> In one case, I could have sued the other party (one co-worker even suggested that I do that). However, I chose not to pursue that option for a variety of reasons. As a result my life was very different and very good. God used this to move me from point A to point B, so to speak. Have I looked back on occasion and been angry at the people involved? Sometimes, yes; and that was a sin and I named that sin to God. The key is, God is God, and no life is too small for Him to consider. Therefore, I could put it all in God's hands and move on. As a result, I was greatly blessed in many ways.

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Jacob belongs to the line of promise and blessing, and God will bless him, even though he often strays from God's plan.

**Application:** You may ask, *well, what if I am not in the line of promise?* In the Church Age, all believers are in the line of promise, so to speak. All believers are blessed directly by God; all believers have an escrow account of temporal and eternal blessings. As the Bible says, God is standing there, tapping His foot, waiting for more opportunities to bless you (Isa. 30:18–19). Do not be confused—the Bible does not promise every believer in time

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<sup>45</sup> I have also been fired for very just reasons as well from other jobs.

that he will become a millionaire and live in a mansion. However, the blessings are there and God will pour these blessings out upon you, if you meet the conditions of escrow (just as funds are dispersed from an escrow account when all conditions of the escrow are met).

Since this is a very popular passage to criticize, there is a lot of discussion of it. I do not find any reason to change my approach to this passage, despite these other discussions.

### Links to Discussions of Jacob and the Goats

#### ["The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages"](#)

by William J. Schepp

Some scientific principles are discussed. The branches in the water may have had an aphrodisiacal quality to them. The passage in question is restrictive, so that Jacob could breed black and white animals.

#### [JACOB'S 'SCHEME' TO MULTIPLY SPOTTED SHEEP - DOES IT CONTRADICT TRUE SCIENCE?](#)

J. D. Pearson's [A Mendelian Interpretation of Jacob's Sheep](#)

God's intervention is not required for the results that Jacob enjoyed. This material, in places, is fairly technical.

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's [commentary on Genesis 30:25-31:16](#)

Deffinbaugh generally writes pretty down-to-earth commentary on Scripture.

These links are provided in case you want more information.

**Lesson 346 addendum: Genesis 30:1–43**

**A brief review of Genesis 30**

#### Genesis 30 Divided into Subsections

vv.	1–24	<a href="#">Jacob's Great Prosperity with Children</a>
vv.	25–43	<a href="#">Jacob's Great Prosperity with Wealth</a>

At first reading, I want very much to place the births of Jacob's children altogether in the same chapter. However, even though these two sections of Genesis 30 seem rather disparate, they have some things in common. Rachel and Leah are confused about a traditional myth of that era. They go for it, following that myth, which, of course, is not going to yield any results. However, God prospers Jacob with many children anyway. In the second section, Jacob himself believes a myth of his era (and maybe he came up with this idea himself); but, despite depending on a silly myth, God still prospers Jacob with

great wealth (having many domesticated animals in this era was equivalent to having great wealth).

Jacob is not prospered with children or with wealth because they followed these myths. God blesses him greatly in spite of them following these myths.

### **Jacob's Great Prosperity with Children**

Genesis 30:1 *And when Raḥēl [= Rachel] saw that she bore Ya'aqob [= Jacob] no children, Raḥēl [= Rachel] envied her sister, and said to Ya'aqob [= Jacob], "Give me children, or else I am going to die!"*

Jacob began to sire children in the previous chapter, having four sons by Leah. Genesis 29.

Although Jacob loves Rachel, he is not a fan of nagging, especially when this is nagging about something over which he has no control. She nags for him to give her children. Unless Jacob is withholding sex, there is nothing he can do about her infertility.

Rachel's complaint, "Give me children or else I am going to die!" is very wrong. It is bearing children which will cause her to die. Whereas her sister is made to bear children, Rachel is not. Her second child will be too much for her and she will die as a result of that difficult birth.

Genesis 30:2 *And Ya'aqob's displeasure burned against Raḥēl [= Rachel], and he said, "Am I in the place of Elohim, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"*

Jacob focuses in on the problem with her complaint: "Do you think that I am God, that I can make you pregnant or not?" Here, Jacob is 100% right and Rachel is 100% wrong. Don't expect to see her apology recorded in Scripture.

Genesis 30:3 *And she said, "See, my female servant Bilhah; go in to her, and let her bear for me, and let me be built up from her as well."*

As we will see, both sisters will offer up their maids in order for Jacob to father more children. Neither one seems to grasp that, when Jacob fathers a child by Bilhah, this does not change things with Rachel (regardless of what the culture of that day held).

Genesis 30:4 *So she gave him Bilhah her female servant as wife, and Ya'aqob [= Jacob] went in to her.*

Jacob gives in and has intimate relations with Bilhah, Rachel's personal maid.

Genesis 30:5 *And Bilhah conceived and bore Ya'aqob [= Jacob] a son.*

Bilhah provides Jacob with a son.



Genesis 30:6 And Raḥēl [= *Rachel*] said, “Elohim has rightly ruled my case, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.” So she called his name Dan.

Rachel names the son, but it is not really hers. She is the son of Bilhah.

Genesis 30:7 And Raḥēl’s female servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Ya’aqob [= *Jacob*] a second son.

Rachel has her maid and Jacob do this again.

Genesis 30:8 And Raḥēl said, “With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have overcome.” So she called his name Naphtali.

Bilhah provides Jacob with another son.

Despite Rachel’s words, she did not wrestle with her sister and she did not overcome a thing.

Genesis 30:9 And Lě’ah saw that she had ceased bearing, and she took Zilpah her female servant and gave her to Ya’aqob as wife.

Leah observes all of this, and since she has stopped having children, she presses her own personal servant, Zilpah, to take up the slack.

Genesis 30:10 And Lě’ah’s female servant Zilpah bore Ya’aqob a son.

Zilpah bears Jacob a son.

Genesis 30:11 And Lě’ah said, “Fortune comes!” So she called his name Gad<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>a</sup>Hebrew Gad, meaning fortune.

Zilpah’s son is named *Gad*.

Genesis 30:12 And Lě’ah’s female servant Zilpah bore Ya’aqob a second son.

Leah has her servant do this again.

Genesis 30:13 And Lě’ah said, “I am happy, for the daughters shall call me happy.” So she called his name Ashēr.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Heb. Ashēr, meaning happy.

Zilpah bears another son for Jacob, and he is named happy. Is Leah really happy over this?

Genesis 30:14 And Re'ubēn went in the days of wheat harvest and found love-apples in the field, and brought them to his mother Lě'ah. And Raḥēl said to Lě'ah, "Please give me some of your son's love-apples."

Reuben, Jacob's oldest son by Leah, comes across what are known to that culture as love-apples. Whether they act as an aphrodisiac or are supposed to improve the chances of birth, we don't know. Possibly the current culture believed both things would take place.

On the one hand, certainly it is possible to have none of these effects, or one or both of them. However, the key is God, not love apples.

Genesis 30:15 But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's love-apples too?" And Raḥēl said, "Therefore let him lie with you tonight for your son's love-apples."

Rachel and Leah work out a deal, where Leah would lay with Jacob on one night, and Rachel the next. Love apples apparently would be a part of Rachel's night with Jacob. It is unclear whether they played a part in Leah's night with him.

Genesis 30:16 And when Ya'aqob came out of the field in the evening, Lě'ah went out to meet him and said, "Do come in to me, for indeed, I have hired you with my son's love-apples." And he lay with her that night.

It is unclear whether *love apples* were given to Jacob (or to Leah). It does not actually matter.

Genesis 30:17 And Elohim listened to Lě'ah, and she conceived and bore Ya'aqob a fifth son.

Leah bears Jacob a 5<sup>th</sup> son by her. Leah's desire was to have another son; and God heard that prayer and answered it.

Genesis 30:18 And Lě'ah said, "Elohim has given me my hire, because I have given my female servant to my husband." So she called his name Yissaskar [or, *Issachar*].

Leah names this son *Issachar*. Even though she relates it to the agreement with her sister about the love apples, it was God who provided the life.

Genesis 30:19 And Lě'ah conceived again and bore Ya'aqob a sixth son.

Leah has another son by Jacob—again, totally unrelated to the so-called *love apples*.

Genesis 30:20 And Lě'ah said, "Elohim has presented me with a good present. Now my husband is going to dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.

Leah's sixth son is named Zebulun.

Leah speaks of Jacob dwelling with her. Apparently, Jacob was gone a lot with the flocks of Laban. When he came back into their camp, he likely stayed with Rachel. The three of them (actually, five) did not live together in one happy home.

Genesis 30:21 *And afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.*

Leah gives birth to a daughter, and she is named Dinah.

Genesis 30:22 *And Elohim remembered Raḥēl, and Elohim listened to her and opened her womb.*

God knows that Rachel wants children, and He hears her prayers and opens her womb. These may have been old prayers, as Rachel has apparently put her faith in the love apples.

Love apples were not the key; God's response to her fervent prayer was. Now, I am still making mention of the love apples, but the Scriptures stopped doing that a few verses back.

Genesis 30:23 *And she conceived, and bore a son, and said, "Elohim has taken away my reproach."*

Because giving birth would be hard on Rachel, God kept her barren for a long period of time, allowing Jacob to more fully enjoy his wife (at least, when she was not nagging).

Genesis 30:24 *So she called his name Yosēph [= Joseph], and said, "הוהי [= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah] has added to me another son."*

Even though Rachel says another son, this is her first son. She mistakenly still counts Bilhah's sons as hers.

### **Jacob's Great Prosperity with Wealth**

Genesis 30:25 *And it came to be, when Raḥēl had borne Yosēph [= Joseph], that Ya'aqob said to Laban, "Send me on my way, to go to my own place and to my land."*

At this point, with his 11<sup>th</sup> son having been born, Jacob asks Laban to send him on his way. His own place and his own land is in Canaan. God gave him this land and that is where Jacob belongs.

Genesis 30:26 *"Give my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go, for you yourself know my service which I have done for you."*

Jacob has worked many years for Laban, and now he is ready to return to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 30:27 And Laban said to him, "If I have found favour in your eyes, please stay, for I have diligently watched that הויה has blessed me for your sake."

Laban recognizes that he is blessed through Jacob, who is blessed by God. This is known as blessing by association. Laban is a believer; but he has apparently not grown much spiritually. However, Laban fully understands that Jacob played a big part in his own personal wealth. So, Laban is not an idiot by any means.

Genesis 30:28 And he said, "Name me your wages, and I give it."

Laban asks Jacob to name his price in order to stay.

Genesis 30:29 So he said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me.

Jacob recounts how he has faithfully served Laban, and that his livestock has prospered under him.

Genesis 30:30 "For the little you had before I came has increased greatly, and הויה has blessed you since my coming. But now, when am I to provide for my own house too?"

"You had little before; and now you have a lot," Jacob points out. "However, it is time for me to increase my wealth for my own family."

Genesis 30:31 And he said, "What do I give you?" And Ya'aqob said, "Give me naught! If you do this for me, I shall again feed and guard your flocks:

Jacob then proposes an novel approach.

Genesis 30:32 "Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the black ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. And these shall be my wages.

Jacob proposes: "I will remove all of the speckled and spotted sheep, and those which are all black. The same for the goats. Those will be mine in payment."

Later, I will present a slightly different view of this.

Genesis 30:33 "And my righteousness shall answer for me in time to come, when you come concerning my wages: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the lambs, it is stolen if it is with me."

Jacob says, "This is how you will be able to tell your sheep and goats from mine."

Genesis 30:34 And Laban said, "See, let it be according to your word!"

Laban agreed.

Genesis 30:35 And on that day he set aside the male goats that were speckled and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the black ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Jacob put this group of sheep and goats with his sons, who were just beginning to mind the livestock.

Genesis 30:36 And he put three days' journey between himself and Ya'aqob, and Ya'aqob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

What seems to be the case—but these first verses do not support this interpretation—is the oddly colored sheep and goats were completely removed from Jacob's responsibility. Then, any such oddly colored sheep or goat which occurred with what remained would be his to keep.

Given what follows, Jacob clearly wants to produce livestock which are oddly colored (with stripes, spots or with being all black).

Even today, these are known as *Jacob's Sheep*.

**Jacob's Sheep** (a photograph); from [Meridians Jacob](#); accessed July 5, 2024.



Genesis 30:37 And Ya'aqob 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.

Now Jacob comes up with a scheme which we understand today does not work and has no effect upon the resulting offspring. He took several branches and made them to look like the spotted or striped sheep or goats that he wanted.

Genesis 30:38 And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, and they conceived when they came to drink.

Jacob took these branches (or rods) and put them in front of the sheep or goats at a time when they would mate. The idea was, they would be inspired to throw off offspring with the coloration seen in the branches or rods. Obviously, we know that such an approach does not work.

Genesis 30:39 **So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.**

Critics complain about this section of Jacob's story and say, "This is nonsense; it would not work." And they are absolutely correct—they are not correct to be critical of the text but of Jacob's method. Now, God did not tell Jacob, "Here is what you do with these branches." Jacob came up with this idea completely on his own (or it may have been a part of the local lore).

Nevertheless, despite his nutty idea (which may have seemed brilliant in that era), there were many offspring with the spots and stripes. These were to belong to Jacob. God blesses Jacob, despite him following some false folklore.

Genesis 30:40 **And Ya'aqob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the black in the flock of Laban, but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.**

This group of sheep and goats were put aside for Jacob.

Genesis 30:41 **And it came to be, whenever the strong ones of the flock conceived, that Ya'aqob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, so they would conceive among the rods.**

Jacob, having been a shepherd for at least fourteen years, recognized which sheep were strong and which were weak. Strong sheep had a better gene pool and were more likely to produce a varied number of odd colored sheep and goats. The weak ones had a more limited gene pool and, therefore, were less likely to produce that kind of offspring that Jacob wanted.

Genesis 30:42 **But when the flocks were weak, he did not put them in, so the weak ones were Laban's and the strong ones Ya'aqob's.**

The strong ones were used to produce Jacob's oddly colored offspring; the weak ones produced the flocks which would stay with Laban.

This is how I see this as taking place. The narrative here does not appear to agree with my approach exactly. Either I am wrong or the translation is off (or both).

Genesis 30:43 **Thus the man increased very much, and had many flocks, and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.**



Over the years, Jacob increased his wealth dramatically, but not because he had weird ideas about breeding. God blessed Jacob and all those associated with him.

When Jacob comes back to the land of promise, he will have a very large amount of wealth.

## Lessons 347–348: Genesis 31:1–13

## Jacob's Dream/Injustice in Life

This lesson is being sent out a week early (last week was a double lesson, as is this week's).

What has happened so far is, Jacob has become somewhat upset with his Uncle Laban and the situation that he is in. He worked for Laban for 14 years—an additional 7 years for a wife that he did not want. Now, he has negotiated a new contract with Laban. Jacob will begin with only white sheep, and he has agreed with Laban to keep all of the other sheep who are produced—the spotted, blotched or black sheep.

Jacob came up with a goofy scheme that is scientifically untenable. However, God blessed him, nevertheless.

**Genesis 31:1** And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and he has gotten all this glory from that which was our father's."

Laban's sons, who originally took all of the spotted, striped and blotched animals out of Jacob's herds are becoming quite concerned. Prior to this, Jacob was essentially working for room and board and his two wives. However, now that has changed. Now he has a specified wage, so that Jacob's earnings are now deducted from Laban's profits. This is the way that all businesses work; but there have been 14 years where all of the wealth generated by Jacob had gone to Laban. However, now that Jacob is keeping a portion of that wealth, it is clear that Jacob is being blessed greatly by God.

Laban and his sons don't see it that way. They believe that Jacob is stealing their wealth. They will inherit their father's wealth, but Jacob is now beginning to take a large chunk out of this wealth, and that has them concerned.

Remember that these are young men, in their teens and 20's (they were not mentioned when Jacob agreed to work for Laban). There was probably some discussion of Jacob and his herd in the Laban household, so that his sons sided with their father on all of those issues.

**Genesis 31:2** And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before.

Laban, now that he is paying Jacob, is unhappy with the deal. In fact, he will unilaterally change this agreement with Jacob many times. He also has his own sons who can do what Jacob is doing; and they are probably not being paid as much as Jacob. Materialism lust is difficult for some. Laban probably lacks for nothing; yet he and his sons are upset because of Jacob—and Jacob is doing nothing but collecting his agreed-upon salary.

Wealth is such a relative thing. It is possible that Laban is also enjoying a reasonable increase on his wealth, because he is associated with Jacob, who is God's man in the line of promise. Laban has sons with flocks; he has Jacob caring for his flocks. So, he is probably doing quite well overall. The problem is, Jacob's increase of wealth is occurring at a much higher rate; or it may be that Jacob's increase in wealth is simply noticeable. That is what bothers Laban. Over a very short period of time (maybe 2 or 3 years since Jacob has begun to work for an actual wage), Jacob's wealth is increasing exponentially. This is bothersome to Laban, who is still enjoying increase in his own herds.

Laban is the boss and the owner. If Jacob is enjoying great increase, then Laban believes that he is being cheated out of this increase. Because of God's grace, sometimes the employee is blessed more than the employer. I have personally seen that occur. I have known employees to receive greater blessings than their employer, despite their salary differential.

The *wealth inequality* movement (which is nothing more than a front for socialism) expresses similar concerns as Laban. They are always able to make their case for wealth inequality, no matter what the circumstances, because there is always wealth inequality. They can always sound offended and upset, whether the wealthy are making 10x what the poor are making, or 100,000x what the poor make. The whole idea is, the government comes in and makes everything equal, which gives the government power over all of these businesses. That is the end-game—more power to the government (power lust can corrupt just as much as monetary lust).

Communism has a different approach for impoverished countries—they rail against poverty and promise to eliminate it with their wonderful policies. In the end, they will instead increase poverty with their socialistic approach because with socialism, no one has a desire to excel, because he is not going to get anything for it.

No matter what a person makes, they can always point to someone else and claim that they are somehow getting a bad deal. The idea is to breed discontent.

I have known many state workers in California. In their own area, they all get paid about the same—so there is no desire to stand out due to productivity. In fact, a worker who is too productive is often going to be looked down upon by his peers. “You make us look bad; knock it off!” My cousin Richard, a state worker, lived by the motto, “If you are not working for the state, you are working too hard.”

When communism is trying to make inroads in a prosperous country, like the United States, they cannot rail against poverty because the poor in the United States have a lot

of stuff. Right now, there are about [93 million people](#) in the United States who do not work, are not looking for work, and yet, I can guarantee you, all of them eat, all of them have some kind of shelter and clothing, and most of them have televisions, cable, cell phones, automobiles, heating and air conditioning. In fact, all of them have far more than Laban and Jacob, even though, in that day, these men were considered wealthy.

Obviously, you cannot argue that communism will solve the poverty problem because our only poverty problem is, we have far too many people who live high on the dole. The biggest health problem of the poor in the United States is [obesity](#) (really). So, communists and their dupes rail against wealth inequality, which is a brilliant strategy because, in a capitalist nation (or in a quasi-capitalist nation) there will be differences of outcome. Freedom *demand*s different outcomes. So, what they need is a lot of people jealous of a few people in order to push more government power to achieve a greater equity in outcomes.

This brings us back to Laban and Jacob. They are both experiencing an increase in wealth; but Jacob is becoming too prosperous, too fast, possibly at a greater rate than Laban—and this concerns Laban. Jacob's wealth increase is apparent to Laban and to his sons. Nowhere is it implied that Laban is getting poorer; nowhere does the Bible tell us that he is facing desperate financial times. This is simply a matter of looking at Jacob, noting that Jacob is prospering, and that angers Laban.

Recall that, at the beginning, Laban was quite happy with Jacob watching his flocks and breeding his flocks prior to this. Laban worked out a deal with Jacob for Laban's two daughters, and Laban was quite happy with this deal. The only person who enjoyed an increase in wealth was Laban, because Jacob, for 14 years, worked only for Laban's increase. However, now Laban cannot get over just how much Jacob's share in increasing. That has become Laban's focus and the focus of his sons.

I used to work for a real estate agency which dominated our part of town. Many of the agents would *farm* a territory, meaning they would hang flyers, they might make phone calls; and this territory was internally protected from other agents. If Charley Brown got a property call from Lucy Van Pelt's farm, Charley Brown had to hand this lead over to Lucy.

There was a mental attitude which went along with this. An agent could see a sign from a rival agency go up in her territory, and she would remark, "That is money out of my pocket; that is a house that should have listed with me." This mental attitude (which is one of healthy competition) did not depend upon the personal wealth of the person with that attitude. They might be selling 100 houses a year; but they could see that one lone house with the wrong sign on it, and they would think that it should have belonged to them. "That should be my listing!"

This is the attitude expressed by Laban and his sons. They are seeing Jacob's share of the flocks increase. Two years ago, *all* of the increase would have been Laban's; but now, Jacob gets some of it. So, it does not matter to Laban and his sons that they are prosperous; they keep seeing that flock which is now Jacob's, which, two years ago, would

have been Laban's. "What you have should be mine." And this is not healthy competition, at this point; this is simply monetary lust.

Do you understand this attitude? This is the attitude of Laban and his sons; this is the covetous attitude of the lower middle class person toward the wealthy person—they strongly desire what is not theirs. They all have reasons why it should be theirs (for Laban, before all the increase was his, and now it is not; for the real estate agent, this is the neighborhood she farms, so the listing should be hers; for the lower middle class person, it is unfair that someone from the 1% has so much more than he does). All of this falls under the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment, which is 'Do not desire another man's wife; do not covet another man's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his donkey, or any thing that belongs to him.' (Deut. 5:21; NSB) As believers, we need to be satisfied with what God has given us; our focus should never be upon someone down the street or at the family reunion who we think makes more.

In life, you can always find someone who is doing better than you are (at least, from your own perspective). All you need to do is to look next door or down the street, and it will be apparent that someone is better off than you are, through some superficial measure of wealth. If this bothers you, then monetary lust might be your problem.

We are all subject to different lusts; just because I suffer from monetary lust and you suffer from approbation lust, that does not make my sins better or worse than yours.

### A List of Lusts

- Monetary Lust (1 Timothy 6:10)
- Sexual Lust (Matthew 5:28)
- Power Lust (Isaiah 14:13-14)
- Approbation Lust (Matthew 23:5)
- Social Lust (Matthew 23:6-7)
- Pleasure Lust (James 4:3)
- Chemical Lust (drugs and alcohol) (Galatians 5:20; 1 Peter 4:3-4)
- Inordinate Ambition (James 4:2)
- Crusader Lust (2 Corinthians 11:20)
- Lust for Revenge (Genesis 34:25-29)
- Criminal Lust (Matthew 21:13)
- Eating Binge Lust (Gluttony) (1 Samuel 2:12-16)

From <http://www.biblenews1.com/balaam/lust.htm> accessed June 17, 2015.

Time passes. In vv. 1–2 we get a set of mental attitudes which fester for several years in the Laban household. However, with v. 3, we are in year 19 or 20 of Jacob's life with Laban, and the attitudes of Laban and his sons are impacting Jacob's life more and more.

**Genesis 31:3** And Jehovah said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers, and to your kindred, and I will be with you."

As occurs many times in Scripture, there are times that God comes to a believer and speaks to him, but often we do not know the manner in which this occurs. Later in this narrative, we will see that God has come to Jacob in a dream.

About 20 years have passed and now it is time for Jacob to return to Canaan—the land that God has given to the Jews—those who would be descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

So, here we have Jacob: he knows what God wants him to do. That is the right thing to do. Now will he do a right thing in a right way, or will he do a right thing in a wrong way? If you have been in this study for any amount of time, you can easily answer that question without even reading ahead.

**Genesis 31:4** And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field to his flocks.

There has developed between Jacob and his wives a solid bond. They have been married for 14 years and have many children as a result. Jacob's wives are now more beholden to Jacob than they are to their father Laban, which will become apparent in the narrative.

It is clear that, Jacob's wives remained in one place, but Jacob took the herd out to another. Such a tradition is not unusual, for the women to remain home with the children and for husband to go off to work. Here, we have such a situation from 4000 years ago.

So, Jacob gathers his wives together, to tell them that he is unhappy at work, working for their father; and that their father is unhappy with him.

**Genesis 31:5** And he said to them, "I see your father's face, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me.

Whereas Jacob knows very little about genetics, he does know some psychology, and now, when he interacts with Laban, he can tell that things are not good. He can look at Laban and he can tell that Laban is displeased.

Jacob recognizes that, even though his employer, Laban (the father of his wives) is not treating him fairly, the God of Abraham is still with him.

**Genesis 31:6** And you know that with all my power I have served your father,...

Jacob is certainly not the ideal person from the Old Testament. However, one thing which is clear—he was a hard and responsible worker. He did wonderful work on behalf of Laban and Laban's wealth increased because of Jacob (which was because of Jacob's relationship to God).

Jacob gets a bad rap for many of the things that he does—he always seems to choose the wrong way to do something. However, this does not mean that he was all bad. It is clear

that, as an employee, he made Laban a boatload of money (measured, in those days, as a headcount of the animals owned).

**Genesis 31:7** ...and your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not allow him to hurt me.

Whereas, Jacob was a faithful employee, Laban was not a good employer. What had happened over the past 6 or so years, after Jacob began working for a wage, Laban kept changing their agreement. Jacob might have too many blotched sheep and goats; so Laban would remove that kind of sheep from Jacob's wages. Still, God would see that Jacob was properly reimbursed every time.

You may remember that Laban seemed very reasonable at first, as someone who was willing to work out a reasonable deal with his employees—here, we find out, that is not the case. When Jacob appears to be doing too well for himself, Laban changes the deal. We will not be given any specifics on this; just a general statement.

**Genesis 31:8** If he said this, 'The speckled will be your wages, then all the flocks bore speckled.' And if he said this, 'The striped will be your hire, then all the flocks bore striped.'

This was the providence of God. Whatever Laban said would be Jacob's wages, God would bless the flocks of Jacob with that particular type. So, if Laban said, "Listen, the speckled sheep will be the only ones you can keep for yourself;" the sheep under Jacob's control would all begin producing speckled sheep.

We know that God oversaw what was happening, and God saw to it that Jacob was blessed with prosperity, despite his own scheming. We studied Jacob's goofy scheme in the previous chapter, which was simply illustrative of Jacob trying to do God's job.

It has never been up to Jacob to make certain that God blessed him. It is up to God to bless him or not. What Jacob did in order to achieve God's blessing was one more example of Jacob doing a right thing in a wrong way. It was right, since Jacob is in the line of promise, and it is right for God to bless him. However, it was wrong for Jacob to try to make this come to pass through his own efforts. Jacob did not have to do any of the things which he did. As God gave him direction, he should act—but always within reasonable moral boundaries. Jacob continually violated reasonable moral boundaries when dealing with others.

This is a principle that every believer needs to understand: you may be treated unfairly at work; you may have a lousy boss—God is able to overrule all of that. If you are over 30 years old, you have had at least one bad job with at least one lousy boss—maybe several. You have suffered, by that point in time, a myriad of injustices. I still recall from decades ago being accused of cheating on a take-home test by a college professor and having to retake the test. I barely knew the person I was supposed to have cheated with. Injustice is a part of life. God can overrule injustice (which is what He was doing when it came to



Jacob's income). Jacob, as usual, tried some lame scheme (having sheep look at peeled almond branches); yet God still blessed Jacob, despite his schemes.

However, what God does not fix or override, He expects for us to deal with or to endure.

This does not mean that you cannot look for new work; this does not mean that you cannot explore other job opportunities. Sometimes God uses employment situations to move us from point A to point B. Every life is different and God tailor-makes our lives to suit us. As believers in the Church Age, during which time we receive no direct revelation from God, we need to spend our lives being filled with the Spirit and learning the Word of God, so that we are able to grow spiritually. This will give us enough information in order to make the difficult decisions in our lives.

One thing which I have experienced and I know others have experienced it as well—I have had a few difficult decisions in my life, and sometimes, in Bible class, I am given the answer. I was being encouraged to leave one particular job, and it is something which I considered. But, I also received teaching that, you do not simply leave a job because things are difficult there or because it is not a perfect job (no such job exists). I chose to stay and that was the right choice.

When I stopped teaching, eventually, it was the right thing to do. It was a major life decision and God was there guiding me the whole time—not audibly, not with hallucinations, but simply from knowing Bible doctrine.

Now that you have become a believer, perhaps you resent God a little bit—that He does not act more forcefully in your life. You picture God as guiding people around in the Old Testament, but not giving you the same guidance. That is a confused impression that you have. God spoke to very few people directly—even in the Old Testament. God guided very few people directly. Jacob is over 40 when he left for Padan-Aram and God spoke to him once in a dream. And now that it is time for him to return to Canaan, God apparently speaks to him a second time. So, it is not as if God is there every single day of Jacob's life telling him where to go and what to do.

Secondly, think back when you were a teen. Who could make the best decisions for your life? You or your parents? In retrospect, you know your parents would have made the best decisions for you. They have the benefit of both wisdom and some objectivity regarding your life. But, do you think that you want your parents following you around every minute of the day telling you what to do, where to go, who to speak to, when to work, when to study, when to eat? Of course not! You would have complained of them having you in prison!

One of the great blessings of life is having free will and being able to determine what you are going to do with your life. God does not have to be with us every minute of the day telling us what to do. We learn the principles and we make the decisions; and we take responsibility for these decisions. The decisions which we make often have consequences which last for day, years or even a lifetime.

Jacob's knowledge of God is far more limited than ours. He has what his father Abraham has told him (the first 10–20 chapters of Genesis and the book of Job); so, from time to time, he might need a little guidance. But that was a different time and that was a different program.

Jacob did recognize God's overruling will. Even though Laban attempted to cheat him, God would bless Jacob anyway.

**Genesis 31:9** And God has taken away the flocks of your father, and has given them to me.

Jacob is pointing out to his wives something which they themselves have observed. Whatever Laban arbitrarily decided would be Jacob's wages, that would be what would be produced. God did this; and Jacob recognizes that. Jacob's observations here are correct.

It was not a result of his schemes; it is a result of what God has done.

Jacob is speaking to his wives about their future plans and about a dream that he had where God spoke to him.

**Genesis 31:10** And at the time the cattle conceived, I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were striped, speckled, and mottled.

People do have a tendency to dream about work; but that is not what Jacob is doing here. God will speak to him in this dream. Therefore, this is a dream fraught with meaning.

First we should look at the word 'attûd (אֲתוּד) [pronounced *gaht-TOOD*], which means, *ram; male goat; chief one*. Strong's #6260 BDB #800. The second word to look at is tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced *tzohn*], which means, *small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks*. Strong's #6629 BDB #838. It is the rams or male-goats which are striped, speckled and mottled, and they are overrunning the cattle or the flock. These are the animals which would belong to Jacob, and they are overwhelming the flock itself that he is responsible for.

**Genesis 31:11** And the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob!' And I said, 'Here I am.'

And God comes to Jacob in this dream and speaks to him. As we have discussed on many occasions, the *Angel of God = the Messenger of God = God*. We studied this back in Lesson #157, and it can be found online here: the **Angel of Y<sup>e</sup>howah** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

**Genesis 31:12** And He said, 'Lift up your eyes and see all the rams which leap upon the cattle, that they are striped, speckled, and mottled. For I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.'

God tells Jacob, "I want you to observe what you have been seeing—that the striped, speckled and mottled goats (or rams) are over the rest of the flock. I am doing that, because I see what Laban has done to you." God has given preeminence to Jacob's animals; the striped, speckled and mottled are the ones *jumping over* the others. The word found here is the masculine plural, Qal active participle of 'âlâh (עֲלֶה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*], which means, *those going up, ascending ones, those coming up, ones climbing up; those leaping*. Strong's #5927 BDB #748.

God sees what is happening and God intercedes, despite Laban's dishonesty. We will be cheated all of our lives—not just as believers, but even simply as people. This is what the world does to us. And, bear in mind, Laban appears to be a believer. When Abraham's servant came to his family to get a wife for Isaac, Laban and Bethuel, because the servant claimed that this was all of God, said, "The thing has come from the LORD; we cannot speak to you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you; take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has spoken." (Genesis 24:50b–51) They appear to acquiesce rather than to be argumentative about this situation.

My point here is, as a believer, your worst problems in life might be other believers.

**Genesis 31:13** I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar, where you vowed a vow to Me. Now arise, get out from this land, and return to the land of your kindred.' "

The Angel of God tells Jacob that He is the God of Bethel (this is where Jacob had the dream about the angels going up and down between heaven and earth).

Jacob's vow is Gen. 28:20–22 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to You." (ESV; capitalized)

God tells Jacob that it is now time to return to the Land of Promise.

## Lesson 349: Genesis 31:1–18

## Jacob Flees Laban

Jacob is a fascinating historical figure to study. When studying Abraham, Moses or David, most of the time, their actions represent the right thing to do. They are good examples to us. However, with Jacob, he has his good points; but he also has many character flaws as well. It is men like Jacob who personally give me hope.

So far, we have studied the first 13 verses of Genesis 31:

**Genesis 31:1** Now Jacob heard that the sons of Laban were saying, "Jacob has taken all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has gained all this wealth."

The *sons of Laban* are new players in all of this. They will naturally take the side of their father and, also among their concerns, is their inheritance. So, every time Jacob keeps a sheep or goat, they see this as being removed from their own wealth (even though Jacob legitimately must be paid).

**Genesis 31:2** And Jacob saw that Laban did not regard him with favor as before.

There is a change with Laban as well. Before, Laban did not have to pay him. Now that Laban is paying Jacob, Laban is not quite as happy as he was before.

**Genesis 31:3** Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."

On top of this, God tells Jacob to return to the Land of Promise. We do not know the method by which God spoke to Jacob; previously, it had been by dream. The means by which God spoke to Jacob will be revealed.

**Genesis 31:4–10** So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.

Jacob and Laban had worked out a deal, where Jacob could keep so many of the sheep as his pay; and you may recall that Jacob had a goofy idea on how to get the sheep to mate. However, despite Jacob's goofy ideas, God will was faithful and allowed Jacob to be blessed with many sheep.

**Genesis 31:11** Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!'

The Angel of God (= God) speaks to Jacob in a dream; and Jacob responds that he is there, listening.

**Genesis 31:12–13** And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'

Jacob is in a peculiar situation. He feels like he is being treated unfairly by Laban, his father-in-law, because he is not receiving reasonable payment for what he has been doing (in his mind). However, during this time, God has been blessing him. In fact, God has

blessed Jacob so much that his brothers-in-law upset that he is being remunerated too much. "That should be our inheritance."

This has been the pattern of his relationship to Laban. Jacob sees things one way; Laban sees them another. In the past, Jacob had been quite a manipulator; but he finds out that his father-in-law is even more of a manipulator. He believes that he comes to an agreement with his father-in-law; only to find that Laban later changes the agreement.

It is almost as if, Jacob is wrestling with himself. He appears to agree on this or that with Laban; and then Laban changes things. Jacob thought he was marrying Rachel, but he wakes up the morning after his wedding, and Leah is in bed with him. He thinks he comes to an agreement on his wages, but Laban changes these wages—again and again.

As a result, Jacob tries to fight back, but his own human works schemes (like putting variously shaved almond tree branches in front of Laban's flock) are not effective; yet God, overseeing all of this, still blesses Jacob. In fact, God has blessed Jacob so much that, his brothers-in-law are upset and concerned, because they see Jacob's increase as legitimately belonging to their father (and, eventually, to themselves).

However, now, Jacob has a clear direction—God has said to him, "[Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you.](#)"

God's plan has continued to move forward in Jacob's life, despite Jacob.

### **What God Achieved in Jacob's Life**

1. God placed Jacob with a man who was very much like himself. Laban was manipulative and Laban continually tried to work the advantages for himself.
2. Despite all of Laban's manipulation, deception and dishonesty, God still blessed Jacob. We don't really realize at this point how much God has blessed Jacob, but when we see his gift to his own brother (whom he crossed), it will be clear that Jacob has been greatly blessed, despite Laban's actions.
3. Jacob will return to the Land of Promise with two wives, two mistresses, and a whole lot of children, all of whom will be the basis for the Jewish race.
4. Despite the way that Laban treated Jacob, God still blessed Jacob. There was nothing that Laban could do which would decrease God's blessing.
5. Furthermore, there was nothing that Jacob could do in the power of the flesh to increase his blessings from God.
6. So Jacob will return to the Land of Promise greatly blessed of God. God poured out blessings upon Abraham; and then these blessings were poured out upon Isaac; Jacob was greatly blessed despite the interference of Laban.
7. While Jacob was outside of the land, God also blessed Esau, so that Esau would have no reason to still bear a grudge against Jacob.
8. In the end, there will be two peoples who grow up side-by-side: the Edomites and the Jews. Esau's sons will appear to have the strongest beginnings. However, it is the spiritual heritage of Jacob that will win out in the end. This is why you do

## What God Achieved in Jacob's Life

not know any Edomites today, but you know Jewish people. The reason for this is, there is a spiritual destiny for the sons of Jacob; but there would be no spiritual destiny for the sons of Edom because he was willing to give up his inheritance for a *mess of pottage*.

What is interesting is, it does not appear that Jacob really understood all that God had done in his life. It does not appear that he learned much from being in close contact with a manipulator like Laban; and it does not appear to he recognizes just how much God has blessed him.

So God has told Jacob to return to the land of promise; he tells his wives, and here is how they respond.

**Genesis 31:14** And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?"

Rachel and Leah feel as if their father has frozen them out as well. Laban has not put anything aside for them. They have no inheritance from him. This is very likely because Laban has sons now; so it is clear that he favors his own sons. His daughters belong to Jacob; and so, he sees no reason to enrich them.

Leah and Rachel reason this out. There is no inheritance from their father that they can depend upon. Even though Laban may have, at one time, made such promises to them; this inheritance is no longer available to them.

**Genesis 31:15** Are we not counted strangers by him? For he has sold us, and has also entirely devoured our silver.

As far as Laban is concerned, his daughters are strangers to him. He has sold them (to Jacob) and devoured their silver. Apparently there was a specific inheritance which was silver. Maybe it was customary; maybe Laban had originally put it aside for them. Remember that Laban is a successful businessman, and therefore had the wherewithal to bless his daughters, married or not. But whatever there was set aside for them, it is not there any more.

Essentially, Laban sold his daughters to Jacob. At this point, Laban does not appear to see his daughters as his own. Whatever promises he made to them in the past, no longer stand.

**Genesis 31:16** All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do." (ESV)



Leah and Rachel both recognize that God has been blessing Jacob specifically. They know that his wealth has increased because of God. They also recognize the duplicity of their father. Therefore, whatever God has told Jacob to do, they are onboard with it.

What appears to be the case is, Laban had promised them an inheritance of silver, but he appears to have spent this silver (or done something else with it). So, the sisters believe that God has blessed Jacob, in part, because of this; to make up for what Laban their father had promised them, but had changed his mind about.

Essentially, whatever Laban has done to these daughters (and it is not completely clear what that is), they are in agreement with Jacob to go with him to the Land of Promise.

Their reasoning is, their father Laban no longer has an inheritance to give them; and remaining in Aram until he dies will not change that. So, there is nothing in Paddan-aram for them; there is nothing to hold them there. Their father has no inheritance for them.

Their true inheritance is with Jacob. When they are associated with Jacob, they are associated with the plan of God. When they are associated with Laban, there is no accompanying blessing. There is no spiritual blessing to be had in the line of Laban. His sons, living in Paddan-aram, will lose the blessing by association that they had with Jacob being near. They rejected Jacob, which suggests that they have rejected his God as well.

[Genesis 31:17](#) Then Jacob rose up and set his sons and wives upon camels.

This does not mean that Jacob, 2 minutes later, started getting everyone ready to leave. There would have been a time interval here; or Jacob already has his exit timed and planned out.

Jacob could not simply leave at some random point in time, and his father-in-law discover this that night, because his father-in-law would easily catch up to him. So, there had to be a right time, when Jacob being gone with his family would not be known for awhile.

Don't misunderstand me—that is not necessarily the right thing for Jacob to do. That is how he reasoned through this in his own mind. He obviously has to leave. Jacob will plan his exit as an escape.

Jacob, Laban and Laban's sons all had their own routines, and they would be in separate areas for various periods of time. This both exercised and fed the flocks that they were responsible for. As we will see, Jacob's getaway will give him a 3 day head start.

You may recall that, when they were coming to an agreement on Jacob's wages, Laban took many of Jacob's sheep and placed them with his own sons, and then had his own sons stay their distance from Jacob. He did not want the chance that Jacob might steal some of these sheep for breeding purposes. The striped and blotched sheep that originally were Laban's were taken to his sons, a 3 day's ride away.

One of the things which Jacob collected over time was camels. Today, this would have been a number of vehicles. Today, he might have one car per wife and mistress; then, he bought a camel for each person; and probably another camel or three upon which stuff could be carried.

Jacob came to Paddan-aram, insofar as we know, with almost nothing (he appears to have traveled with his mother's personal maid—which suggests that he may not have been completely empty handed). In any case, he will leave with a great flock, 2 wives, 2 mistresses, around 12 children (I probably need to go back and count them<sup>46</sup>), and a pair of camels for each person. Besides this, Jacob would have had servants as well.

This is a huge amount of stuff (and they have young children); and they will not be moving as quickly as Laban will move when he finds that they are gone.

**Genesis 31:18** And he drove away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his property, which he had gotten in Paddan-aram, in order to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.

The ESV translates the first verb *drove away*. This is the verb *nâhag* (נָהַג) [pronounced *naw-HAHG*], and it means, *to bring, to lead, to urge on a course, to drive [animals] along, to drive away, to lead away [as a captive]*. Strong's #5090 BDB #624. So, Jacob gathers up and leads away all the animals which are his.

As mentioned previously, Isaac will be mentioned from time to time, but we will no longer follow him in the narrative. The historical narrative always follows a particular patriarch, who is the actual author of the section which is about him. We first spent our time with Abraham; then with Isaac (who appears to have only written two chapters of Genesis); and now we are with Jacob, who is a more prolific author than his father.

## Lesson 350: Genesis 31:19–26

## Laban Catches up to Jacob

Jacob originally lived in the Land of Promise, and would have been heir in the line of promise, despite Esau. However, Jacob dealt dishonestly with his father, and was forced to leave the land in order to keep from being killed.

This foreshadows several events.

### Jacob Leaving the Land of Promise and Then Returning

1. Jacob is in the land of promise, but then he leaves; and, at this point, he is making preparations to return to that land. This parallels several future situations.
2. Jacob's family will become reasonably large, but most of his sons will be quite jealous of Joseph and sell him into slavery. Joseph will rise to a position of

<sup>46</sup> Not all of his daughters are named.

## Jacob Leaving the Land of Promise and Then Returning

great authority in Egypt, and be able to provide food for his family during a famine. As a result, all of Jacob's family will move out of the Land of Promise into Egypt. They will return 400 years later, under Moses.

3. The southern kingdom (Judah) will be removed from the land of Canaan for their sins (under the principle of the 5<sup>th</sup> Stage of National Discipline). They will be kept out of their land for 70 years, and then be allowed to return.
4. The Jews again are removed from the Land of Promise in A.D. 70, when many of them are slaughtered by the Romans. They have remained outside of the land since then, with a small number of exceptions (I believe about 6 millions Jews live within the Land of Promise today—which is modern Israel). However, the Jews are scattered throughout the world, as God said that they would be. They will be the evangelists at the beginning of the Tribulation; and God will regather them again to the Land of Promise at the end of the Tribulation.

In this way, Jacob's life has foreshadowed 3 important events in the history of Israel.

At this point in our narrative, Jacob is living in Paddan-aram working for his uncle/father-in-law Laban, but he is ready to separate himself from Laban.

Jacob has decided to leave Paddan-aram, where he lives, as God has told him to return to the Land of Promise. Laban, his father-in-law, gave him the wrong daughter to marry 13 years ago, so Jacob ended up working for Laban for 14 years total in order to marry both of his daughters. For the past 6 years, he has worked for Laban, but Laban has changed his wages 10 times. Jacob now has a dozen or more children, he is stuck in a dead-end job working for his father-in-law, and both his father-in-law and brothers-in-law are displeased with him, because the sheep he is given in exchange for his work tend to multiply exponentially.

The game changer has been God. God came to Jacob and told him that it was time for him to move away from Laban. So, Jacob has gone to his wives, has bounced the idea of them leaving Paddan-aram and moving to Canaan, and they are completely on-board. They realize that their father is no longer going to give them an inheritance; that what he promised them was gone (this is a summary of Genesis 31:1–18).

*Robert Dean: The emphasis here is that no matter how many flaws and failures there are, and Jacob certainly made a lot of mistakes and failed in a lot of ways, God is always true to His promise. That is one of the key themes throughout this whole section of Genesis. We see all the failures, the flaws, the sin nature trends of all the patriarchs. These are not always wonderful people. Yet we see that God is faithful to His promise and He uses fallen, flawed sinners to accomplish His plans and purposes in history. So this is tremendous encouragement for all of us. Ultimately the emphasis is on God's faithfulness, that no matter what transpires, no matter what failures there might be in the circumstances, He is still faithful to His Word. He has*

*been faithful to Jacob. Jacob has left the land as a result of God's direction and while he is out of the land God has promised to prosper and bless him, and that is indeed what happened while he was out of the land. In Genesis 30:43.<sup>47</sup>*

However, rather than man-up, go to Laban, and say, "We're moving;" Jacob sneaks away. He will have about a 3 day head start while Laban is off shearing sheep.

**Genesis 31:19** And Laban went to shear his sheep. And Rachel had stolen the images which were her father's.

So, Laban has gone out to shear his sheep (this is the money day—that is, this wool can be sold for a great deal of money—it is like harvesting to a farmer). Jacob planned his escape to occur during the shearing of Laban's flocks. He did not just leave on some random day. He left at a time to get the maximum amount of time on the road before Laban realized that he was gone.

What appears to be the case is, there would be a significant period of time involved in the shearing and a common set of events which would occur, leading up to the shearing and the actual shearing itself. Perhaps the sheep will all be washed as well. These events allowed for the greatest amount of time to pass between the times when Jacob is seen by Laban or by his sons.

Rachel, while her sister is gathering up the children (Leah has about a half dozen or so; Rachel has one), steals into her father's tent and steals the images which belong to her father. These are little deities; little gods. Although we are not given the motivation here, let me suggest several possible reasons: (1) Rachel will not get an inheritance from her father and whatever inheritance there was, has been spent; (2) these little statues might be valuable (they might even be made of the silver promised to them); and (3) she might be taking these for good luck (that is, she might actually believe that these deities are effective).

Now, remember the names that Leah named her children? At first, she was thinking about Jacob and her relationship with Jacob. But with Judah, she named him *praised* because she has been *praised of the Lord* (Genesis 29:35). So she has shown some change of attitude over the years, as well as some acceptance for her situation. *Praised* suggests that she is happier with her life (at least on some days).

Rachel, on the other hand, has been upset over not having more children; she is jealous of Leah; and here, she steals from her own father. You may recall that she got so irrational that Jacob told her that she needed to lighten up (Genesis 30:1–2).

One of the things which concerned me is, *what about Laban's herds that Jacob was tending? Who watched after them?* We are not told. My guess is, many of them were

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<sup>47</sup> From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen130.htm> accessed July 13, 2015.

shipped to Laban to be sheared. If this did not represent his entire herd, then what happened to the other animals? Nothing is said about this; however, since Laban does not later complain about missing animals when he meets up with Jacob, this suggests that Jacob saw to their care. Perhaps he left a trusted servant in charge of them; and this trusted servant led the herds and flocks to Laban, where Jacob's exit was revealed to Laban. This seems to be the most logical explanation.

**Genesis 31:20** And Jacob deceived the heart of Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he fled.

When Jacob leaves, it is sudden, with the idea that he would have a 3-day head start, and his father-in-law would not be told during this time, as no one else would know. Jacob would be 3 days gone before Laban is aware of what happened.

God told Jacob that it was time for him to return to the Land of Promise. This does not mean that he should do it like this.

Laban is not called a Syrian because of his lineage, but because of where he lives. His father, Bethuel, came from Mesopotamia; but Laban would have been born and raised in Syria. Understanding this explains a number of apparent contradictions in the Bible. Unlike the United States, where people move every 5 years, in ancient times, once a person moved to here or there, they tended to remain there. Jacob, did a fair amount of moving; but he was always tied to the Land of Promise.

**Genesis 31:21** And he fled with all that was his. And he rose up and passed over the river, and set his face toward Mount Gilead.

Jacob does not steal Laban's animals; he only takes that which are his by their agreement (even though Laban changed this agreement several times). Nothing is said about where Jacob left Laban's sheep. However, it is reasonable to suppose that Jacob was faithful in this thing. He may have had one of Laban's slaves working with him, and once they got to a particular place, he told the slave to take the sheep back to Laban. That is all speculative. However, we can be certain that Laban's sheep were taken care of, as this will not be an issue when Laban catches up with Jacob.

Interestingly enough, there is a river that Jacob must cross over; and that would logically be the Euphrates River. Although I have always pictured Laban living just west of the Euphrates; he must have been living east of the Euphrates (at least, at this time). So, to get to the land of Canaan, Jacob would be going west and cross over the River. This would have been quite an undertaking. Although we are not given much information at this point, Jacob has a great many animals and servants, as well as family members. All told, there are probably no fewer than 25 people (servants, wives and children), and possibly as many as 30. They will cross over another (and smaller) river in Genesis 32:22.

**Genesis 31:22** It was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled.

Because of their schedules and their locations, it was not known for 3 days that Jacob had gone. Recall the Laban went out of his way to put a great deal of space between Jacob's flock and those of his sons—a 3 day's journey, in fact (Genesis 30:36). Laban does not find out about this personally. Someone has to tell Laban that Jacob was gone with his entire family.

**Genesis 31:23** And he took his brothers with him, and pursued after him seven days' journey. And they overtook him in Mount Gilead.

I would assume that a dozen or two camels along with a very large flock of sheep and goats left an easy trail to follow. Furthermore, Laban knew the direction that Jacob would go in. Furthermore, there were not a lot of options for going from Paddan-aram to Canaan. It wasn't as if there were 2 or 3 commonly used routes.

*Brothers* can be a reference to various relatives. We are never told exactly how much of Abraham's family moved to Haran. We studied a very specific line of this family. We know about *that* line. However, that is not necessarily all of Laban's relatives. So Laban quickly gathers up some men who would be able to pursue Jacob with great alacrity.

**Genesis 31:24** And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Take heed that you do not speak either good or bad to Jacob."

God comes to Laban and speaks to him. He tells Laban to be careful and not to speak ill of Jacob when he catches up to him.

There is no reason to assume that Laban is an unbeliever. You may recall from Genesis 24, when the servant said that meeting Rebekah was an answer to prayer; and Laban and his father Bethuel said, "We cannot argue with that." It is likely that much of Abraham's extended family had faith in the Revealed God (and were, therefore, saved).

God allows Laban to pursue Jacob; God allows Laban to catch up with him and to confront him. However, Laban is not to speak good or bad of him. Recall that Jacob has left Paddan-aram on God's direct orders. Therefore, geographically speaking, what he is doing is right. Picking up his family and taking them to Canaan—this is what God has told him to do.

However, sneaking out on Laban—this was Jacob's idea, not God's. Even though God occasionally gave the patriarchs some direction in their lives (Jacob was told to return to Canaan), God does not micro-manage. Jacob, true to form, does a right thing in a wrong way.

**Genesis 31:25** Then Laban overtook Jacob. And Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount. And Laban with his brothers pitched in Mount Gilead.



**Map of Israel's Natural Features**, from [Every Day with God](#), accessed November 24, 2014. The Jordan Valley runs between the two seas, and to the east (right) of the Jordan valley is Mount Gilead, in southern Bashan. So, Jacob is nearly home free. On the other side of the Jordan River, south of the Hill Country, is where Jacob's family is (for the most part).

This is the place where Laban catches up with Jacob; and he will discuss the situation with Jacob now.

For the next few verses, we will have Laban's perception.

**Genesis 31:26** And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have deceived my heart and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword?"

Laban is complaining that Jacob was acting as if he were a kidnapper, who swooped in and stole Laban's daughters from him. The idea is, Jacob took Laban's daughters and grandchildren away, and without a word to Laban.

Laban is not conferred with; there has been no discussion. Jacob obviously left in such a way as to get a head start from Laban.

Despite Laban's treatment of Jacob, and his exaggerated comparison, Laban has a point here.

Over and over again, Jacob acts only on his own behalf, and he never takes into consideration the thoughts and feelings of others.

Jacob married Laban's daughters; he fathered Laban's grandchildren. He has worked for Laban for 20 years; and Jacob has shown a fine profit after all of these years. Laban is not a great man—he is selfish, self-centered, and manipulative (very much like Jacob is). However, as the father of Jacob's wives, he deserves some respect, which Jacob has not afforded him.



## Lesson 351: Genesis 31:25–32a Jacob & Laban Discuss Jacob Suddenly Leaving

Jacob has spent 20 years working for his Uncle Laban. Jacob married two of Laban's daughters, but God has told Jacob that it is time to leave Paddan-aram and return to Canaan, the land God had promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Jacob left surreptitiously, with the approval of his wives. Rachel, the younger wife, snuck into her father's tent and stole some religious figurines from him.

3 days passed before Laban was told that Jacob had gone. However, as soon as Laban heard, he gathered up some of his men and pursued Jacob, who would be moving much slower with his possessions, wives and children.

**Genesis 31:25–26** Then Laban overtook Jacob. And Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount. And Laban with his brothers pitched in Mount Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have deceived my heart and carried away my daughters as captives taken with the sword?"

Laban accuses Jacob of taking his daughters away, as if he had taken them captive; as if he had kidnaped them.

**Genesis 31:27** Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harp?

Laban makes some reasonable points. Jacob could have left under better circumstances. His leaving could have been discussed and then celebrated. In life, it is normal to have endings to long-term ventures (although it is not always required). After all, Jacob has worked for Laban for 20 years and he has married two of Laban's daughters.

An agreed upon exit with a celebration would have been the right thing to do. Were there potential problems? Of course; but that should not stop Jacob from attempting to do what is right.

Jacob is continually doing the right thing in a wrong way. God told Jacob to pack up and leave, so Jacob does this surreptitiously. His leaving was right; the way he left was wrong.

Jacob and Laban began to butt heads once Laban had to begin paying Jacob. Both men were sneaky, manipulative; and both men looked to turn every situation into a personal advantage. This got in the way of normal family things—which things Laban despairs of not being able to enjoy. Laban has only himself to blame for this—his attitude and actions are why Jacob left Paddan-aram without a word. His attitude and actions are why his own daughters are turned against him.

Yet, Laban still has a point.

**Genesis 31:28** And why have you not allowed me to kiss my sons and my daughters? You have done foolishly in so doing.

This is what a normal father/grandfather would want to do—to kiss his daughters and his grandsons goodbye. Laban says this was foolish to do things this way. This is actually the Hiphil perfect of the verb *çâkal* (סָחַל) [pronounced *saw-KAHL*], which means *to act foolishly, to be foolish, to play the fool*. Strong's #5528 BDB #698.

Laban had to know that this would happen eventually. He has to know something about Abraham and Isaac; and about Abraham's need to go to the land of Canaan. He had to know something about Abraham's interaction with God. Therefore, as heir to Abraham, Jacob would have to return to Canaan. This had to be known by Laban to some degree.

He appears to be unhappy with Jacob anyway, and probably would not have objected to Jacob leaving. Recall that Jacob told his wives that Laban's countenance was now against him. Laban's sons were jealous of Jacob. Jacob's wives no longer had an inheritance with their father. So, it is likely that a departure could have been agreed to by all parties.

We are viewing a situation where both people are right, and both people are wrong. Jacob had been cheated by Laban; and he was right to be concerned about what Laban might do at his leaving (Laban would not have harmed him, but Laban may have used an excuse to keep back some of his herd). However, despite all the ways that Laban has sought to cheat Jacob, God has always overruled Laban's dishonorable business practices. Jacob needed to simply trust God to work things out. He should have known by experience that he could do this.

**Application:** In life, you do what is right, and let God sort everything else out.

As usual, Jacob did a right thing (returning to Canaan) in a wrong way (sneaking away without giving any notice to Laban, his employer).

**Genesis 31:29** It is in the power of my hand to do you harm. But the God of your fathers spoke to me last night, saying, 'Take heed that you do not speak either good or bad to Jacob.'

Not speaking evil of Jacob included not doing anything evil to Jacob.

Laban is mad, with good reason; even though Jacob did not raid his flocks or possessions, but simply took what is his. However, Jacob's manner of leaving was disconcerting to Laban.

However, Laban admits that he has been warned by God. There is also one more thing Laban is concerned about:

**Genesis 31:30** And now you have gone because you longed after your father's house. Why have you stolen my gods?"

Laban understands why Jacob is leaving. *To long after your father's house* means, Jacob simply wants to return to his family in the west. So Laban admits, "You want to return to your home in Canaan; I get that."

However, Laban brings up another legitimate concern, which is the fact that he had some small deity statues that were stolen from him. Jacob is not aware that his wife, Rachel, stole these small figures; and Laban has no idea who stole them.

This would suggest that these little deities might have been prominent in Laban's home, as he notices immediately that they are missing. When Laban left to pursue Jacob, he would have been in a hurry. If these figurines were expensive, he might have checked for them.

**Genesis 31:31** And Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters away from me by force.'

Laban began with a set of questions, and then ended with a question: "Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harp? And why have you not allowed me to kiss my sons and my daughters? You have done foolishly in so doing. Why have you stolen my gods?" (Vv. 27–28, 30b) Jacob answers the first set of questions with, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters away from me by force.' "

This is probably a legitimate concern that Jacob had. He has been with Laban for 20 years and Laban has cheated him on many occasions during that period of time. Therefore, Jacob does not know what Laban is capable of doing. Jacob is not exaggerating Laban's actions by much. However, no matter what Laban has done to Jacob, God has always overruled him.

God has given Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a series of promises. If Jacob were to review these promises and trust God, then doing the right thing would be appropriate.

Jacob has continually tried to overcome evil with evil. Whatever Laban did to him, Jacob tried to overcome using the wrong methods. When Laban tried to limit Jacob's pay, Jacob used some goofy voodoo thing to try to compensate for being cheated. Even as Jacob told his wives, "You rather has changed my wages 10 times," he still had a boatload of livestock.

Next, Jacob addresses Laban's second concern:

**Genesis 31:32a** With whomever you find your gods, let him not live. Before our brothers, choose what is yours with me, and take it to you."

Jacob makes a very bold statement here that, whomever has Laban's gods should die. This suggests that there is the understood principle that (1) stealing is wrong and (2) death for stealing is the accepted punishment. Both men appear to agree to this.

Throughout the book of Genesis, before we come to the Law of Moses, there are specific standards by which men lived (or believed they should live); and these were universally agreed to.

### Standards of Behavior Agreed to before the Mosaic Law

1. Murder was wrong and punishable by death. Genesis 9:6
2. Lying is wrong. Genesis 12:18–19 20:9
3. Adultery is wrong. Genesis 20:3 26:11
4. Stealing is wrong; death was a reasonable punishment. Genesis 31:32
5. Envy leads to bad behavior. Genesis 26:12–15

These standards of behavior in ancient society make up the final 5 commandments, which were a social contract between men.

There was no one society that believed that stealing was right; and another society that believed that stealing was wrong. These are fundamental laws written upon our hearts (Romans 2:15).

### When Societal Norms Change:

This does not mean that societies do not try to turn things around. Today, in the United States, homosexual acts are being sold as natural and good; and that those who do not approve are not just judging the homosexual but they are classified as *haters*. This is such a perversion in so many ways.

The sin of homosexual actions is like any other addictive sin—it is no better or worse than an alcoholic drinking to excess or a drug addict doing drugs. However, when homosexual present this as normal behavior which should be accepted and taught in the schools, that is a different thing. We ought to resist evil. Teaching homosexuality is normal in grammar school would be akin to teaching children of that age group that taking drugs and drinking is a good thing. We studied back in Genesis 19 how unhealthy a lifestyle of homosexuality is. This literally reduces a person's life by 20 years.

So, as of late, our society has not only proclaimed homosexual acts as good and natural, but then has taken this a step further to misapply the concept of judgment and hatred. If you indicate that you believe that homosexual acts are wrong, you are considered to be judgmental and a hater—whereas, you are neither. Proponents of homosexuality are simply calling good evil and evil good. This is the warning found in Isa. 5:20 *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!* (ESV)



## What about Jesus' warning not to judge?

The Bible clearly teaches that homosexual actions are wrong, which we have already studied back in Genesis 19. However, what about *judging*? *Doesn't the Bible tell us that judging is wrong? Aren't we wrong to "judge" homosexual acts as being wrong?* There are specific circumstances in which we are not to judge. We are not to impute this or that sin to Charley Brown. Nor are we to judge Charley Brown as being more sinful than we are. This does not mean that we cannot determine whether this or that action is wrong. If the Bible tells us that something is wrong, then it is wrong. It is not judging to state that homosexual acts are wrong; it is not some violation of the Christian life to recognize that homosexual relationships are all about sin.

Furthermore, it is not wrong to judge when this is a part of your occupation. A judge, an official position in pretty much every society, has to make a judgment based upon the preponderance of the evidence. A judge does not get to declare, "God says that I should not judge, so I am dismissing this case based upon that."

Similarly, those who employ individuals need to make logical judgments about who they should hire and fire. This does not violate God's mandate not to judge. When writing an employee reference, that is not judging either.

You evaluate the children that your child hangs out with; that is also a normal, non-sinful activity. When you choose to marry, this involves careful evaluation of your partner-to-be (ideally speaking).

When you rent a house to someone, when you lend money (or your possessions) to someone, you are making a judgment call—and a legitimate one.

## When the most fundamental laws are changed:

Even these fundamental laws are challenged in society today. The government, for all intents and purposes, is stealing from businesses and individuals. Our tax rate is far too high for some individuals; and far too low for others. It is not impossible for a well-off person to pay 50–60% of his real income to federal and local governments in the United States. If some liberals had their way, this would be higher (so many yearn for the days of FDR, when 90% was the tax rate for the richest<sup>48</sup>). However, our [real tax rate today](#) is actually higher than it was back in the 1950's.

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<sup>48</sup> This was not the real tax rate for the rich. Those favored by the government received all kinds of loopholes which lowered their tax liability. The real tax rate of the 1950's was around [25%](#).



This is, in effect, stealing. If liberals were personally subject to this rate, they would understand that it is stealing. However, there are so many friends of the government who receive special breaks (I write this in 2015, where GE, a very financially successful organization, is paying [little or no taxes](#)<sup>49</sup>). My point being is, the government does take from one group of people and gives this to another group of people. This is common and this is, in effect, stealing (although the Bible does tell us to pay our taxes). So, in some societies, in some ways, stealing is authorized.

Dove-tailing with the homosexual angle, one business was [sued out of business](#) for not wanting to participate in a gay wedding by baking a cake for the gay couple. That is stealing as well.

Back to Genesis 31:

God has told Jacob to return to the Land of Promise, but God has not given Jacob a specific set of directions. God leaves that approach up to Jacob. Jacob has chosen to quietly slip away from Laban. He has spoken to his wives, and they are on board with this.

Jacob waits until the day that Laban is shearing sheep, which should afford him the longest head start.

#### Lesson 352: Genesis 31:26–33

#### Polygamy and Responsibility of the Husband

Jacob, who worked for Laban for 20 years, slipped away quietly without telling anyone, taking his wives and children with him. Laban found out and pursued Jacob and caught up with him, while Jacob was east of the Jordan. Laban first asked a series of questions which Jacob then answered.

**Genesis 31:26–30** And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly. It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" (ESV)

Laban asks Jacob, "Why did you leave secretly like that, not allowing me to say goodbye to my children and grandchildren; and why did you steal my gods?" Laban also reveals that God spoke to him in a dream and warned him not to rag on Jacob.

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<sup>49</sup> What GE actually pays is [disputed](#). Some [claim](#) that GE gets money back from the government; some [question](#) this.

**Genesis 31:31** Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. (ESV)

This was Jacob's answer to the first set of questions. Both men have legitimate beefs with one another. Laban would like to have had a proper goodbye with his daughters and grandchildren; but Jacob did not trust Laban (and Laban had given him little reason to).

On a personal level, Jacob certainly has reason to be suspicious of Laban and about what Laban might do; but Jacob is forgetting the promises of God, to his father, his grandfather and to him. Whatever Laban threatens to do or does, is overruled by God. God will keep His promises. He spoke these words directly to Jacob:

**Gen. 28:13–15** And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth 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 promised you."

So, it came down to this—who does Jacob actually fear? God or Laban?

Jacob continues:

**Genesis 31:32** With whomever you find your gods, let him not live. Before our brothers, choose what is yours with me, and take it to you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

Rachel knew where her father kept these deity statues and she slipped into his tent, while everyone was getting ready, and stole them from her father. Remember that she only has one child to prepare for this trip; and she has a maidservant who can assist in that. Her sister had a passel of children. So Leah has all kinds of preparation to do; Rachel had a lot less, which allowed her the time to slip away and to steal these statuettes.

These statues no doubt have both some religious value and likely some inherent monetary value (they may be crafted from gold and silver and contain some jewels or precious stones). I am assuming that they are made out of precious metal because they are fairly small—they will fit in the saddlebag of Rachel's camel, and she will cover them up by sitting over them.

We have no idea her reason for stealing them. If I were to speculate, it would be that she expected an inheritance—previously spoken of as silver—and that her father clearly cut her out of this inheritance—so she grabbed whatever she could. These were small enough that she could take them without anyone realizing it (other than her father when he returned home).

We don't know what is going to happen to her if she is found out. Jacob is brazen enough to say, "If someone stole from you, that person should die." It never occurred to him (or to Laban) that the thief is Rachel (or anyone else from Laban's own family). If either man even slightly suspected Rachel, then Jacob would have never made such a statement.

**Genesis 31:33** And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tents of the two slave women, and he did not find [them]. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

Laban searches everywhere for these little deity statues. This also tells us that all of these adults had their own separate tents. This is one of those many places in Scripture where a custom or tradition is mentioned, where the Bible is neutral.

Along these same lines, the Bible is not saying that this is how marriages ought to be—and that when you marry so many women, everyone needs to have their own place. That is simply what happened. It is necessary to separate ancient customs from Biblical mandates; and Biblical laws related to ancient customs.

**Application:** Let me give you an odd application. Since gay marriage is now recognized by the state, it is very likely that polygamy will be next. We all know that gay marriage is not really a marriage and that polygamy, although this is a marriage, is not God's ideal. So, what if a polygamous family is saved? What then? In most cases, unless one of the women chooses to leave, they simply continue on as a polygamous marriage. In any sort of marriage, the husband assumes responsibility for the woman. He is going to make certain that she is taken care of, in every way that a husband should take care of his wife. Marriage for any man is first and foremost a responsibility, first to the woman he marries, and then to the children that they bring up in the world. He becomes the leader of that household; and most importantly, the husband is the spiritual leader. If a man has married two women, then he remains in that state, even if everyone is saved after their polygamous marriage was initiated. He has assumed responsibility for two (or more) women, which obviously become quite complex in the same household. What the husband cannot do is say, "I am a Christian now; God's plan is for one man and one woman marriages; so one of you has to go." He is still responsible.

The Bible deals with the subject of the husband's responsibility in marriage. R. B. Thieme, Jr. used to say that the husband owns 51% of the stock in marriage; let me suggest that his responsibility is higher than that.

### **The Husband's Responsibility in Marriage**

1. The husband is the authority in the family; and it is up to him to manage the family the right way. 1Tim. 3:1–5 **The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well,**

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with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? (ESV) Even though this is a passage about a man who wants to become a pastor of a church, the way he manages his own family is of utmost importance. A man who is unable to control his own family is not fit to be a pastor-teacher.

2. 1Tim. 5:8 **But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.** (NASB) A husband assumes a great many responsibilities as the husband and father. First and foremost, he is responsible for his wife and children. He has to make certain that they are taken care of. But this verse goes much further than that. Those would be of his own household. Who would be among *his own* outside of his own household? Possibly his own parents, his mother and father-in-law; and, in many cases, other relatives. The entire context of this is the responsibility of believers to various people in their periphery. The husband is to see after the necessities of his family.
3. 1Cor. 11:3 **But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.** (NIV) Just as Jesus is the head of every man (He loved us; He died for us; He saved us; He paid for our sins; He brought us out of slavery, paying for us with His blood). Although the man is the authority over the woman, he is to be the authority over the woman just as Jesus is his Authority. There is much more to this authority than subjecting a woman to close-order drill. That is not the exercise of authority (although it is not necessarily out of bounds for some marriages). There are a variety of ways that men lead in life; and in marriage. If you, as a man, are going to lead your wife in a highly authoritative way, then make sure that she fully understands that prior to marrying you. A man should not be one way before marriage, and then turn dramatically different after.
4. Eph. 5:23 **For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.** (NASB) Again, the authority of the husband is affirmed, but it is parallel to Christ as the head of the church. Therefore, this is not some impersonal application of military authority over a frightened 5'2" 120 lb. little woman. All that Christ has done for us is applicable. A woman should feel safe and protected by her husband—even when she is in a lousy mood (I have been told that some women can be moody from time to time).
5. This is why it is important for the man to have some spiritual maturity—or, at least some spiritual growth—so that he can lead his family in the right direction.
6. As far back as Deut. 24:5, it is clear that the husband has the responsibility in a marriage: **If a man has recently married, he must not be sent to war or have any other duty laid on him. For one year he is to be free to stay at home and bring happiness to the wife he has married.** (NIV) It is up to the husband to show his wife that she made the right decision to marry him.
7. Eph. 5:28–30 **In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh,**

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- but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of His body. (ESV; capitalized) Most normal males do nothing intentionally to harm themselves. Many make some attempt to eat right and to even exercise to some extent. Just as we nourish and cherish are own bodies, so should be our attitudes toward our wives. This does not mean that we are on diet patrol for the wife, but that we nourish and cherish our marital relationship.
8. This is further supported by Mark 10:6–9 (Jesus is speaking) “But from the beginning of creation, `God made them male and female.' `Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (ESV; Genesis 1:27 2:24) The husband and the wife become a singular unit; and the husband is in charge of it.
  9. A similar passage is Col. 3:19 **Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.** (ESV) The word *to be harsh* is *pikrainō* (πικραίνω) [pronounced *pihk-RAH-ee-no*], which means, 1) to make bitter; 1a) to produce a bitter taste in the stomach; 2) to embitter. exasperate; 2a) render angry, indignant; 2b) to be embittered, irritated; 2c) to visit with bitterness, to grieve (deal bitterly with). Thayer definitions only. Strong's #4087. With this verb is the negative. Understand what is being said here might be better explained in the next point:
  10. The husband is commanded to love the wife; the wife is *never* commanded to love her husband (Eph. 5:33). It is quite obvious that a man is not necessarily going to *feel* in love every moment of the day; nor are we being told here that we need to somehow conjure up those feelings all of the time. The husband's love toward his wife is *what he does*. This is the fundamental difference between the husband and wife—the husband is the initiator and the wife is the responder. In courtship, generally speaking, it is the man who is the aggressor. After marriage has taken place, the man is still the aggressor. I don't mean in sex; but in love. In sex, the Bible allows for either the husband or the wife to be the aggressor (1Cor. 7:4). However, in love, it is the husband who is the aggressor—both before and after marriage.
  11. 1Peter 3:7 **Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.** (ESV) *In an understanding way* is actually *according to the standard of knowledge*. It is incumbent upon the husband to know his wife, to understand her, to have knowledge of her, and to treat her accordingly. In most cases, this is going to be treating her with tenderness. I understand the *weaker vessel* to refer to two things: in most cases, the wife is physically weaker to the husband. It is wrong for the husband to use his greater physical strength to bully his wife in any way. Secondly, in marriage, the husband has the authority; therefore, the wife is the weaker vessel inasmuch as, she is second in command. Now, both the husband and wife are equal before God—so we are both **heirs in the grace of life**. Furthermore, a husband and wife must be of one accord, so that they can continue to have a strong prayer life. Discord in the home means that the

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- powerful prayers of a husband and wife together are no longer powerful.
12. The man must recognize that he is not complete without the woman. God created the woman to complete the man. Logically, you do not harm or abuse that which completes you. Genesis 2:19–20
  13. Even for the unbeliever, his blessed lot in life is his wife. Eccles. 9:9
  14. It is these principles which make it fairly easy for two people to determine if they should wed:
    - 1) For the man—is this the woman you are prepared to take care of and be responsible for, no matter what happens in life?
    - 2) For the woman—is this man someone you are willing to give your volition to?
    - 3) If either person thinks *no*, then they should not get married. How they feel about one another is not really the issue.

The Bible has a great deal to say about a man and his wife. Little of this teaching makes any sense when applied to so-called *gay marriage* (which is a misnomer, regardless of the law).

Back to the narrative next time:

### Lesson 353: Genesis 31:33–42

### Laban Searches for His Deity Statues

Jacob stole away from Laban's land, taking with him his wives and children. Jacob's wife Rachel also stole the little deity statues that belonged to Laban. At this point in the narrative, Laban is searching Jacob's camp for these statues, not realizing that his daughter is the thief.

**Genesis 31:33** And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the tents of the two slave women, and he did not find [them]. And he went out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

Here is something to consider—Laban went into Leah and Rachel's tents. Did he believe his daughters stole from him? Was he willing to execute either of his daughters? At this point, it is hard to determine what was in his mind. Obviously, he needed to search everywhere—but whether he would have required the execution of his own daughters—that is a tough question which would require a great deal of speculation. Perhaps he was simply being thorough? Perhaps he thought someone hid them in their tent? In any case, Laban has their tents searched as well.

**Genesis 31:34** And Rachel had taken the images and put them into the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all the tent, but did not find them.



It appears that during all of this commotion, accusation, etc., that Rachel had to figure out what to do. We do not know when this took place; perhaps as soon as she realized that her father was near.



In any case, at some point, she moved these little statues to the saddle of her camel and then sits on the camel in order to cover them. This tells us that these little deity statues are fairly small. They could be found and possibly even seen in the saddle of the camel; but she is able to sit over them with her Mideastern garb and cover them up completely.

**Rachel Sitting on the Household Gods of Laban by Francesco Ferrando** from National Trust. Painted: c.1720; Oil on canvas. *The scene shows an episode from the Old Testament. Rachel stole sacred figurines, 'the household gods', from the house of her father, Laban, and hid them in a camel's pack. Here she is concealing them from him by protesting her inability to get up due to it being her time of the month. Both she and her older sister, Leah, were married to Jacob. He was finally escaping to Canaan after 14 years of labour, undertaken as payment for marrying Rachel. After Laban discovers the theft he sets out in pursuit and soon catches up with them. Meanwhile, his servants are searching a chest and Jacob is pointing out that he does not have the idols.* Painting and text from [BBC](#).

As to value, that is difficult to even speculate. The inclusion of gold or gem stones increases their value significantly. Today, we can purchase a deity statue on ebay or amazon for under \$100; however, if we specify a gold plated statuette, such a statue will be worth easily \$1000 or more; and if the statue is solid gold with gemstones, the value increases ten thousandfold.

What we have observed are snippets of the conversation between Jacob and Laban. It probably was much more detailed than this and perhaps went on for 30 minutes or more. We know from the book of Job that people from that era could be very long-winded.

**Genesis 31:35** But she said to her father, “Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before you. For the custom of women is upon me.” And he searched, but did not find the images.

**Fresco by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo of Rachel sitting on the idols.** Posted at [Wikipedia](#).

Interestingly enough, I came upon two works of art which commemorate this event, and both of them have Rachel sitting on the ground rather than on a camel, as the text clearly indicates. This reveals an assumption which I have made. The text actually says nothing about a camel. She is sitting on a camel’s saddle; the two artists assume that the saddle is on the ground somewhere, and that Rachel is sitting upon it separate from the camel.



So Rachel is sitting upon the deity statues on the saddle of the camel, but she refuses to get off the saddle (and possible from off the camel) because she tells her father she is experiencing her period. Many a woman has gotten her way by citing her period as the reason.

The fact that Laban did not insist on checking her camel (or, saddle) suggests that he did not suspect her. Or, if he did, finding that she is intentionally hiding the figurines could subject her to being executed.

**Genesis 31:36** And 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 after me?”

As Laban searches and searches intently, Jacob becomes more and more indignant.

There is only one thing which was actually taken from Laban—those small deities—and since he does not find them, Jacob gets self-righteous and huffy about it.

All of this suggests that Jacob was very careful about Laban’s livestock. He did not just let them roam free, but took care of them. We know this because Laban has not in any way complained about his own livestock. That is a big plus in the Jacob column.

**Genesis 31:37** For you have searched all my stuff; what have you found of all your household stuff? Set it here before my brothers and your brothers, that they may judge between us both.

And Jacob rubs it in big time. The word *brothers* is used quite loosely simply to refer to the people who are with Jacob and the people who are with Laban. This same use of the word *brother* is found even today in everyday speech.

“Put everything that you found right out there in front of everyone, and then we will be judged by our own respective crews,” Jacob suggests. Nothing has been found, so there is nothing that Laban can place out in front of everyone.

Bear in mind that, unless the deity statues were of great value, then this is really not the main issue between Jacob and Laban. There are some real issues between these two men; but the focus is upon this comparatively insignificant slight (however, we do not know the value of these figurines, so they could be quite expensive).

What is really important is, did Jacob provide reasonable years of service to Laban? Have Laban’s daughters been treated well? Given the circumstances, is this split up a reasonable thing to do?

Jacob testifies to his own responsibilities regarding Laban’s livestock.

**Genesis 31:38** I was with you these twenty years. Your ewes and she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of your flock I have not eaten.

Jacob has a great many faults. However, he is an honest man and a good worker.

*To cast their young* means for the ewes and female goats to either spontaneously abort or to give birth to stillborn lambs. In other words, Jacob took good care of Laban’s flocks and they had a strong and healthy birthrate. In a previous chapter, Jacob was careful about breeding healthy animals with other healthy animals.

Jacob did not even eat Laban’s animals. I would have assumed that this would be acceptable, for Jacob to occasionally cook up one of Laban’s animals, but Jacob did not even do that. This suggests that Laban’s sons probably appeared from time to time and required an accounting of Laban’s livestock.

Jacob is testifying to his own honor as a herdsman for Laban; and this is certainly of greater importance. This is their fundamental relationship—owner and herdsman. Given what we have read, and given the fact that Laban is not complaining about the condition of his herd, suggests that Jacob was a good caretaker of his property.

**Genesis 31:39** That which was mangled I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. You required it at my hand, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.

If there was any loss, Jacob took the hit. As with many Bible passages, we do not know everything related to it. Did Laban's sons come into Jacob's camp now and again and do a head count? They must have kept careful records. That seems to be the case, although we are not told that anywhere else. What would further suggest this is, the great concern Laban's sons had about Jacob's increasing wealth. Certainly, they would want to check and recheck Jacob's stock.

Is Jacob exaggerating his faithful service? That is possible, but I don't think that is what is happening here. Otherwise, Laban would call him on it.

Jacob is far from being a perfect man, but this does not mean that he is a dishonest or lazy worker. Again, the lack of complaints by Laban about Jacob's work suggests that Jacob is giving an accurate recitation of his service.

**Genesis 31:40** I was there; in the day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night. And my sleep departed from my eyes.

Much of the time, Jacob is going to be taking these animals about to find fresh food; fresh grass. So there are no pens to keep them or to protect them; but there were predators. Jacob was extremely responsible over these years. He took very good care of Laban's animals.

We know Jacob in some fairly negative ways. We know how he got Esau's birthright; we know how he deceived his own father. We know that he was heavily influenced by his mother; and how his parents playing favorites did some damage to his psyche. We know that he sneaked away from Laban. So Jacob is not a great man (so many of us can relate to him because of this). But, he did put in an honest, full day's work.

So, Jacob's defense of himself is probably not overblown. This is probably quite accurate. Jacob had been a good worker for Laban. Jacob was responsible; and Laban was blessed, as God's blessing to Jacob overflowed to Laban.

Laban enjoyed great financial increase by his association with Jacob. You may recall that at least twice in the Bible, statements are made about God materially blessing both Abraham and Isaac; so it seems reasonable that God would bless Jacob as well—and that those associated with Jacob would enjoy blessing by association.

As we have already seen, Jacob was prospered by God, much to the chagrin of Laban's sons. That Laban is similarly blessed is a reasonable assumption to make.

**Genesis 31:41** And I have been twenty years in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six for your flocks. And you have changed my wages ten times.

*House* here actually refers to a *compound*. They probably lived on the same land, but all in their own tents (as we have already seen—v. 33).

That Laban is a shifty, dishonest and greedy boss—that seems to clearly be the case.

Jacob was with Laban for 20 years. Although we only witnessed the negotiation of wages once, Laban reworked the wages 10 times for Jacob. Jacob was to keep all of the flock who were born not all white. Once a large number of the flock were born that were not all white, Laban changed it to this type or to that type; and God would continue to bless Jacob under those circumstances. So, if Jacob's wages were to be the spotted newborn, God would see to it that there would be a large number of spotted newborn.

Jacob's goofy scheme with almond branches put in front of the animals when they were feeding had nothing to do with it. This was typical of Jacob's approach. God was there and God blessed Jacob in spite of his own actions. As we have seen over and over again, what Jacob did by way of his personal schemes never contributed anything to his blessing.

Remember that (1) Jacob took advantage of Esau when he was hungry, and traded a meal for his birthright; (2) he deceived his own father in order to receive the blessing meant for Esau; and (3) he came up with some scheme to affect the outcome of the breeding of his animals. (4) And now, Jacob has sneaked away from Laban. These are examples of human works; and, as you can see, they contribute absolutely nothing to the plan of God. Jacob was *never* better off as the result of any of his schemes. Yet God remained faithful to Jacob (and to Abraham), despite Jacob's scheming. None of Jacob's schemes resulted in him being better off than before; only God's blessing saw to that.

**Application:** Human works contribute nothing to the plan of God. God's plan moves forward, regardless of what we do.

Most people have had the experience of putting a tremendous amount of effort into doing this or that; and then realizing that, at the end, this effort was all for naught. This describes much of what Jacob has done.

Both men have profited by their relationship. Both men will walk away from their association the better for it. Laban's livestock was increased dramatically; Jacob's life was improved dramatically. Laban gave Jacob a peaceful, guided existence and Jacob gave Laban 20 years of faithful service. Jacob comes away with great wealth and a very large family. Both men should be thanking one another, yet neither man appears to recognize this.

One thing that I have noticed with some people is, they ought to recognize that they have been greatly blessed in their lives (which is true of many people that I know), and yet, they do not feel blessed, they are not satisfied and they are not grateful for their lives. This means that they have no capacity for life (which is provided for believers through Bible doctrine).

Now, what Jacob can rightfully stand upon is his work ethic and his faithfulness to Laban as his boss. He is even able to testify to God's faithfulness in his own life.



**Genesis 31:42** Unless the God of my fathers, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac had been with me, surely you would have sent me away now empty. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night.”

Jacob recognizes that God has been with him. God has spoken to him only two times, but Jacob fully understands that the whole time, God has been with him.

*The fear of Isaac* simply refers to Isaac’s relationship to God.

*God rebuking Laban last night* refers to God coming to Laban in a dream and telling him not to make any judgment calls concerning Jacob.

One thing that ought to be clear to you, if you are a growing believer: God is with you. You will never have God come to you in a dream; you will never hear God speak to you out of the sky—but if you are experiencing any spiritual growth, then the fact of God in your life becomes more and more real.

To be more specific, if you have been a believer in Jesus Christ for 5 or 10 years, and you do not feel any different than you did at the beginning; if you do not think differently than before; or you don’t have a stronger faith in God, then there is something wrong with your spiritual life. Most of the time, this comes down to two things: (1) rebound (naming your sins to God); and (2) spiritual growth through the study of God’s Word under a pastor who teaches accurately and with authority. If you do not rebound and if you are not growing regularly (daily) by means of the teaching of the Word of God, then you probably do feel as if your spiritual life is at a standstill.

Spiritual growth does not occur in any other way. You cannot sing spiritual hymns to get you to spiritual maturity. You cannot do works around a church and become spiritually mature in that way. You cannot try really, really hard not to sin, and that effort result in spiritual maturity (although the fewer sins you commit, the better life you will have). You cannot give away all of your money to the poor in order to become spiritually mature.

Apart from the intake of Bible doctrine, there are no combination of behaviors which result in spiritual growth.

### **Lesson 354: Genesis 31:43–51 The Non-Aggression Pact Between Jacob and Laban**

Jacob has worked for his father-in-law Laban for the past 20 years, and after being treated poorly and dishonestly, Jacob slipped away with his wives and children. Laban, when he realized that Jacob was gone, pursued him and has caught up to him at this point in the narrative.

Laban has two basic complaints: (1) Jacob left without allowing Laban to say goodbye to his daughters and grandchildren; and (2) someone stole some idolatrous figurines from Laban which were possibly valuable. Neither Jacob nor Laban realize that Rachel, Jacob’s



wife, stole these figurines. Laban was unable to find these figurines because they were in the pocket of a saddle upon which Rachel sat and would not move.

Then Laban points out a fact which is quite difficult to dispute:

**Genesis 31:43** And Laban answered and said to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, and the sons my sons, and the flocks my flocks. All that you see is mine. And what can I do this day to these my daughters, or to their sons which they have borne?”

Laban makes a valid point. Jacob’s wives are his daughters. All of Jacob’s flocks came from Laban’s flocks. All that Jacob could see originally came from Laban. Laban, therefore, has both a stake and an emotional investment in them.

Jacob may have worked hard for Laban, but Laban provided the base for all that Jacob built up. Quite obviously, God provided the increase.

In any case, from Laban’s point of view, Jacob has really given him the short shrift.

However, Laban, because God came to him the previous night and issued some warnings, has decided not to get angry or violent with Jacob.

Jacob, on the other hand, does not really recognize his indebtedness to Laban. Jacob cannot get past the fact that Laban is a conniving sonuvabitch, much like himself. Jacob, like many of us, cannot get past the way that Laban has treated him. He does not recognize that Laban still had trusted Jacob with his daughters and his wealth (his livestock). Jacob, because God overruled the wrong the Laban did to Jacob, was greatly blessed and very prosperous. Laban was never able to overrule the hand of God. However, it is clear that Jacob cannot get past this emotionally; and it is likely that Jacob does not even recognize how much God has blessed him.

Most of us are far more blessed than we realize. It is our lack of spiritual growth and often our mental attitude sins which keep us from recognizing just how much God has blessed us.

If Jacob had true capacity for life, he would recognize that all of his family and wealth are a result of his life with Laban, and this would be a good time and place for him to thank Laban.

Jacob is not there yet in his spiritual life. However, his son Joseph, will be. His son Joseph will face a number of circumstances and people which would appear to negatively impact his life, but Joseph will, a few chapters into the future, give us the Old Testament version of Romans 8:28 (**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.** —ESV; capitalized).

Jacob should have been able to both hear and agree with his father-in-law Laban. “The daughters are my daughters, and the sons my sons, and the flocks my flocks. All that you

see is mine. And what can I do this day to these my daughters, or to their sons which they have borne?" God gave Jacob the blessing, but all of this came from Laban.

In life, we do not meet any perfect people. We do not know people who always do the right thing. We will run into people, from time to time, who will do us wrong. However, bear in mind that God is in control, and God works all things for good.

Laban continues speaking to Jacob, suggesting that which is quite reasonable:

**Genesis 31:44** And come now, let us make a covenant, you and I. And let it be for a witness between you and me."

Laban knows that God is involved in all of this, as God has spoken to him. Part of the reason the Jacob took off without a word to Laban was Laban's treatment of Jacob.

As readers, we ought to see that both men have a case; both men have a viewpoint. Laban is not all wrong and Jacob is not all right (or, vice versa).

They have decided to part with some mutual respect, with a contract or an agreement drawn up between them. Essentially, Laban is going to make some reasonable demands on Jacob and Jacob will agree to them.

**Genesis 31:45** And Jacob took a stone and set it up as a memorial pillar.

Probably, this is an oblong stone which is set on end, so that it stands out. Even though it says that Jacob set this up; Jacob may have ordered some of his servants to set it up. This may have involve a number of men.

**Genesis 31:46** And Jacob said to his brothers, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap. And they ate there upon the heap.

In order to hold an oblong stone up, other stones were probably piled around it. The idea was, to make a monument that is clearly set up by man.

**Genesis 31:47** Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. (ESV)

Even though the Bible speaks of the confounding of languages at the Tower of Babel, very little is said about language after that. This is one of the few places where language is mentioned. Both men give a name to the heap of stones using their own language.

Although brothers Abraham and Nahor would have spoken the same language, their grandchildren, Jacob and Laban, respectively, did not. Laban and Bethuel (his father) are both called *Syrians* (or *Aramæans* in Genesis 25:20). This refers to their location, their language and, to some extent, their culture. Laban probably grew up speaking Syrian as his primary language or as his co-language.

When Abraham moved to Canaan, little is said about the language he speaks. He interacted with a variety of peoples in that land, who certainly did not have a common language (the king of Sodom, Melchizedek of Salem, Abimelech of Gerar); and nothing is ever said about their interaction as speakers of different languages. This is one of the few times where it is suggested that Laban and Jacob clearly have different primary languages.

We have had this hinted at before. If you will recall the original interaction between the Abraham's servant and those he met at the well, the language was very simple and elementary, at first.

**Genesis 31:47** And Laban called it in Syrian, *Heap of the Testimony*, and Jacob called it in Hebrew, *Heap of Testimony*. (MKJV; which is apparently the translation that I have used throughout most of this study)

You may recall when Jacob first met the people at Laban's well, that their speech was stilted and short. There are many similarities between Syriac and Hebrew. However, it is clear here that there were also dramatic differences. In the first v. 47, we have the transliteration from the Hebrew; and in the second v. 47, we have their respective translations (which are identical).

Men speaking these respective languages could communicate with one another; but they probably knew a little about one another's language. Laban spoke Syrian and Jacob spoke Hebrew.

**Genesis 31:48** And Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me this day. Therefore the name of it was called *Heap of Testimony*,...

Laban believed that he was right and that Jacob was wrong. However, he did not want to separate from his son-in-law and from his daughters and grandchildren with animosity between them. He did not want to be remembered by his daughters and grandchildren in a negative way, knowing that they may never see one another again.

**Genesis 31:49** ...and Watchtower, for he said, Jehovah watch between you and me when we are absent from one another.

Laban also gave this heap of rocks the name Mits<sup>e</sup>pâh (מצפֶּה) pronounced *mitz<sup>e</sup>-PAW*, which means *outlook point, watchtower*; transliterated *Mizpah*. Strong's #4708 (& #4709) BDB #859. Some translations transliterate this (ESV, WEB) and some translate it (Green's literal translation, MKJV).

Properly, these verses should be taken together:

**Genesis 31:48–49** Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." Therefore he named it Galeed, and Mizpah [= *Watchtower*], for he said, "The LORD watch between you and me, when we are out of one another's sight. (ESV)

These are two men who have developed a dislike for one another over these past 20 years—or, at the very least, they did not trust one another. There is enough information in this narrative which should indicate that they both had good reason to be that way. Jacob, all of this time, believed that he was being cheated by Laban on wages (which he was). Laban believed that Jacob just took off without saying goodbye, without indicating any appreciation whatsoever—and Laban was right about this. Jacob did not really appreciate his relationship to Laban, which resulted in 2 wives, 2 mistresses and at least 12 children, at this point. In fact, all of Jacob's blessing and wealth, came from, originally, from Laban (and ultimately from God, obviously).

So Laban is saying, "I can't be there to watch over my daughters, so I ask the LORD to do this." Even though there is some local religion in Laban's life, he uses the proper name for God in this passage.

**"The Reconciliation of Jacob and Laban" by Italian Baroque painter [Ciro Ferri](#). From [Dwelling the Word](#), accessed August 12, 2015.**

**Genesis 31:50** If you will not afflict my daughters, or if you will take wives besides my daughters, no man is with us. See! God is witness between you and me."

Laban asks for his daughters to be treated well; and for Jacob not to take any more wives. He calls for God to be a witness between them. These are all reasonable requests. Jacob, as a rich man, could easily have more wives and more children. Laban is asking him to agree not to.

Unlike agreements that many people enter into in this era, these agreements were taken very seriously. When God was a witness, both men would endeavor to keep their part of the agreement.





**Genesis 31:51** And Laban said to Jacob, “Behold this heap, and behold the pillar which I have set up between you and me.

This is interesting—back in v. 45, Jacob is said to have set up this pillar. However, here, Laban says that he set up the pillar. This suggests that both men, and those working for them, all had a hand in doing this.

Despite his many flaws, Laban is saying all of the right things here, and it does not appear that he is doing this to put something over on Jacob. He seems to recognize that this will be the last time that he sees Jacob and his daughters.

**Genesis 31:52** This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and that you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.

This will be a pact of non-aggression. Jacob would not pass by this heap of stones to do harm to Laban or vice versa. It would stand between them both as a witness to this agreement; an agreement entered into with God’s approval.

The idea is that, perhaps one of them one day would start to stew and start to get angry and decide, “I’m going to bring my servants with me, and pay that so-and-so back for all the crap that he has given me.” But then, in order to go from one place to the other, they would have to pass by this monument, and this monument represents a pledge taken by both men before God.

To many of us today, whatever pledges we make, whatever contracts that we sign, are meaningless, if we choose to do something else. I have signed a great many contracts in my business; and very often with people who have no intention of fulfilling their part of the contract. They look at the contract as something they have to sign in order to get what they want; but they do not see it as a obligation of personal honor or even as a legal document.

They say, *there is no honor among thieves*; sometimes, there is no honor at all.

This is different between Laban and Jacob. These are men who have some very strong feelings about one another—not feelings of mutual respect and love. However, Jacob is married to Laban’s daughters; Jacob is caring for Laban’s grandchildren. Therefore, it is to the benefit of both men to have a pact where they have set aside their personal differences.

Such agreements are a part of married life all of the time. You may dislike your in-laws, for whatever reason, justified or not. However, for the times that you see them, you make nice, for the benefit of your spouse and the benefit of your children (their grandchildren). This is known as being civilized, not hypocritical. As an aside, we spend time, sometimes every day, with people that we do not really like. It is normal to still say, *hello, good morning, how are you?* It is inappropriate (at work or wherever) to tell them what you think

about their wardrobe, their taste in friends, cars or whatever, even if close proximity to such things makes you want to vomit.

**Application:** Let me give you a real-life situation: now teachers are dealing with all kinds of confused children, boys who may wear effeminate clothing, girls who might try to act like boys, and even children whose foolish parents have allowed them to transmorph into some other gender. We all know this is wrong; the Bible is clear on such things. However, this does not mean that, every time we see little Johnny that we give him an earful. Little Johnny might be wearing a bra and lipstick, and we just roll with it. If this is allowed in your school, then you let it go. You do not praise him as if he has done something great and brave—he hasn't—but you do not beat him over the head with his own perversion either. Much of the problem here is related to his parents who would allow and sometimes even encourage such stupid behavior. Much of the problem is cultural where children are made to believe that, there is a reasonable chance that you might be a girl but born as a boy (or vice versa) and that if you recognize it and act on it, that shows courage. 30 years ago, our society understood that this shows anything but courage, but we are in the culture that we are in.

In all cases, this is a person for whom Christ died, and often their acting out simply reveals just how mixed up and empty they are without faith in Christ and without Bible doctrine. There are many people who have recovered from this lifestyle and from this confusion (just google *recovering homosexuals*). It is not up to us to change their exterior; when the time presents itself, we present the Lord Jesus Christ. We let Christ work from the inside out.

Whereas, only 2% or so of Americans self-identify as homosexual, a much larger percentage have had same-sex attractions—some occasional and some often—and our society seems to now be selling the idea that, if you feel a same-sex attraction at anytime, well that simply means you are born a homosexual. The generational change in society will simply mean that more of those who would have learned to resist such attractions will give in to them, and that perversion will run rampant in a larger and larger segment of our society.

In any case, I apparently have gone out on far too many tangents at this time, going from striking a mutual agreement, to tolerating in-laws, to tolerating those at work that you might not normally want to tolerate, to tolerating people who suffer from a confused sexuality due to the views of society today. We will return to the narrative next time.

## Lesson 355: Genesis 31:51–55

## Concluding Genesis 31

Jacob and his father-in-law Laban have come to a mutual understanding, and are making a covenant with one another. They have amassed a pile of rocks to commemorate this agreement, and they will part—perhaps not as friends, but not as enemies either.

[Genesis 31:51–52](#) And Laban said to Jacob, “Behold this heap, and behold the pillar which I have set up between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a



witness, that I will not pass over this heap to you, and that you will not pass over this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.

*This heap* refers to the pile of stones that they had gathered, with probably a long oblong stone set upright in the midst of the pile. The idea is, this will stand out from the other stones laying about, and it commemorates and records their agreement with one another.

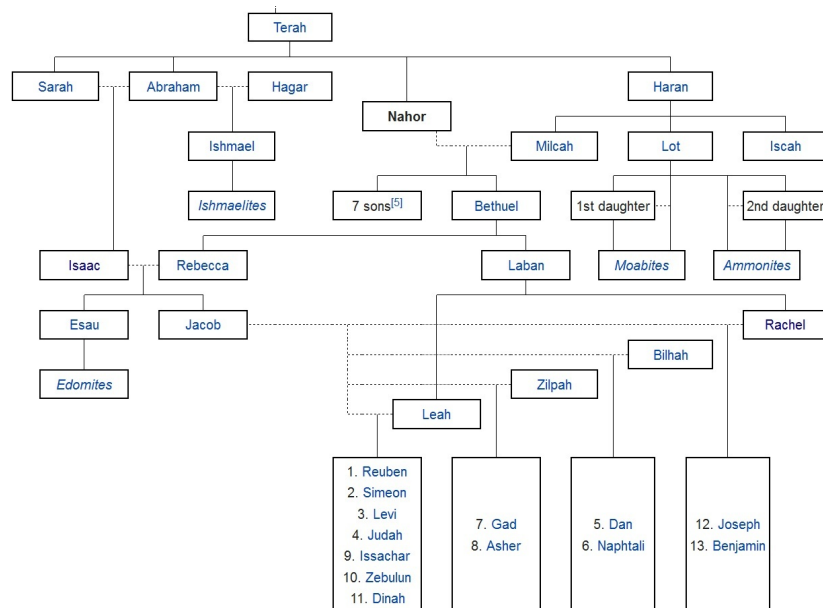
Laban continues:

Genesis 31:53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us.” And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.

Abraham and Nahor were brothers. Abraham’s grandson is Jacob and Nahor’s grandson is Laban (now Jacob’s father-in-law). Laban speaks of the God of Jacob’s grandfather and the God of his own grandfather—Who is the same God—as if there is some kind of equality in their lines.

*Their father* refers to Terah ben Nahor (Nahor I<sup>50</sup>), who is both Jacob and Laban’s great grandfather.

**Terah’s Genealogy** is from [Wikipedia](#), accessed August 18, 2015. Terah’s father is Nahor I, the son of Serug.



Interestingly enough, Jacob does not swear by their common God, but he swears by *the Fear of his father Isaac*. Today we may understand *the fear of Isaac* to refer to his faith; to the allegiance that he has for his God. God, as the giver of life, was understood to be feared, indicating both fear and respect. God was understood to be thought about. Jacob, despite his many failures, has a better understanding of their common God—Whom he learned about primarily from Rebekah, his mother (Rebekah is Laban’s sister). So, Laban is both Jacob’s father-in-law and his uncle (and, I think that they would be second cousins, having the same great grandfather?).

Recall that, earlier that day, Laban was searching for his little god figurines. Therefore, his grasp of matters theological was both confused and syncretic. Furthermore, when God called Abraham, he was told to specifically separate from his father’s house (Genesis 12:1)

<sup>50</sup> Nahor, the brother of Abraham, would be Nahor II.

and to go to Canaan, an order which Abraham only followed in part (Terah took Abram his son and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife, and they went forth together from Ur of the Chaldeans to go into the land of Canaan, but when they came to Haran, they settled there. The days of Terah were 205 years, and Terah died in Haran.—Genesis 11:31–32; ESV). Presumably, one of the primary reasons for Abraham to separate from his father was that there was idolatry in his family (And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Long ago, your fathers lived beyond the Euphrates, Terah, the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods.'—Joshua 24:2; ESV). So, Jacob does not appear to want to swear by their *common gods*.

**Genesis 31:53** The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac.

Note that there is a spiritual heritage here. We began with Abraham in our study of the patriarchs, but the God of Abraham is a Revealed God; a God Who revealed himself to Nahor. This does not mean that God came to Nahor many times. It could simply be that Nahor knew God through what existed of the book of Genesis and the book of Job. However, as noted above, there was theological vagueness in that part of Abraham's family. Therefore, so that Jacob does not intermix with whatever false notions of God that Laban has, he swears **by the Fear of his father Isaac**. As we have studied previously, this *fear* refers to a respect for and a concentration on the Revealed God.

We never go into detail about that branch of Terah's family in Syria and their relationship to God. It is clear that a belief in the Revealed God existed and we find testimony to that given when Rebekah is sent with Abraham's servant to marry Isaac. When the servant speaks about his entire trip that resulted in his finding them as the will of God, they agreed and could not argue with him about that.

On the other hand, there was confusion in their household as well, as revealed by their possession of household deities. We will know a little about this portion of their genealogy, but very little. There may be hundreds of family members living in this area and there may be 10 or 20. We simply do not even know their numbers.

In fact, at this point in time, for all intents and purposes, we are done with Laban. He will be mentioned 3 times after this chapter, but only in passing. His genealogy will never be explored. In fact, you may remember that we never even learn the names of his sons.

The faith of Y<sup>e</sup>howah is passed on to Abraham's descendants; and that faith continues down through many generations. We do not know if that same faith is passed down on a limited basis to a few generations of Laban—that his sons are not even named in Scripture suggests that they did not exercise faith in the Revealed God. Laban apparently did believe in the God of Abraham, but his faith apparently took in other gods as well.

Because the faith of Abraham has been passed down to Isaac and then to Jacob, we are interested in their genealogy. The genealogy that is important is that which takes us from

Adam to Abraham to David and finally to Jesus. This is the genealogy of promise, and the only genealogy followed out fully in the Word of God. There are a few other lines in Scripture, but, apart from the first few chapters of Chronicles, other lines are mentioned usually once and then forgotten—and never as a linear genealogy (Genesis 11 is an example of a linear genealogy).

**Genesis 31:54** And Jacob offered sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brothers to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night in the mountain.

You will note that Jacob takes the lead in the worship of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, offering up an animal sacrifice. As we know today, animal sacrifices looked forward to Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. They no doubt had some understanding that their sins and wrongdoing were passed along to the animal which was then sacrificed. However, I have not found any evidence that these men of old understood that the animal sacrifices that they offered up were a picture of the Messiah to come.

We no longer sacrifice animals because that was a type of Christ, and all typology referring to Jesus Christ came to an end when the antitype, the True Lamb without spot and blemish, Jesus Christ, appears.

*His brothers* refer not to his literal brothers, but to those men who are with him—either as employees or as slaves. This apparently includes Laban and his people as well. As suggested earlier, there may or may not be many unnamed family members. We only know of a handful of people related to and living with Laban.

**Genesis 31:55** And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them. And Laban departed and returned to his place.

*Sons*, here, is actually a reference to *grandsons*. Laban realizes that he might not ever see these boys ever again. *Daughters* refers to Laban's female descendants, which would have been his two daughters and his one granddaughter (at least one granddaughter).

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What we have in this chapter are the competing interests of at least 4 parties, most of whom do not take God into consideration.

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### **Competing Interests/Differing Realities**

Objective truth:

1. God blesses Jacob, despite his own actions and despite the actions of others. Jacob does a number of things for blessing, but these are human works and none of it counts for anything. Yet, God still blessed him.
  2. As Jacob's wives, Leah and Rachel can expect to be blessed through their spiritual heritage and their association with Jacob.
  3. Laban and his sons have been greatly blessed in their association with Jacob. Despite all of the haggling, deception and dishonest business practices, Jacob was blessed and Laban was blessed. Jacob received God's direct blessing and
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## Competing Interests/Differing Realities

- Laban received blessing by association. Laban and his sons may have felt as if they were somehow being cheated, but what they observed was God blessing Jacob.
4. God told Jacob to leave Paddan-aram and to return to the Land of Promise. This is God's perfect timing. Esau's anger had subsided; the anger of Laban's sons was increasing by the day, and Jacob had the wherewithal to make the trip.
  5. Jacob has been a hard worker and faithful servant to Laban. Jacob may not have been the most wonderful person in the world; but he was an honorable employee.
  6. All that Jacob leaves with has its origin with Laban. Jacob leaves with Laban's daughters and livestock (which Jacob worked for). Jacob does not appear to fully appreciate Laban's contribution to his wealth (even though, ultimately, all of our blessing comes from God). Recognizing that all blessing comes from God is no excuse to be ungrateful to others (to your parents, your employer, etc.).
  7. Jacob apparently saw to the care of Laban's livestock when he left. Laban does not complain about his livestock being abandoned or left unattended.
  8. Rachel did go into her father's tent and she stole his deity figures. This suggests that both she and her father had some esteem for these figurines—probably not unlike the Catholic who carries about with him a figurine of Mary. This is evidence of Laban's syncretism.
  9. Jacob left surreptitiously, intending to leave Laban and return to the Land of Promise before Laban realized what was happening. Jacob's timing was intended to give him the greatest amount of time before Laban realized that he had taken off.
  10. No matter what stunt Laban pulls, God will overrule it, if necessary, in order to bless Jacob and his family. Laban is unable to remove the blessing God has for Jacob.
  11. As we have studied, wealth is a relative concept—God made Laban wealthy just as He made Jacob wealthy; however, Jacob's wealth appeared to increase at a greater rate than Laban's, which was what Laban and his sons had a problem with.

The reality for Laban's sons: they believe that Jacob is taking away from their father's wealth. Probably they have a concern for their own inheritance as well. They do not appear to give any respect to Jacob's work ethic or to his faithfulness to Laban.

Laban's reality: His son-in-law Jacob was receiving a payment for services which was too high (even though Laban himself determined what that payment would be); and Jacob was gaining too much financially. I assume that Laban believed Jacob to be the thief of his religious figurines (or one of Jacob's servants).

Leah and Rachel's Realities: Their father will no longer give them an inheritance, so they have no reason to remain in Paddan-aram with him. Their loyalties are realigned with Jacob, their husband. Possibly because there will be no inheritance from her father, Rachel steals little deity statues from her father.

## Competing Interests/Differing Realities

Jacob's Reality:

1. God has told Jacob to go west.
2. He carefully determines the loyalty of his wives.
3. Laban has changed his salary on many occasions, every time to benefit Laban.
4. Jacob himself has been a loyal, hard worker. He knows this.
5. Jacob does not appear to express any appreciation toward Laban. Without Laban, Jacob has no family and no wealth. Interestingly enough, twice when Laban is named again, it is in relation to him giving his daughters personal maids. These personal maids also become Jacob's mistresses (they are surrogate mothers for their mistresses); so 4 of Jacob's sons are a result of these gifts that Laban gave to his daughters (Genesis 46:18, 25).
6. Because of his past experience with Laban, Jacob believed it best to sneak out of town. Right or wrong, he plans his exit from Paddan-aram quite carefully. However, God did not tell Jacob to slink away.

Neither man appears to realize that they have been greatly blessed by knowing one another, even though that is clearly the case. Certainly, there are a great many negative things which could be said about Laban and his personal greed. However, all that Jacob is at this point is because of Laban.

Neither man appears to appreciate how much they have truly benefitted from their mutual association.

Had Jacob been properly focused upon God, his great blessings would be obvious to him. Jacob does not appear to understand how God has overruled, time and time again, the machinations of Laban.

Rom 8:28 **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.** (ESV, capitalized)

### Romans 8:28 in the Life of Jacob

1. We have known from day 1 that Jacob was far from being a perfect man.
2. We have seen him a number of right things in a wrong way.
3. That Jacob was concerned about his spiritual heritage was a good thing; that he got his twin brother Esau to trade his spiritual heritage as the firstborn for a bowl of red lentil soup was the wrong way to do it.
4. That Jacob got the blessing of his father illegitimately through deception was clearly a violation of morality. It was good that Jacob was concerned about receiving his father's blessing, and receiving the spiritual heritage of his family, but it was wrong for him to do this as an adult, as influenced by his mother, with the clear intent to deceive his own father.
5. As a result, his brother Esau vowed to kill him; and his mother quickly arranged for Jacob to go live with Laban.
6. All of this was quite a mess—of Jacob's own doing—and yet God will still bless

## Romans 8:28 in the Life of Jacob

- Jacob and all Israel through this mess. Even though his mother, Rebekah, influenced Jacob, he is clearly an adult at this point in time.
7. Insofar as we know, Jacob never saw his mother again. His mother Rebekah had too much influence over him, and convinced Jacob, as an adult, to deceive his own father. His spiritual inheritance was important; but trying to take it by deception was going at it the wrong way.
  8. There has been a great deal of jealousy in Esau's soul toward Jacob; and when Jacob stole his blessing by deceiving Isaac, their father, that was the last straw. Esau was filled with hatred for his brother. Esau vowed to kill him.
  9. As a result, Jacob had to leave the Land of Promise temporarily. The reason given was for him to find a wife from his family, who worshiped Y<sup>e</sup>howah; but the real reason was to get him out of town and away from Esau, who would have killed him.
  10. God put Jacob face to face with a man who was every bit the conniver and manipulator that Jacob was—his Uncle Laban. Jacob learned what it was like to work for a man who was only out for himself.
  11. One of the things that Laban did to Jacob was to trick him on his wedding night. Jacob was in love with Rachel, but Laban saw to it that her older sister, Leah, was delivered to Jacob's bed as his bride. The next morning, because they cohabited, Jacob was married to Leah.
  12. Since Jacob loved Rachel, he worked an additional 7 years for Laban, in order to marry her. However, most of his sons would be born by Leah.
  13. The line of Jesus Christ, the line of promise, would actually go through Jacob and Leah.
  14. Because Rachel appeared to be infertile at first, Jacob fathered sons by the two sisters' maids. This results in a healthier bloodline, having 4 different women as the mothers of Jacob's 13 or more children (he had 12 sons along with other daughters besides Dinah, but they are never named). These 12 sons would become the 12 tribes of Israel.
  15. It will become apparent that Rachel is not as strong as her sister Leah in giving birth, and she will die giving birth to her second son. God, by withholding children from her, gave Jacob and Rachel a lengthy period of time together as husband and wife.
  16. All this time, while Jacob is in Paddan-aram, God is blessing Esau greatly, so that his anger toward Jacob is subsiding.
  17. So now, in leaving Laban's household and returning to the Land of Promise, Jacob has 2 wives and 2 mistresses; he has 12 sons who will become the 12 tribes of Israel; he is being guided by God (God told him to leave the land of Laban); and Esau (sorry to give this away) will no longer be filled with hatred toward Jacob.
  18. Furthermore, Jacob and Laban enter into a non-aggression pact.
  19. All of these things further the plan of God, and are better for Jacob as well, despite the many missteps that Jacob has made. God has greatly blessed Jacob, in spite of himself.



Jacob, in his life and actions, has put himself at odds with God on many occasions; yet God will overrule Jacob's actions over and over again.

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 31:

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

In the previous chapter, Jacob indicated to Laban that he was ready to split up.

Genesis 31:1 *And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Ya'aqob [= Jacob] has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth."*

Laban's sons believe that they will be cheated out of some of their inheritance based upon what Jacob is doing. Their father understands that God is blessing Jacob, and spreading that blessing around to him (Genesis 30:27). His sons do not understand this.

Note that Laban's sons are not even named here. This suggests to me that they are not even saved.

Genesis 31:2 *And Ya'aqob would look at the face of Laban and see that it was not toward him as before.*

Laban, unfortunately, finds himself being convinced by his sons, so now he is seeing Jacob as an interloper (despite the fact that he is married to Laban's two daughters).

Genesis 31:3 And הוּוּי [= *YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah*] said to Ya'aqob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives. And I am with you."

God knows that it is time. God tells Jacob that it is time to return to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 31:4–5 And Ya'aqob sent and called Raḥēl [= *Rachel*] and Lě'ah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, "I see your father's face, that it is not toward me as before, but the Elohim of my father has been with me.

To take off and leave, Jacob believes that he needs to sneak away in order to preserve all of his wealth.

Genesis 31:6 "And you know that I have served your father with all my strength.

Rachel and Leah know their father and they know Jacob. When Jacob says these things, they ring true to the daughters.

Genesis 31:7 "Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but Elohim [= *God*] did not allow him to do evil to me.

Apparently, we did not get the full story in the previous chapter. Laban changed his mind about Jacob's wages ten times, and the daughters know this to be true.

Genesis 31:8 "When he said this, 'The speckled are your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And when he said this, 'The streaked are your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked.

When Laban agreed that certain markings would be considered Jacob's wages, the sheep and goats would bear lambs and kids with those markings. When Laban changed this, what Jacob's flock bore provided him with more wealth. Laban could not do anything to stop the flow of blessing to Jacob. Remember that fact.

Genesis 31:9 "So Elohim has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.

Jacob is no longer talking about his famous trick of the previous chapter. He has a large number of livestock based upon what God has done. He understands that his blessings come from God and not from some foolish experiment he thought up. Genesis 30:37–40

Genesis 31:10 "And it came to be, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and looked in a dream and saw the rams which leaped upon the flocks were streaked, speckled, and mottled.

This was revealed to Jacob in a dream. What he did was not the key to his prosperity. What God does is the key to our prosperity. Remember this.

Just in case you think, *does this mean that God will speak to me in my dreams?* He will not! We have the full revelation of God in the Bible. There was not some detail which God forgot about and left out. He is not going to add some tasty bit of revelation to your dreams (no matter how weird your dreams are).

Genesis 31:11 “And the Messenger of Elohim spoke to me in a dream, saying, ‘Ya’aqob.’ And I said, ‘Here I am.’”

God spoke to Jacob in some of his dreams. No doubt, he has shared this with his two wives.

Genesis 31:12 “And He said, ‘Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you.’”

God recognized that Laban was cheating him.

Genesis 31:13 I am the Ĕl of Běyth Ĕl, where you anointed the standing column and where you made a vow to Me. Now rise up, get out of this land, and return to the land of your relatives.’ ”

God tells Jacob that He is the Ĕl of Bethel. “It is time for you to return home.”

Genesis 31:14 And Raḥĕl and Lě’ah answered and said to him, “Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father’s house?”

Rachel and Leah had a promised inheritance. However, they are wondering if that inheritance still exists.

Genesis 31:15 “Are we not reckoned by him as strangers? For he has sold us, and also entirely consumed our silver.”

The wives recognize that Laban is treating them as strangers or immigrants. They are apparently aware that all of the silver promise to them is gone.

Genesis 31:16 “For all the wealth which Elohim has taken from our father is ours and our children’s. Now then, do whatever Elohim has told you.”

The wives tell Jacob, “We are with you all the way. Whatever God has told you do to, do it. We will go with you.”

Genesis 31:17–18 So Ya’aqob [= Jacob] rose and put his sons and his wives on camels, and he drove off all his livestock and all his possessions which he had acquired, his property of the livestock which he had acquired in Paddan Aram, to go to his father Yĭtsḥaq [= Isaac] in the land of Kena’an [= Canaan].

Jacob gathers all of his accumulated wealth and puts it, his sons and his wives on camels.

Genesis 31:19 And when Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Raḥēl stole the house idols that were her father's.

Rachel, angry that the silver she was promised is gone, she grabs up some home idols, which would be the most expensive thing that she could walk away with (I am guessing that she could not find the silver).

Genesis 31:20 And Ya'aqob deceived Laban the Aramean, because he did not inform him that he was about to flee.

Jacob is going to sneak off. He is not telling Laban what he is going to do.

Genesis 31:21 And he fled with all that he had. And he rose up and passed over the river, and headed toward the mountains of Gil'ad.

Jacob, with his family and belongings, cross over the river and go into the mountains, which would give them cover.

Genesis 31:22 And on the third day Laban was told that Ya'aqob had fled.

Recall that Jacob was a three-day journey away from the others, so it takes them three days to realize that he has gone.

Genesis 31:23 Then he took his brothers with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gil'ad.

The brothers pursue Jacob and catch up to him in seven days.

Genesis 31:24 But in a dream by night Elohim came to Laban the Aramean, and said to him, "Guard yourself, that you do not speak to Ya'aqob either good or evil."

God also speak to Laban and warns him not to speak good or evil of Jacob. "Hold your tongue, Laban; make no judgments on Jacob."

Genesis 31:25 Then Laban overtook Ya'aqob. Now Ya'aqob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brothers pitched in the mountains of Gil'ad.

Laban also overtakes Jacob. Laban confronts Jacob directly.

Genesis 31:26 And Laban said to Ya'aqob, "What have you done, that you have deceived me, and driven my daughters off like captives taken with the sword?"

Laban is very upset over what has taken place and accuses Jacob of taking his daughters from him by force.

Genesis 31:27 “Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and not inform me, and I would have sent you away with joy and songs, with tambourine and lyre?”

Laban makes some reasonable points. “You departed like a sneak. Why could we not all celebrate your departure?”

Genesis 31:28 “And you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have been foolish to do this.

“You gave me no chance to say goodbye to my own family.”

Genesis 31:29 “It is in the power of my hand to do evil to you, but the Elohim of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Guard yourself, that you do not speak to Ya‘aqob either good or evil.’

“I could really put the hurt on you,” Laban warns Jacob, “but God told me not to.”

Genesis 31:30 “And now you have gone because you greatly long for your father’s house, but why did you steal my mighty ones?”

There are some stolen items taken from Laban’s home (which is probably a tent). These are gods—little idols—which Laban had purchased. He probably paid a lot of money for them.

Now, as an aside. We do not know how people felt about idols in the ancient world. Let me suggest that it is very possible that they understood the idols to simply stand for a higher power, but they were not that higher power. Catholics have many symbols like statues of Mary. None of them believe that their statue actually is *Mary*; but it is a physical representation of her. However, that aside, it is still idolatry.

Genesis 31:31 And Ya‘aqob answered and said to Laban, “Because I was afraid, for I said, ‘Lest you tear your daughters away from me.’

Jacob responds, “In my defense, I was really worried that you would try to take your daughters from me.”

Bear in mind that Laban was a pretty sneaky individual. Jacob was not unwarranted in his concerns. That does not make him right.

Genesis 31:32 “With whomever you find your mighty ones, do not let him live. In the presence of our brothers, see for yourself what is with me and take it with you.” For Ya‘aqob did not know that Raḥēl had stolen them.

“Whoever has stolen those idols, he should not live,” Jacob proclaims, not knowing that it was Rachel who did this.

As an aside, apparently everyone knew about Laban's idols (not a bad name for a group, by the way).

Genesis 31:33 And Laban went into Ya'aqob's tent, and into Lě'ah's tent, and into the tents of the two female servants, but he did not find them. And he came out of Lě'ah's tent and entered Raḥēl's tent.

Laban checks out all of the tents.

Genesis 31:34 Now Raḥēl had taken the house idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban searched all about the tent but did not find them.

Rachel had placed these idols in the camel's saddle and was sitting on them.

Genesis 31:35 And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my master that I am unable to rise before you, for the way of women is with me." And he searched but did not find the house idols.

Then Rachel says, "Listen, I am on my period, so I cannot rise up before you." In other words, she is going to sit right where she is.

Genesis 31:36 And Ya'aqob was wroth and contended with Laban, and Ya'aqob answered and said to Laban, "What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have hotly pursued me?"

Apart from the accusation about the idols, Jacob has left with only that which belongs to him. "You have hotly pursued me for what exactly?" he demands.

Genesis 31:37 "Now that you have searched all my goods what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my brothers and your brothers, and let them decide between the two of us!"

Jacob is now rather insulting, making light of Laban's accusations.

Genesis 31:38 "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 sheep.

"I have worked for you for 20 years, and obviously, I have done right by you for that entire time." Laban knows that this is true. Despite his negative thoughts about Jacob, he did not want Jacob to leave him.

Genesis 31:39 "That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you, I myself bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night.

On some occasions, Jacob bore the loss for animals lost to wild beasts.



Genesis 31:40 “Thus I was! By day the heat consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes.

Jacob indicates that he worked hard for Laban all of this time, enduring very hot and very cold weather, losing sleep often.

Genesis 31:41 “These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times.

“Now that you are here,” Jacob says, “let me tell you why I have a problem with you. You told me to name my price and I did; but then you unilaterally changed my wages ten times.”

Genesis 31:42 “Unless the Elohim of my father, the Elohim of Abraham and the Fear of Yitshaq, had been with me, you would now have sent me away empty-handed. Elohim has seen my affliction and the labour of my hands, and rendered judgment last night.”

Jacob makes it clear that all of this blessing came from the God of Abraham and of Isaac.

Genesis 31:43 And Laban answered and said to Ya'aqob, “These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and this flock is my flock, and all that you see is mine. But what shall I do today to these, my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?

Then Laban says, “From my perspective, everything that you have come from me. You wives, your servants, your children, your livestock.”

In one way, he is correct; but in another, he is not. This was an agreement which he made with Jacob and Jacob did the work to gain these things. Much of what Laban had at this point was gotten by Jacob's work.

Genesis 31:44 “And now, come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and it shall be a witness between you and me.”

Jacob and Laban agree to make a covenant between the two of them.

Genesis 31:45 So Ya'aqob took a stone and set it up as a standing column.

These stones standing up would be a sign of this peace treaty being made.

Genesis 31:46 And Ya'aqob said to his brothers, “Gather stones.” And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap.

The two groups of men ate together at this heap of gathered stones.

Genesis 31:47 And Laban called it Yeḡar Saḡadutha, but Ya'aqob called it Gal'ēd.

They had different names for it, but the different names represent different languages rather than different meanings.

**Genesis 31:47** And Laban called it in Syrian, *Heap of the Testimony*, and Jacob called it in Hebrew, *Heap of Testimony*. (MKJV)

Remember that Laban has already been called an Aramæan in this chapter; their language would be Syrian (which we also call Aramæan).

**Genesis 31:48–49** And Laban said, “This heap is a witness between you and me today.” That is why its name was called Gal’ēd, also Mitspah, because he said, “Let הוּי watch between you and me when we are out of each other’s sight.

The two men were going their separate ways, but Laban’s two daughters were going with Jacob.

Even though many Christians and Jews have used this saying when two lovers or two friends part, Jacob and Laban are hardly either. These rocks represent what is between them.

**Genesis 31:50** “If you afflict my daughters, or if you take other wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us; see, Elohim is witness between you and me!”

Laban expresses concern for his daughters, for their treatment, and than Jacob not take additional wives.

**Genesis 31:51** And Laban said to Ya’aqob, “See this heap and see this standing column, which I have placed between you and me.

Laban calls for this pile of rocks to stand as a witness between them. Laban would go one direction and Jacob would go another direction from here.

**Genesis 31:52** “This heap is a witness, and this standing column is a witness, that I do not pass beyond this heap to you, and you do not pass beyond this heap and this standing column to me, for evil.

Neither man was to cross over this heap of rocks to pursue the other for evil.

**Genesis 31:53** “The Elohim of Abraham, the Elohim of Naḥor, and the Elohim of their father rightly rule between us!” And Ya’aqob swore by the Fear of his father Yitshaq.

They all had believed in the Revealed God. Abraham was a believer and so was his brother Nahor. However, God chose Abraham because God looked at Abraham and his future line. Abraham’s line would lead to Jesus.

Genesis 31:54 *And Ya'aqob slaughtered a slaughtering on the mountain, and called his brothers to eat bread. And they ate bread and spent the night on the mountain.*

A sacrifice was also offered up. They all spent this night on the mountain.

Genesis 31:55 *And Laban rose up early in the morning, and kissed his sons and daughters and blessed them. And Laban left and returned to his place.*

The next morning, Laban rose up, kissed his grandsons and his daughters and blessed them. Then he returned home.

## Lesson 356 Genesis 32:1–2

## The Function of Angels

In the previous chapter, Jacob surreptitiously left Laban, taking his wives and children and his part of the flock with him. Laban realized that Jacob made an escape 3 days after the fact and chased Jacob down, catching up to him in Gilead, east of the Jordan. They met, more or less resolved their differences, agreed to a non-aggression pact, set up a pillar in recognition of their agreement, and then offered up an animal sacrifice to God.

Laban returned to his home; and Jacob continued traveling west toward Canaan. He was east of the Jordan River when Laban caught up to him. Crossing the Jordan would have put him into the Land of Promise.

Genesis 32:1 *And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.*

Interestingly enough, Jacob has been able to see angels on at least two occasions. Although Abraham ate a meal with the Revealed Lord and two angels, it is not clear that he knew that these were angels (although, at some point, he must have, since that fact is recorded in Scripture).

Jacob, on the other hand, when he was leaving the Land of Promise, he came across an elevator/escalator where angels were transported between heaven and earth. Here, upon his return, angels meet him.

In this case, the MKJV says: *and the angels of God met him*. This is the masculine plural, Qal imperfect of pāga' (פָּגַעַ) [pronounced paw-GAHG], which means *to fall upon, to meet, to encounter, to reach; to entreat [by request], to assail [with a petition], to urge; to strike, to kill, to slay; to touch out of boundary; to reach [to anyone]; to strike a covenant [with someone], to make peace*. Strong's #6293 BDB #803. Although this is rather a momentous event, we are not really told much about it, apart from the fact that it did occur. We know that Jacob records this event; and it appears that the angels initiate the event (they are the subject of the verb).

Given the verb and given that angels are the subject of the verb, this is more than Jacob looks out in the distance and sees an encampment of angels. But what they actually do here is not clear. My guess is, they act as a welcoming committee of sorts.

However, exactly what they do or say is not clear; and Jacob will make a statement in v. 2, but that statement does not appear to be directed toward the angels. Jacob will see them; he will correctly identify them (although we do not know if he speaks to himself or to others who are with him).

There are two categories of angels: fallen and elect. The fallen angels have rejected the authority of God and have sinned; elect angels have not. This doctrine concentrates on the elect angels.

This doctrine is not the same as the Doctrine of the Angelic Conflict. That doctrine focuses more upon the warfare between the fallen and elect angels, and how it plays out in our own lives.

### **Wenstrom and Ballinger on the Function of Angels**

1. Angels are God's servants who are dispatched from the throne room of heaven to execute God's purposes. The ministry of the elect angels falls into several categories. Generally speaking, the elect angels: (1) Protect, (2) Provide, (3) Prepare, (4) Proclaim the Word of God and (5) Execute God's Judgments.
2. Wrapping one's head around the concept and function of angels, it might be best understood as, the CEO of a company delegates responsibilities to those under him. This does not mean that he is incapable of taking care of these responsibilities, nor does it mean that he is adverse to dealing with such things personally. In a large organization, the one at the top is primarily all about delegating responsibilities to those within the chain of command. Although this is not a perfect analogy, it may help us to understand God's use of the angels to take care of certain responsibilities.
3. In relation to God, the elect-angels perform the following services:
  - 1) They act as attendants around the throne of God, and are waiting to serve Him and do His bidding. Psalm 103:20 Isa. 6:1f Job 1:6 2:1 Rev. 5:11 8:1ff
  - 2) They continually, night and day, offer praise and worship God in heaven. Isa.6:3 Psalm148:1,2 Heb. 1:6 Rev.4:8; 5:11-12
  - 3) Some angels are observers who rejoice over what the Lord does. Job 38:6-7 Luke 2:12-13 15:10
  - 4) Some angels will function as soldiers in battle with Satan. Rev. 12:7
  - 5) Angels are used by the God as instruments to execute His judgments. Rev. 7:1 8:2
4. In relation to the nations, the elect-angels and non-elect angels perform the following services:
  - 1) Angels announce and inflict judgment (Sodom was a city-state). Genesis 19:13
  - 2) Michael, the archangel, is the guardian of the nation of Israel.

## Wenstrom and Ballinger on the Function of Angels

- Daniel 10:13, 21 12:1 Jude 9
- 3) The non-elect angels rule over the Gentile nations (Daniel 4:17 Eph. 6:11-16) and seek to influence their human leaders (Daniel 10:21 11:1).
  - 4) In the Tribulation the elect-angels will be the agents God uses to pour out His judgments. See Rev. 8-9 and 16.
5. Angels were quite active in the life and ministry of Jesus. In relation to Christ, the elect-angels perform the following services:
- 1) Angels informed Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds of Christ's birth. Luke 1:26-38 2:8-15 Matt.1:20
  - 2) An angel warned Joseph to take Mary and the baby Jesus and flee into Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15), and an angel directed the family to return to Israel after Herod died (vv. 19-21).
  - 3) Angels ministered to Jesus after His temptation. Matt.4:11
  - 4) An angel strengthened Him in Gethsemane (obviously, this would be strengthening Jesus in His humanity—in this case, the resolve of His humanity). Luke22:43
  - 5) Angels were poised to deliver Him from His enemies. Matt.26:53
  - 6) An angel rolled the stone from the empty tomb. Matt.28:1-7
  - 7) Angels announced His resurrection to the women on Easter morning. Matt. 28:5-6 Luke 24:5-7
  - 8) Angels were present at His ascension and gave instruction to the disciples. Acts 1:10-11
  - 9) Angels ascended with Him into heaven. Acts 1:11
6. In relation to His coming again, the elect-angels perform the following services:
- 1) The voice of the archangel will be heard at the translation of the church. 1Thess. 4:16
  - 2) They will accompany Him in His glorious return to earth. Matt. 25:31 2Thess. 1:7
  - 3) They will separate the wheat from the tares (the righteous from the unrighteous) at Christ's second coming. Matt. 13:39-40
  - 4) Angels announce and inflict judgment. Rev. 14:6-7 Acts 12:23 Rev. 16:1
7. Angels in relationship to some individual believers:
- 1) The angels delivered Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom. Genesis 19
  - 2) Angels prepared the way for the servant of Abraham who went to find a wife for Isaac. Genesis 24
8. In relationship to the believer, angels have done/will do the following:
- 1) Angels protect and deliver God's people. Heb. 1:14 Daniel 6:22 Psalm 91:11 Genesis 19:11 Acts 12:11 Matt. 18:10
  - 2) They guide and encourage believers. Matt. 28:5-7 Acts 8:26 27:23,24
  - 3) They interpret God's Word to men (no longer an issue with the closing of the canon). Daniel 7:16 10:5,11 Zech.1:9,19 4:1,5 5:5-11 6:4,5
  - 4) There is the teaching angel of Revelation. This is a concentrated period

## Wenstrom and Ballinger on the Function of Angels

- of conflict, so that the accumulation of doctrine in a person's soul is not a lifetime endeavor. Rev.1:1 17:7 22:16
- 5) Angels mediated the Law to Moses. Acts 7:53 Gal.3:19
  - 6) Angels carry the saved home when they die. Luke16:22
  - 7) They execute judgment on individuals and societies (Acts12:23 Gen.19:12,13 Ezek.9:1,5,7; note the active role they play in the judgments of the Tribulation, Rev.16).
9. In relation to the Church:
- 1) Hebrews 1:14 describes ministry of the elect-angels "**servant-spirits who are divinely commissioned and repeatedly dispatched for service on behalf of those who are destined to inherit salvation.**" In this, however, Scripture points to a number of specific ministries:
  - 2) The elect-angels bring answers to prayer. Acts 12:5-10
  - 3) They help in bringing people to the Savior. Acts 8:26; 10:3
  - 4) They may encourage in times of danger. Acts 27:23- 24
  - 5) They care for God's people at the time of death. Luke 16:22
  - 6) How some of these things occur in our own lives today is unknown; this is a set of activities which we do not observe in the post-canon period of the Church Age.
10. In relation to the introduction of a new dispensation, angels are actively involved when God institutes a new epoch in history:
- 1) They joined in praise when the earth was created. Job 38:6-7
  - 2) They were involved in the giving of the Mosaic law. Gal. 3:19 Heb. 2:2
  - 3) They were active at the First advent of Christ. Matt. 1:20 4:11
  - 4) They were active during the early years of the church. Acts 8:26 10:3, 7 12:11
  - 5) They will be involved in events surrounding the Second advent of Christ. Matt. 25:31 Thess. 4:1
11. Angels as spectators.
- 1) They rejoice when even one sinner is saved. Luke 15:10
  - 2) They actually learn Bible Doctrine from the local church, taking a keen interest in our assembly. Eph. 3:10 1Peter 1:12
  - 3) They observe all the affairs of men, and are pleased or offended, as the passage on hair suggests. 1Cor. 11:10
  - 4) They took great interest in the incarnation. 1Tim. 3:16
12. The angelic hierarchy is divided into two categories:
- 1) The college of heralds and
  - 2) The angelic army. Most angels do not have wings. Wings are an insignia of rank.
    - (1) Seraphim have the highest rank with six wings (Isa. 6:2 Rev. 4:8).
    - (2) Cherubim have four wings, plus the uniform of wisdom (Gen. 3:24 Ezek 1, 10, 28ff).
13. Miscellaneous points:
- 1) We are never told to pray to angels or to depend upon angels. Our prayer



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- and dependence is to be directed to God the Father; and, if angels are involved, then He will see to that.
- 2) Although there is great angelic activity in the church age, they do not appear to be visibly manifest to us in the post-canon Church Age. Bear in mind, seeing an angel in the Old Testament was rare (just like miracles in the Old Testament were rare); such things appear to be even more rare in the post-canon, New Testament period. Personally, I would be suspicious of anyone who claims to have seen an angel or witnessed a miracle. This does not mean that I doubt the power of God; but we live in a period of human history where His Word has eclipsed the manifestation of God's supernatural power. 2Peter 1:16–21
  - 3) Furthermore, God is teaching angels as well; and there is no better way to teach someone than to have them actually do something. Illustrative of this: I recall seeing my father fix the brakes of my car on several occasions. However, a roommate, later on, told me how to fix my own brakes, but did not touch them himself. I learned how to do my own brakes from my roommate because of this approach.
  - 4) Angelic involvement in this earthly realm communicates God's essence and character to them as well.

I realize that angels may seem rather fantastic to some, but what in this universe is not fantastic? The sun, the existence of so much water on earth, that we are made of molecules whose size is too small to even imagine, airplanes, computers, birth and life itself?

From [http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page\\_id=1163](http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=1163) accessed January 14, 2015 and <http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/angels.html> accessed January 14, 2015. These points were occasionally edited and new material was added as well.

**Genesis 32:2** And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place *Two Camps*.

Jacob actually called that place Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced *mahkh-uh-AH-yim*], which is transliterated *Mahanaim*; and it means *two camps* (a reference to Jacob's camp and the camp of the angels). Strong's #4266 BDB #334.

Other than these camps being near one another, it is not clear if there was any interaction whatsoever between Jacob and the angels of that camp.

It is interesting that God spoke to Jacob on two occasions; but He is not spoken of here. The two camps would have been his own camp and that of the angels. Throughout Scripture, it is emphasized that we live side-by-side a plethora of angels.

Often in science fiction literature, there is the concept of two (or more) realities or dimensions existing side-by-side. This actually is reality. Angels do live among us, but in

another dimension, so to speak. They can see us; we cannot see them (except in rare circumstances like this).

It is quite interesting that Jacob is, on two occasions, tied to angels. Remember when God first spoke to Jacob, Jacob observed angels traveling between heaven and earth. Here, he observes a camp of angels.

It appears that quite a number of angels were assigned to Jacob because of his line; although it is not altogether clear what they did. We can only suspect what they did, based upon the Doctrine of Angels which we just studied.

No doubt, God, because He designated a line of promise, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, angels would be following this line with great interest.

## Lesson 357 Genesis 32:1–19

## Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

Jacob has left Paddan-aram and his Uncle Laban, and is now in Canaan. Laban, Jacob's uncle and father-in-law, caught up with him east of the Jordan and they came to an agreement and then parted, having agreed to a non-aggression pact.

At this time, Jacob is preparing to meet his estranged brother, Esau.

**Gen 32:1–2** Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's camp!" So he called the name of that place Mahanaim [= *two camps*]. (ESV)

Jacob then continued to travel west when the angels of God met him. He called this place *two camps*, because he had his camp and the angels had theirs.

A few minor observations:

### Observations About Jacob

1. Angels appear to Jacob on two occasions: when he is leaving the Land of Promise to go east; and when he returns to the land.
2. We should not infer from this that angels are only involved in Jacob's life when in the Land of Promise. When he went to Paddan-Aram, Jacob met and married his wives, and his children will become the heads of the 12 tribes of Israel.
3. Many things occurred in Paddan-aram which clearly indicate that God is with Jacob, despite the goofy things that Jacob does. Whenever Laban tried to put one over on Jacob, God turned things to Jacob's favor.
4. This has confused readers for many years. Jacob had his own ideas in Paddan-aram (like the selective breeding of Laban's livestock), and people try to put that on God. Laban acted according to his volition, Jacob acted according to his own volition, and God acted according to His sovereignty, respecting the volition of the

## Observations About Jacob

- two men. You cannot line up Jacob's volition with God's sovereignty—in fact, much of Jacob's life is spent wrestling with God.
5. Now, even though Jacob was outside of the land of Canaan for 20 years, it stands to reason that God's agents, the angels, were also with Jacob all this time, even though they were never manifested to him in Paddan-aram. God did not manifest Himself to Jacob either in Paddan-aram until it was time for Jacob to leave that area.
  6. Seeing these angels at this point in time should have given Jacob confidence, in addition to the fact that he possessed God's promises about the future of his seed. However, it is clear in this chapter that he still fears Esau. It appears that he might make some spiritual progress in the next chapter.
  7. Recall that God promised Jacob, as he was leaving the Land of 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 promised you." (Gen 28:15; ESV)
  8. Seeing the angels and perhaps by taking inventory of what God had provided Jacob during these intervening years, should have given Jacob great confidence that God has been with him all the time.
  9. Despite being protected by these angels, Jacob sets that aside and approaches Esau with both a plan and a backup plan. Jacob continually wants to control a situation and manipulate those around him.
  10. In other words, Jacob still trusts in himself, but not in God, in his day-to-day life.
  11. In this chapter, Jacob will wrestle with the Lord Jesus Christ, which is an indication of what his life has been like up to this point. He is continually fighting the Lord Jesus Christ, even though God is on Jacob's side.

We may easily conclude that Jacob's relationship with God is much different than Abraham's relationship to God.

**Genesis 32:3** And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, to the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

Jacob has been out of the land for 20 years now; however, he left on bad terms with Esau. At the urging of his mother, Jacob pretended to be Esau in order to steal the blessing from his father that was meant for Esau. Therefore, at that time, Esau was ready to kill him. So, upon his return, 20 years later, Jacob wants to patch things up with Esau. Obviously, he does not want to live in fear of Esau killing him.

You will note that Jacob somehow knows *where* to send this message. Esau would have moved to Seir *after* Jacob left Canaan.

The word for *messengers* is exactly the same word translated *angels* in v. 1. It is the word  $\text{mal}^{\text{e}}\text{âk}^{\text{e}}$  (מַלְאָכִים) [pronounced *mahl<sup>e</sup>-AWK<sup>e</sup>*], and it means, *messenger* or *angel*. This word

is also used for a prophet (Isa. 42:19) and for a priest (Mal. 2:7). Strong's #4397 BDB #521. However, here it means *messengers*.

**Genesis 32:4** And he commanded them, saying, "So will you speak to my lord Esau: 'Your servant Jacob says thus, I have lived with Laban and stayed until now.

By calling Esau *my lord*, Jacob establishes respect for Esau among his messengers (who are probably slaves). He is making it clear that Esau should be approached with all respect.

Jacob sends these messengers ahead of him—indicating that Jacob had a number of men who were his slaves or who worked for him. We don't realize at first the large retinue that is with Jacob. At first, it appears that it is Jacob + wives + children; but there are many more people with him than this.

**Genesis 32:5** And I have oxen and asses, flocks, and menservants, and slave women. And I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in your sight.' "

Jacob is sending the message that he has returned to the Land of Promise. Jacob realizes that he has done wrong to his twin brother, and he wants to give his brother a very generous gift in order to indicate that he recognizes that his actions were wrong; and that they need to be friends at this point.

Despite the fact that Jacob will appear to be very generous, his approach is to manipulate Esau.

**Genesis 32:6** And the messengers returned to Jacob saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and also he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

This is interesting. 400 men indicates that Esau is very successful and that he has many people who work for him and support him (probably most of these men are slaves, which was a profession of sorts in that era). Is Esau trying to make Jacob a little fearful about this meeting? Probably.

**Genesis 32:7** Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, and he divided the people with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels, into two bands.

Jacob is not certain what this meeting will be like. He believes that there is the possibility that Esau is still angry and might still harm him. In this, we realize that Jacob does not fully appreciate, or believe, all of the promises which God has made to him. He does not fully appreciate that he is the line of promise, and that God would make a great nation from him.

Jacob is going to try to preserve his wife and children. By doing this, he will be (in his own mind) *helping* God to fulfill His promises. Or, this could simply indicate that he still has doubts about what God has promised him.

There are times when God works His will and you just don't see it. I recall the experience myself of suddenly looking around, and realizing just how much God had blessed me. It did not really occur to me before that. Similarly, God has made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to make a great nation of them. If Jacob would look at who is with him, he would recognize that God has blessed him with 12 sons. By the time we get to the end of Genesis, all those with Jacob will number 75. Jacob goes to Paddan-aram by himself (or with his mother's slave); and now he is emerging with two wives, two mistresses, 12 sons, and at least one daughter. He needs to open his eyes and realize just how much God has blessed him.

**Genesis 32:8** And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and strikes it, then the other company which is left will escape."

Jacob is explaining why he is splitting his people into two camps.

Jacob plans for the worst—that if Esau is still angry, that some of those belonging to Jacob might be able to escape with their lives. More than likely, the idea is to have this other group completely out of sight, so that no one is aware that they even exist.

**Genesis 32:9** And Jacob said, "Oh God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Jehovah, Who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you.'

Now Jacob prays. He is essentially repeating what God has told him. What Jacob needs to do is believe this.

**Genesis 32:10** I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have done to Your servant. For with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I have become two bands.

You see what Jacob has done. He observed the other camp of angels, and called that place, Mahanaim (*two camps*). Now, he has broken up his own family into two camps.

Part of the meaning here might be, even in Israel, there will always be two camps of Israelites: those who believe in the Revealed God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and those who do not.

In any case, Jacob recognizes how he appears before God, not worthy of the least of God's mercies. This is a good start.

This is Jacob's second prayer, the first being, **If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth.** (Genesis 28:20-22 NIV) This second prayer actually reveals some spiritual growth.

**Genesis 32:11** Deliver me, I pray You, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau. For I fear him, lest he come and strike me, from mother to sons.

Jacob prays to God; but it will be clear that God, in eternity past, solved this problem that Jacob faces. The same thing is true of us and all of our problems.

**Genesis 32:12** And You said, 'I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' ”

Jacob quotes God's Word right back to Him, which is what God wants us to do. We are to know God's Word and expect God to keep to His Word. Jacob is saying, "You promised this; I am holding You to Your promise."

We are given God's Word and we are to stand upon it. We are given God's promises and we are to claim them.

It would be even better if Jacob believed this and acted upon his belief. It will become apparent that, even though Jacob is praying this prayer, he is still going to do things his way.

**Genesis 32:13–15** And he lodged there that night. And he took of that which came to his hand, a present for Esau his brother two hundred she-goats, twenty he-goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty she-asses and ten foals.

Jacob, in looking back, recognizes that he has made some great mistakes in his dealings with Esau. He does not have a better solution in his own mind apart from a huge present—or bribe, if you will.

It is reasonable to assume that this does not represent all of his wealth (# of animals = wealth in the time of Jacob). However, this is probably a significant portion of what Jacob has. This might even be as much as half of his own livestock.

**Genesis 32:16** And he delivered into the hands of his servants, every drove by themselves. And he said to his servants, Pass over in front of me and put a space between drove and drove.

To make it seem as if he has a lot to present to Esau, each group of animals is to be kept separate, so that there is group after group after group which come to him.

**Genesis 32:17** And he commanded the foremost, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you saying, 'To whom do you belong? and, Where do you go? And whose are these before you?'



Jacob is placing his slaves in front. We are not told exactly how it is known, but Jacob recognizes that Esau will ask, "To whom do you belong?" So, a slave was recognizable as a slave.

Furthermore, it will become clear that Jacob has a great many slaves.

**Genesis 32:18** Then you will say, 'Your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau. And, behold, he also is behind us.'

The servants present themselves as servants belonging to Jacob. The group of animals that they lead are presents for Esau. And Jacob is behind them all. Jacob expects that the presents will mollify his brother's anger.

**Genesis 32:19** And so he commanded the second and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, In this way you will speak to Esau when you find him.

It appears that there was one slave per group of animals. Each slave would introduce his group of animals as a gift, and then tell Esau that Jacob is coming.

## **Lesson 358: Genesis 32:20–26**

## **Jacob Wrestles with God**

We pick up where Jacob has his wives and children with him. He has left Paddan-aram. His Uncle Laban chased after him and caught up with him, and they managed to resolve their differences. Now, as Jacob moves further into the Land of Promise (he is still east of the Jordan River right now), he needs to confront Esau, his twin brother.

Jacob left the Land of Promise because of his scheming to take Esau's blessing from him. He will soon confront his brother, 20 years after the fact, which is the background for the next few lessons.

There is a point of confusion, related to Genesis 32 and Genesis 33 and I am not sure if this has been dealt with before. Jacob intends to protect his wives and children by setting them up as a separate camp (Genesis 32:7–8 **Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. He divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two camps, thinking, "If Esau comes to the one camp and attacks it, then the camp that is left will escape."**); but, in Genesis 33:1–6, he approaches Esau with his family. Therefore, bear in mind that, whatever Jacob plans out in this chapter appears to be reversed in the next chapter. This does not mean that there is a contradiction here; it simply suggests that Jacob changed his mind about his approach to Esau.

**Gen. 32:13–16** He [Jacob] spent the night there and took part of what he had brought with him as a gift for his brother Esau: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 ewes, 20 rams, 30 milk camels with their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 male donkeys. He entrusted them to his slaves as separate herds and said to them, "Go on ahead of me, and leave some distance between the herds." (HCSB)

This is the present which he will send to Esau.

Gen 32:17–19 And he told the first one: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'Who do you belong to? Where are you going? And whose animals are these ahead of you?' then tell him, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau. And look, he is behind us.'" He also told the second one, the third, and everyone who was walking behind the animals, "Say the same thing to Esau when you find him. (HCSB)

Genesis 32:20 And also you will 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."

We continue this quotation from Jacob, which becomes a quote within a quote, within his quote. In the single quotation marks, we have what Jacob's servants will say; and in italics, this is what they will tell Esau that Jacob said.

Jacob, even after all these 20 years, is afraid of Esau. Knowing that Esau would meet him, accompanied by 400 men, did not help. Jacob recognizes that what he did to Esau was wrong. Jacob is far from being a perfect man; and it is not clear that he would not do all of this over again.

Since Esau will have 400 men with him, and Jacob is concerned for his safety and the safety of his family, we may reasonably assume that Jacob has a lot fewer men than that. Perhaps there are 40 men with Jacob, apart from his own family.

Genesis 32:21 And the present went over before him. And he himself lodged that night in the camp.

This indicates that there was a great deal of space between Jacob and Esau—a half a day's travel or so. Jacob is lodged quite a distance behind the present; he will initially move his family elsewhere.

Genesis 32:22 And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two slave women, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok.

The Jabbok indicates that Jacob is east of the Jordan moving toward the south, to meet his brother, who is coming from the south (from Edom) to meet him.

**East of the Jordan Map** from [Katapi Bible Atlas](#); accessed September 2, 2015 (only the relevant portion of the map is shown). You see the Jabbok River near the top of the map, Edom (where Esau lives) at the very bottom. It appears that Jacob will meet Esau south of the Jabbok River (south, on a map, is always down), but he will place his family north of the Jabbok.

What Jacob appears to be doing is separating his family from all of this. Here, it appears that his intention is that, they will be completely separate from him when he meets Esau. There will be a significant distance between Jacob's family and Jacob when he finally meets Esau face to face. With his family would be slaves, of course.

If this is the proper interpretation of what is happening, then he will change his mind in Genesis 33.

**Genesis 32:23** And he took them, and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had.

This is the second camp which he will set up. This is the camp which he hopes to protect, in case Esau kills him. More than likely, they would have been entrusted into the care of several slaves.

*What he had* refers to all of his animals and slaves, which represents his wealth.

**Gen 32:21** So the gift was sent on ahead of him while he remained in the camp that night. (HCSB)

The gift is all of the livestock which Jacob has for Esau. This livestock would all come to Esau first, as a gift.

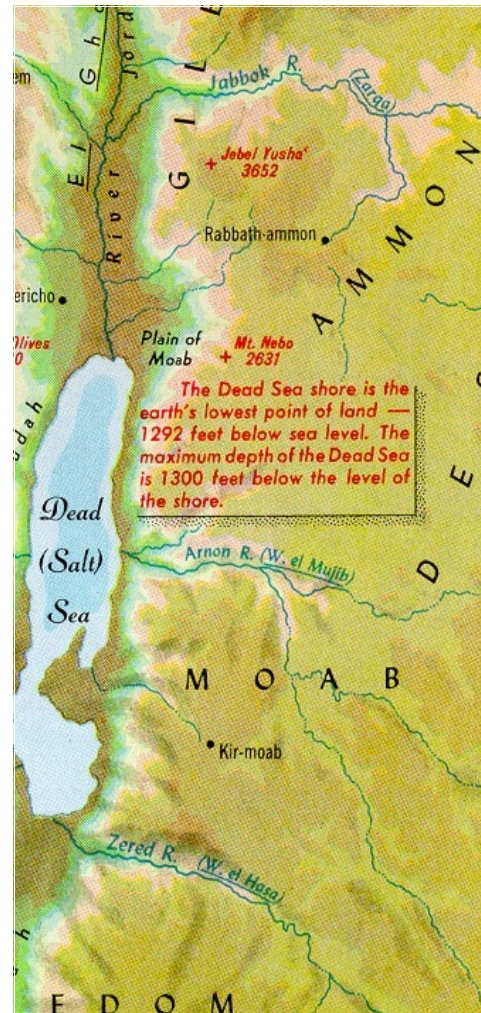
**Gen 32:22–23** During the night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female slaves, and his 11 sons, and crossed the ford of Jabbok. He took them and brought them across the stream, along with all his possessions. (HCSB)

Jacob was taking his wives and children and separating them out, to hide them away in another camp, in order to protect them, along with his wealth (animals and slaves). That is what he appears to be doing; however, Genesis 33 will suggest something different.

What he sends to Esau will be a number of slaves, each bearing a gift of animals (which represented wealth in the ancient world). He will himself bivouac in the middle of these two camps.

Then, something very unusual occurs.

**Genesis 32:24** And Jacob was left alone. And a Man wrestled there with him until the breaking of the day.



Jacob is in the middle of the two camps. Behind him is his family, entrusted to the care of several slaves. They probably have many animals in that camp, which represent his wealth. In front of him are many of his slaves leading many animals as a present for Esau. Jacob has gone between the two camps, to organize everything, and now he is between them both and apparently alone.

This man that Jacob meets is a theophany; he is a manifestation of God prior to the incarnation. God reveals Himself in a number of ways: as a man, an angel, a burning bush, a cloud, etc. Here, God is a wrestler.

This wrestling match describes Jacob's relationship with God over a long period of time. Jacob continually has been at odds with God, always trying to do things his own way. Jacob has been wrestling with God all of his life.

[Genesis 32:25](#) And when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh. And the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with Him.

Jacob, throughout his life, wrestled with the Lord. He was continually at odds with God.

It appears here as if God is unable to defeat Jacob in this wrestling match. Why is God unable to out-wrestle Jacob? Jacob refuses to surrender. He refuses to give in to God. This illustrates Jacob's hard-headedness. Everything that God does to guide Jacob into doing the right thing is met by Jacob's hard-headedness, always doing what he thinks should be done instead.

God is a gentleman and He allows us our free will. We do not become God's robots; God does not make us into automatons. However, He deals with us just like we might deal with our own son or daughter. We do not want robots for children; but we do not want children whose lives are filled with sin (which means they would have very unhappy lives). So, as parents, there are times that we must put our foot down, and there are times that we must discipline them.

The damage done to Jacob's thigh is the damage which Jacob has done to himself by resisting God. We can interpret this as divine discipline.

Nevertheless, Jacob wanted this blessing which he had learned about since he was a child. And so he demands this of God.

[Genesis 32:26](#) And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." And he said, "I will not let You go except You bless me."

God tells Jacob to let Him go; and it is Jacob who refuses during this wrestling match.

Since this is God, it should be clear that this is not a matter of strength, strategy or ability. Jacob has not wrestled God to a point where God cannot beat him. The key here is Jacob's volition. Jacob wants God and God's blessing, while fighting with God at the same

time. Jacob has some understanding of God's blessing, but in his actions, insofar as he continues to oppose God, are often wrong. Jacob so often does the wrong thing to gain God's blessing.

Essentially, God says to Jacob, "You keep fighting Me; you cannot seem to stop fighting Me." Then he asks Jacob, "What is it that you want? What do you really want?" And Jacob answers Him, "I want You to bless me."

For some of us, this describes our lives with God. We are always at odds with Him. We want God to bless us, but we are doing exactly the opposite of what God wants us to do.

Gen 32:24–26 [Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that He could not defeat him, He struck Jacob's hip as they wrestled and dislocated his hip socket. Then He said to Jacob, "Let Me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." \(HCSB\)](#)

I don't know that I could do a better job than Robbie Dean has already done.

### **Dr. Robert Dean Explains This Wrestling Match**

Now we are left with this mystery. Who is this man? Why is he called a man? Well, when does this take place? It is night; it is dark. Jacob doesn't know who is there, all he knows is there is what appears to be a man in opposition to him, and he is under assault. Jacob is strong. What has he been doing for 20 years? He has been out working with the flocks and the herds. We know that he is strong because when he first arrived in Paddam-aram he single-handedly picked up the large stone that covered the well. So we know that he was a man who was physically strong. We don't know who he is wrestling with yet, but if we read to the end of the story we know that it is God. Why is God wrestling with Jacob? And if He is wrestling with him why doesn't God just take him out at the very beginning and win the match? Why does God let Jacob seem to win or come close to winning? Probably the reason for this whole episode here is a real physical picture of what was going on spiritually for the last thirty or forty years or more in Jacob's life where he was struggling or wrestling with God and God's place in his life. All of this time Jacob has been trying to manipulate the blessing. He was trying to out-fox Esau, trying to cheat him, and then goes to Laban, and he is constantly trying to manipulate to get what God had already promised and prophesied in that original announcement when the two twins are struggling in Rebekah's womb, and God said that the older would serve the younger, and that these represent two nations. He already knows that but has been busy trying to manipulate God to get what was already his to begin with.

God in grace does the same thing with us. We are always wrestling with God in our lives, and God just doesn't hit us over the head with a 2 x 4, He doesn't win the match right away. There is grace in the process as He gives us that time to learn and to grow before God finally drives the point home that He needs to be the one who is in complete charge of our life and our thinking, and He needs to be the only and ultimate reference point for everything that is in our life. This is that point in Jacob's life. He has gone through these stages of spiritual advance and it is here that everything is going to change. We know



## Dr. Robert Dean Explains This Wrestling Match

that because at the end of this episode God gives him a new name, Israel, which means he who wrestles with God and he has prevailed against God. But in his prevailing against God, what happens? God wins. There is this ironic twist that take place in this episode. God at the very end just touches. It is a word that can mean to smite or to strike or to hit, but it also means just to lightly touch. It is not a word which tells us what the power of the touch was, and since it is God it doesn't have to be anything powerful, He can just touch that hip joint and displace it and Jacob is going to be crippled for the rest of his life as a constant reminder of who is ultimately in charge of his life. What God is showing Jacob is that Jacob has to be in complete submission to God's authority in his life before God is going to give him the blessing. God is not giving him the blessing yet. Jacob has out-foxed Esau, and has deceived his father Isaac, but God has not made the point of giving the blessing to Jacob, and it is at this point that Jacob in his wrestling with God, pleads with God to give him the blessing. It is at this point that Jacob recognizes that he must be in complete and total dependence upon God. And we never again see in the life of Jacob that old cunning manipulator that we have seen up to this point. This is a transforming event and time in Jacob's life. This is when he moves into a new level of spiritual maturity and dependence upon God. So this whole wrestling match is designed to be a picture, a training aid, as it were, for Jacob and for us of the reality that we, too, have to come to this point where just as Jacob meets God face to face and recognizes that he must make God the ultimate authority in his life, we have to come to that same point as well.

From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen134.htm> accessed June 3, 2015.

In a nutshell, it is like this. God has promised specific blessings to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and Jacob is constantly trying to earn these blessings, sometimes through deception and other approaches. In this way, he is actually wrestling with God, when he does not have to be.

Although there will be a marked change in the life and behavior of Jacob, he does not ever achieve the level of Abraham's spiritual growth. Therefore, do not look for him to be so changed as to be as spiritually mature as his grandfather.

Jacob has returned to the land from Paddan-aram. He is about to meet his brother, Esau; and he knows that Esau has 400 men with him. Jacob has set a huge amount of livestock aside for Esau.

### Lesson 359: Genesis 32

### Jacob's Wrestling Match and Palestine

We will go off on a temporary tangent here.

We are covering a great deal of ground, which helps us to relate this wrestling match to the name *Palestine* which was given to this land.



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## Griffin post: Palestine and Jacob's Wrestling Match with the Lord

### Who Are the Palestinians?

According to a recent census released by Central Bureau of Statistics, nearly three million Palestinians live in the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza. These Palestinians claim to be the descendants of the ancient natives of Palestine. Furthermore, they declare that they and millions more of their Palestinian descendants, scattered as refugees throughout the Middle East and living in other countries of the world, are engaged in a national struggle for sovereignty in their historic homeland. In addition, the radical Islamic terrorists have championed this same cause and declared that there will be no peace for the West until Palestinians achieve their objectives. But what are the facts behind these claims? What is the actual origin of this people who have gained such prominence that their demand for national recognition and right of return is said to be at the center of the Middle East conflict and the deciding factor and the war on terrorism?

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### What Is the Origin of the Name Palestinian?

The term Palestinian is thought to have been derived from the Greek and Latin words for one of the chief enemies of the Israelites - the Philistines (Greek Palaistine, Latin Palaestina, for Hebrew Plishtim—notice the repetition of the consonants PLST). The Philistine kingdom of Philistia occupied the narrow strip of coastal plain between modern Gaza and Joppa from thirteenth to seventh centuries B.C.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the word Palestine appears in the King James version of the Bible with reference to this region (Joel 3:4). However, more modern versions use the term Philistia.

David Jacobson, an instructor at the University College of London on Jews and the classical world, believes that Palestine may have originated as a Greek pun on the translation of "Israel" and "land of the Philistines". He observes that the Greek and Latin terms frequently appear in ancient literature with reference not to the land of Philistines, but to the land of Israel. For example, Herodotus (circa 450 B.c.), reputed to be the father of history, recorded that the people of Palestine were circumcised, a distinction of the Israelites, not Philistines (who were uncircumcised). Likewise, Aristotle (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) observed in his writings that the Dead Sea was in Palestine (a geographical setting in Israel far to the east of Philistine territory). And Philo of Alexandria (1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.) identified Palaistinei with biblical Canaan and remarked that "Palestinian Syria was occupied by the populous nation of the Jews".

Furthermore, if Palestine was derived from Philistine, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Septuagint (circa 250 B.C.), should have translated the Hebrew word "Plishtim" (Philistine) by the well-known Greek term Palaistinoi (Palestine). However, the translator chose the Greek transliteration Philistieim (revealing by the plural ending IM, a term of Hebrew origin). Jacobson argues that the Greek word Palaistine is quite close to the Greek word Palaistes, which means "wrestler", "rival" or "adversary". This is the very meaning of the Hebrew word Yisra'el (Israel), based on Genesis 32:25-17, in which Jacob received the name Israel because he "wrestled" (Hebrew sarita) with "God" (Hebrew 'El).

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## **Griffin post: Palestine and Jacob's Wrestling Match with the Lord**

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To the Greeks, who liked to use word plays, the word Palestine would have sounded both like the people of Israel, who were thought to be the descendants of a hero who wrestled with a god, and the Philistines, who lived in adjacent coast. The first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who wrote in Greek, supports this general usage by referring to both the land of the Philistines and the much larger Land of Israel as "Palestine". However, he also distinguished the Land of Israel by this term when he wrote of "the events that befell us Jews in Egypt, in Syria and in Palestine".

The use of the term Palestine in identification with the Land of Israel officially took root when the Roman emperor Hadrian renamed the country Syria Palaestina. It is often thought that Hadrian did this to punish the Jews for their revolt against Roman rule (the Bar-Kokhba Revolt of A.D. 132-135), for by removing their name for their country, the historic connection with their homeland would be severed. However, since the first-century Jewish writers Philo and Josephus had already used this term in Greek for Israel, and Roman writers continued this practice. Hadrian may have simply codified the ancient and accepted usage. Nevertheless, the designation Palaestina appears to have been applied particularly to Judea, at the center of which was the capital city of Jerusalem.

Hadrian's attack was clearly leveled against Jerusalem, which he considered the heart of the rebellion. It was from this city he expelled the Jewish population and renamed it Aelia Capitolina (in honor of his own family name Aelia and the gods on Rome's Capitol Hill). To obscure the Jewish religion of the city, he plowed under the site of the Temple Mount and erected within it pagan temples and shrines. In this way Hadrian symbolically sought to remove the Jewish past and build a new and revised Roman future.

Even though Romans attempted to sever a connection between Palestine and the Jewish people, Palestine remained identified with Israel as a place of promise "so that in later times the words Judea and Palestine were synonymous". Therefore, in general sense, the name Palestine has more of a historical link with the land of the people of Israel - the Jews - and in a restricted sense, also with the Philistines. In addition, the later application to Judea and Jerusalem may well have arisen from an attempt by the Roman enemies of the Jews to revise their historical origins.

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### **Who in Palestine Was Called a Palestinian?**

Greek and Roman writers used the terms Palestine and Palestinian to refer to the land of Israel and its Jewish inhabitants. As we have seen, early secular writers such as Herodotus and Aristotle had used these terms in this way, as had first-century Jewish writers such as Philo and Josephus. In the early 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., the Roman poet Ovid described Jewish Sabbath observance with the words "the seventh-day feast that the Syrian of Palestine observes". Other Latin authors, such as the poet Statius and the historian Dio Chrysostom, also spoke of the Jews as Palestinians and the Jewish homeland as Palestine.

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## Griffin post: Palestine and Jacob's Wrestling Match with the Lord

Likewise, in Talmudic literature (3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.), Palestine is used as the name of a Roman province adjoining the provinces of Phœnicia and Arabia (i.e, the Land of Israel). In the fourth century A.D. the three provinces into which the Land of Israel had been divided were referred to as first, second and third Palestine. But the term Palestine seems to have disappeared completely after the Muslim conquest of A.D. 638. In fact, Palestine never appears in the Qur'an, which refers to the area as simply "the holy land"(Al-Arad Al-Muqaddash). In like manner, Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Qur'an, and Arab historians variously referred to it as Iliya (adapted from the Latin Aelia), Bayt Maqdis (adapted from the Hebrew Beit Hamiqdash, "the Holy House" or "the Temple") or finally as Al-Quds (the holy one).

The crusaders renewed the use of the three Palestines, however, after the fall of the Crusader kingdom, the name Palestine was no longer used officially, but was preserved only by Christians cartographers in maps drawn in their native lands. From the establishment of Islamic rule over the land until the late nineteenth century, inhabitants of the region between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean appear to have referred to themselves primarily with respect to their religions (Mohammedan, Christians and Jews)

The first modern use of the term Palestinian appears during the time of the British Mandate (1917-1948). To the classically trained British mind the Land of Israel had ceased to exist in ancient times; and Palestine had endured in the classical literature as the designations of the Jewish homeland and heritage. This may be seen, for example, in the Jewish Encyclopedia (published in London 1905), which states that Palestine is "the portion of Syria that was formerly the possession of the Israelites". Given the British penchant for historical accuracy, the term is applied with reference to the Jewish residents of the country. Therefore, the standard British reference for defining terms, the Oxford English Dictionary, defines the term Palestinian as 1) "the Jews who returned to Israel from Moscow" and 2) "Jews from Israel who volunteered to be British army to fight Germany". In fact, Jewish soldiers serving with the Allies during World War II had the word Palestine inscribed in the shoulder badges.

In addition, under the British mandate, the Jewish owned newspaper Jerusalem Post was known as the Palestine Post and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra was called Palestine Philharmonica Orchestra, and postage stamps were issued bearing the appellation "Palestine - El", the abbreviation El meaning Eretz Israel (Hebrew for "the land of Israel").

These usages makes clear that even though the term Palestinian could have also been applied to Arabs or many other ethnic groups (such as the Armenians, Greeks, Syrians and Ethiopians of Jerusalem's Old City or the German Templars of its New City), under British rule, the term was especially understood to refer to a Jew from Palestine.

<sup>1</sup> Abraham lived in the land around 2000 B.C., and both he and Isaac interacted with the Philistines of Gerar. It is unclear whether these Philistines are related to the Philistines who occupied the land during the time of David. It appears to me that they are, as Abraham and Isaac interact with Abimelech (Genesis 20:26), which is a title for their king; and David interacts with Abimelech as well (Psalm 34 superscript; *Abimelech* appears to be the title and *Achish* his actual name—1Sam. 21:10). Obviously, this is not the same person, but, since he carried the same title, that continuity would suggest that these are the same people. Based upon Genesis 38, where one family wants to intermingle with the Jews, it is not out of the question that another people have intermingled with the Philistines.

From <http://thestupidleft.blogspot.com/2007/02/lie-about-palestinian-people-and.html> accessed June 3, 2015. Some editing and corrections have been made. The apparent author of this website is Stewart Gilligan Griffin; however, this article appears to have been cut and pasted, with a great many of the original spelling errors included. See [WordPress](#) for another site which carries this same article.

Dr. Robert Dean give us the short version: *[T]he Greek verb for wrestling is PALAIO [palaiw], and before the emperor Hadrian shut down Jerusalem and renamed Jerusalem and renamed Israel Palestine, long before the end of the first century and the destruction of Israel the Greeks called the land of Israel Palestine. It is not a play on Philistine at all, which is what a lot of people think, but the etymological derivative goes back to this word for wrestler. Palestine sounded like Philistine but it was based on the Greek verb for wrestler, the land of the wrestler, the land of Jacob the wrestler who was renamed Israel.*<sup>51</sup>

What we do and do not know about the ancient Philistines.

### Regarding Philistines and Palestine—In Summation

1. Although we have some clues about the origin of the Philistines, we do not even know for certain if they are Semitic peoples.
2. There is no relationship between the people who call themselves Palestinians today and the Philistines of yesteryear, despite the similarity of the name.
3. There is no clear title to the Land of Promise, apart from God giving it to Abraham. Abraham's descendants will live on this land in the Millennium.
4. However, even from human viewpoint, we could not assign this land to the Palestinians today. The Jews, historically, have a much earlier claim on this land. However, people live on whatever land that they can seize and defend. I don't know that there is any land that has been occupied by descendants from the original occupants. Native American Indians may be some of the few people who live on the land originally occupied by their ancestors.
5. Right now, the Palestinians live on roughly the same plot of land that the Philistines lived on 3 millennia ago; and the Jews live on a smaller plot a ground than they themselves occupied 3 millennia ago.
6. The name Palestine appears to be a play on words. It appears to both reference the Philistines who occupied this land; and a Greek word for *wrestler*, which is a

<sup>51</sup> From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen134.htm> accessed September 1, 2015.

## Regarding Philistines and Palestine—In Summation

- reference to Jacob, named *Israel* by God.
7. There could not be a better designation for this land; and there seems to be conflict (wrestling) in the land continually. This conflict is often related to God and the relationship of the people of the land to God.

We will return to verse-by-verse exegesis next lesson.

### Lesson 360: Genesis 32:24–31

### After the Wrestling Match

This is the night before Jacob is about to meet his estranged twin brother Esau. Jacob has divided his people into two camps, primarily to hide his wives and children from Esau. In front of him are most of his servants with a large present of livestock for Esau. Behind him are his wives and children (and probably some slaves); hidden so that they might be protected. Jacob is worried that his brother Esau might kill him, as he was ready to do 20 years ago. At this point, Jacob is alone between the two camps.

**Gen. 32:24–25** Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that He could not defeat him, He struck Jacob's hip as they wrestled and dislocated his hip socket. (HCSB)

Jacob, for all of his life, despite being in the line of promise, appeared to be in opposition to God. Whenever there was a choice between the right way of doing things and Jacob's way of doing things, Jacob went with his own way, his own plan. The oft-time repeated phrase of the book of the Judges is, **And every man did what was right in his own eyes**, also describes Jacob's approach to life. If he could work a situation to benefit himself, that is what he did.

**Gen 32:26** Then He said to Jacob, "Let Me go, for it is daybreak." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." (HCSB)

Jacob demands a blessing from God.

**Genesis 32:27** And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob."

God does not ask questions in order to elicit information, as God is omniscient. God often asks questions in order to teach—God here uses the Socratic method of teaching over a millennium before Socrates. What is God getting at? God is reminding Jacob of who he is; of how he solves problems. Jacob is a *chiseler*; he is a *supplanter*; he is a *heel-catcher*. Jacob is the name of a man who *takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy*.<sup>52</sup> He is a man whose every thought appears to be centered on, *what's best for*

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<sup>52</sup> From [Wenstrom.org](http://Wenstrom.org) accessed September 1, 2015.

me; what's in it for me; how can I profit by this situation? God is telling him, "This is who you are."

Throughout human history, God often uses a play on a person's name. Jacob meant, *chiseler*. God, Who is wrestling Jacob, will now rename him. Renaming Jacob will be equivalent to giving him a blessing.

"This is who you used to be; this new name is the person that you should be."

**Genesis 32:28** And He said, "Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for like a prince you have power with God and with men, and have prevailed."

Jacob has screwed up on many occasions, in his opposition to God; and in his continual attempt to work other people for his own gain. However, he will prevail because God is with him and because of God's promises to Abraham. God is telling Jacob, "You are not prevailing because you have outsmarted everyone around you; you are prevailing because I am in your life." Jacob's name is now Yis<sup>er</sup>ra'el (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced *yis-raw-ALE*], which means, *God prevails; contender; soldier of God*. Strong's #3478 & #3479 BDB #975. "You have prevailed," God tells Israel, "not because of your goofy schemes, but because I have prevailed."

*Wenstrom: The name yisra'el, "Israel" memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. The statement "you have striven with God and with men" refers to Jacob's problems with Isaac, Esau, Laban, and his wives, which were in reality problems with God since God permitted these people to come into his life to draw him closer to God.<sup>53</sup>*

That was God's intent. However, what we do in this life is not always in accordance with the will of God. Jacob certainly is a personification of that.

**Genesis 32:29** And Jacob asked and said, "I pray You, reveal Your name." And He said, "Why do you ask after My name?" And He blessed him there.

Jacob asks the Name of this Man wrestling him, and he responds, "Why do you ask My name?" This response seems to mean, "Do you not know Who I am? You have been fighting Me—wrestling Me—all of your life, and yet you don't know Me?"

Then God blesses Jacob. Recall that Jacob gained the blessing of his father based upon deception. However, here, God will bless him, knowing all there is to know about him.

Jacob fully recognizes with whom he has been wrestling:

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<sup>53</sup> From [Wenstrom.org](http://Wenstrom.org) accessed September 1, 2015.



**Genesis 32:30** And Jacob called the name of the place Penuel [= *Face of God*]; for [he said] “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

The Hebrew name is P<sup>e</sup>nîy’êl (פְּנִיאֵל) [pronounced *pehn-ee-ALE*], and it means *facing God*; and it is transliterated *Penuel*, *Peniel*. Strong’s #6439 BDB #819. Anytime in the Hebrew, you see that part of a proper noun contains ’êl, that is usually a reference to God.

Jacob recognizes that he has been wrestling God, and yet, he is still alive. This has got to have an impact upon a man. You are alive, in your human body, and you meet God face to face; you wrestle with God—and He leaves you alive. This has to make Jacob think and ponder his life.

We will not have this experience, but some of us have had a similar experience, where it is clear that our lives could have ended, but we remain alive. We recognize, perhaps for the first time, that there is just this slender thread that, if it is cut—and that would require very little—our life would suddenly end. Ideally speaking, this ought to make a person a tad bit more introspective. “I’m alive (and maybe I shouldn’t be); what is my life for? What is my life all about? Why has God allowed me to live?”

Every time Jacob limps, he needs to remember, “I was face to face with God and He let me live.”

**Genesis 32:31** And as he passed over Penuel the sun rose upon him, and he limped upon his thigh.

Jacob would, possibly for the rest of his life, limp because of his opposition to God. Every time that he limped, he was to remember his own opposition to God, as well as God’s blessing of him.

A chiasm is the overall arrangement of a passage (it is logically arranged like a X-a chi). I believe that this is found in Genesis to help with remembering the passage. Sometimes we can read AA’, BB’, etc., and it makes sense; sometimes we can focus in on the center line as what is important, and then come out from there.

### **William Ramey’s Chiasm of Genesis 32:22–31**

- A Jacob did not cross the Jabbok that night, but remained alone (22-24a)
- B A "man" wrestles with Jacob (24b-25)
- C The "man's" request to Jacob (26a)
- D Jacob requests a blessing (26b)
- E The "man" asks Jacob his name (27a)
- X Jacob's name changed to "Israel" (27b-28)
- E' Jacob asks the "man" his name (29a-b)
- D' The "man" blesses Jacob (29c)
- C' Jacob's response by naming the place "Peniel" (30a)
- B' Jacob says that he has seen God "face to face" (30b)
- A' The sun rose upon Jacob as he crossed over Penuel alone (31)

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## William Ramey's Chiasmus of Genesis 32:22–31

Editorial note: In commemoration of Jacob's confrontation with God, the descendants of Israel did not eat the sinew of the hip because it was touched in the struggle (32)

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

Much of Genesis can be difficult to interpret, as most of it is narrative. Now and again, there is clear commentary on what has gone on (Genesis 19:15 22:15–18); but most of the time, the incidents and narrative are given, without any sort of moral commentary added. Therefore, we take all the relevant material together, with the narrative, and determine for ourselves how to understand what is being taught.

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### Wenstrom: What Jacob Learned (or, Should Have Learned)

[Here], Jacob has learned what God's grace is all about, namely, that we cannot merit the blessing of God because of who we are or what we do, that it is a gift and cannot be earned or deserved.

Jacob exploited his brother Esau's hunger and got him to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup because he thought he had to do something to get God to bless him. He disguised himself as Esau in order to deceive his father Isaac who was blind into giving him the blessing of the birthright rather than to Esau because he thought he had to do something to get blessed by God.

Jacob's finally learned that neither Esau or anyone or himself could prevent God from blessing him. He clung to the Lord demanding to be blessed because he now understands that the blessings of God come directly from God and not by cheating and deceiving people.

Jacob had learned through the twenty years with Laban that Esau could neither provide nor prevent the blessing of God and so it was not Esau that stood in the way of Jacob's blessing in the land of Canaan.

On the one hand, it was God Who opposed Jacob and on the other it was Jacob himself, who by means of his deceitfulness and treachery, attempted to produce spiritual blessings through carnal means. Jacob had learned that the blessing of God must be obtained from God himself, and this must be done by clinging to Him in helpless dependence, not by trying to manipulate Him or fighting Esau.

Jacob had learned through the years of divine discipline while living with Laban that he did "not" have to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the birthright instead of Esau but that the blessing of the birthright was based upon God's grace meaning it was a gift that he did "not" earn or deserve.

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From [Wenstrom.org](http://Wenstrom.org) accessed September 1, 2015.

We have one final verse in Genesis 32, and this verse is based upon Jacob's wrestling match with God. God touched Jacob's hip and it was thrown out of whack for what appears to be the rest of this life.

Genesis 32:25 When the Man saw that He did not prevail against Jacob, He touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as He wrestled with him.

Gen 32:26–29 Then He said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me." And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked Him, "Please tell me Your Name." But He said, "Why is it that you ask My Name?" And there He blessed him.

Gen 32:30–31 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. (ESV; capitalized)

Genesis 32:32 Therefore the sons of Israel do not eat of the sinew of the thigh, which is on the hip-socket, until this day, because He touched Jacob's hip-socket, the sinew of the thigh.

This verse is a gloss—a verse added after the Scripture was originally written. It had to be added after the time that this became a tradition. Also, notice the designation: *the sons of Israel*. This does not refer to Jacob's literal sons (although they may have begun the tradition) but his grandsons and great grandsons as well (as such a custom is passed down from one generation to the next, it becomes a tradition).

At this point in time, his sons are young; they are all less than 14 years old (20 years plus 1 year of travel minus 7 years). We are not told what Jacob said to his sons, but his sons would have asked him what had happened (he would be limping). He would be saying more than, "I wrestled with some guy." He would have revealed that this man was God. It is reasonable that his sons, at the next meal that involved meat, chose not to eat the sinew of the thigh. However, for this to become a tradition, it had to take place over a period of many years. That is why v. 32 is a gloss.

Even though this is a gloss, that does not mean that this verse is not a part of the Word of God. It is reasonable to assume that all glosses which found their way into the Word of God become a part of the Word of God.

There were God's laws; and there were traditions. There is nothing wrong with some traditions. We in the United States celebrate Independence Day (the 4<sup>th</sup> of July) and other holidays related to our military. The Bible does not prescribe a list of official holidays for believers in the Church Age, as it did for nation Israel.

This long-standing tradition indicates (1) the Jews believe this narrative and (2) this narrative was received early enough in their history to give it credence. For many hundreds of years, the Jews would not eat this part of the thigh; and when asked by the younger generation, *why*, this story of Jacob wrestling God would be recounted. This is how some portions of Scripture were taught, from one generation to the next.

These traditions also suggest a very early date for the writing of the book of Genesis. There are all kinds of false theories about the composition of Genesis and that it occurred at a very late date by a variety of authors (the [JEPD](#) approach). You *cannot* build tradition for something that happened in 1800 B.C. from a document that is written and circulated in 800 B.C. It would make very little sense, because no one would have that tradition.

If you are unfamiliar with the JEPD theory, there is the claim that there are two sets of documents floating around, one written by the Yahwist, combined ancient legends, myths and poems into a document where the name *Jehovah* is used quite often. The Elohimist wrote down the second document, which was a great many of the traditions popular in the northern kingdom. The Deuteronomist apparently wrote the book of Deuteronomy? And then a priest (or several priests) took these documents and edited them altogether. Well, that is the theory, anyway. So there is no misunderstanding, this theory is based upon nothing substantial. That is, we do not have a Yahwist partial document or anything like that.

The late-dating of the Pentateuch (the claim that it was written a thousand years after the history actually took place), means that everything the Jews believe was suddenly foisted upon them, 1000 years after the fact. One day, there was no Word of God; and, the day after, there was the Word of God with stories about Abraham, Jacob, Moses and the Exodus, etc. And then, when this document shows up out of nowhere, the entire nation of Israel decides to believe that it is the Word of God, as well as being genuine and accurate history. And, to add to this confusion, the Documentary Hypothesis folks teach that there are actually 2 or 3 separate documents floating around, and someone much, much later, mixed them altogether, and then proclaimed this the Word of God. Again, did people know anything about this original documents? And why were they willing to set those documents aside for a brand new integrated document?

Just the idea of having these documents floating around opens up a whole set of questions. Who actually wrote them; when did they write them; were the Jews aware of them; did the Jews ascribe authority to these documents; and if they did ascribe authority to these documents, why were the Jews so willing to suddenly accept an edited version of the same? This would go against every copyist tradition that the Jews had, where they carefully copied the Old Testament manuscripts out letter by letter. This theory means that copyists either preserved the old manuscripts or they didn't. Why would they be so willing to abandon manuscripts that they had preserved for centuries? Or, if they had not been preserving these manuscripts, then how was it possible to sell these new edited manuscripts as the Word of God? This century-old, long-standing theory of where the books of Moses came from (not from Moses) introduces far more confusion than it solves.

And somehow, this late introduction of the Word of God, occurs among a people who, for hundreds of years at least, gathered and read the Word of God publically all over the nation of Israel. This is among a people who are known for their careful protection and dissemination of the Word of God, where they knew the middle letter of every book.

The entire JEPD approach is illogical because it is in conflict with everything that we know about the ancient Jewish culture. They were meticulous about preserving the Word of God; and they, at some point in time, began to read the Word of God aloud publically.

Interestingly enough, in our current age of information, it is easier to perpetrate a fraud than it was then. Because of the internet and the way that news is disseminated, the same false information can be repeated and repeated and some people will believe it (primarily, because they are predisposed to believe it). Most famously, the idea that George W. Bush lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq in order to get us to go to war in Iraq.<sup>54</sup> This is one of the greatest fictions of my generation, and yet, millions of people believe it (and still believe that today—some of the people reading this right now may believe that).

Another example are the 9/11 Truthers (a misnomer, if there ever was one) believe that one or more of the buildings that collapsed on the attacks of 9/11/2001 were actually caused by explosives surreptitiously set within the buildings prior to the actual attacks. The idea is, the Bush administration (such a bogey man to the left) somehow *coordinated* the destruction of these buildings with the attacks of 9/11. It is as if, no one would have been shocked had planes only flown into buildings; but if more of the buildings collapsed, then that would really get Americans all fired up? To a normal person, this makes absolutely no sense.

Let's look at the lies perpetrated today, and compare them with the theory that the writings of the Old Testament showed up 1000 years too late. A significant number of people today believe that [George Bush lied about WMD's](#) in Iraq and that someone set explosives in certain buildings in New York City to go off to coincide with the attacks of the hijackers. However, this is not a majority of people in either case (although the [lie](#) about George Bush [lying](#) has been quite effective, [politically speaking](#)).

On the other hand, nearly all Israel was supposed to accept the forged documents, appearing 1000 years after the fact, which are filled with all of their laws, rituals and traditions (which they would not have had in their entirety). How does it make sense that these documents suddenly appear, and, at the same time, the Israelites have been following the mandates and rituals of these same documents for the previous 1000 years? How did they know about God's laws and the rituals that God required of them, if they did not have these documents in the first place? Or, did they suddenly start following all these rituals, even though, they never followed them before?

Let's approach this logically: Prior to receiving the false Mosaic documents (the assumption of the JEPD theory) (1) Israel was already following all of the laws and rituals found in

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<sup>54</sup> The reason most often given is, he wanted to [avenge](#) his father. However, reasons *why* are rarely given.

those documents; (2) Israel followed some of the laws and rituals found in those documents; (3) Israel had not been following any of the laws and rituals found in those documents. In the case of #1 and #2, how did they know about these laws and rituals if they did not have the documents yet? And, in the case of #3, what sense does it make for Israel to begin following a whole new set of laws and rituals which they never followed before, because someone “found” some documents telling them that they have been following these laws and rituals for hundreds of years? The book of Leviticus is quite complex, with dozens of rituals and feast days and regulations. Does it make sense that one generation before these documents suddenly appear on the scene, are not practicing all of the rituals and feast days; but then, suddenly, in the next generation, they are followed, because these are supposedly the laws of Israel from the beginning? How could the entire nation be duped like this?

My point in all of this is, it is logical and it makes sense for the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy to have been written during the time that these historical incidents occurred. They would have nearly universal acceptance because these people experienced all that was found in those documents (or their parents and grandparents experienced these things).

The religion of Y<sup>e</sup>howah is very different from any other religion. It is based upon thousands of historical incidents. It is based upon a nearly complete contiguous history of God’s interaction with the Jewish people. If you remove the historical nature of the Bible, there is very little Bible remaining. If I were to make a wild guess, perhaps 90% or more of the Old Testament is an historic record. Even some of the psalms have their foundation in historical incidents (often noted in the inscriptions).

The teachings of Islam, Confucius, Buddhism do not require thousands of years of *historical events* in order to stand. In fact, Islam, for the most part, would rather than we did not know anything about the historical person of Mohammed—at least, not at first.

Not nearly as insidious a theory as the JEPD theory, but still problematic in many ways, is the idea that Moses wrote the book of Genesis. He may have been the final editor; but I doubt even that.

There are a number of things which confirm the historicity and traditional understanding of the writing of the Bible (particularly of the early books).

### **Reasons Why Genesis Was Written at the Time of These Events**

1. The history is accurate, and the names of cities and place as well as the customs of the day correspond to the time period that each chapter is written. We find glosses where they would make sense to find them.
2. One of the great ancient historians, Will Durant, wrote: *The discoveries here summarized have restored considerable credit to those chapters of Genesis that record the early traditions of the Jews. In its outlines, and barring supernatural incidents, the story of he Jews as unfolded in the Old Testament has stood the*



## Reasons Why Genesis Was Written at the Time of These Events

*tet of criticism and archeology; every year add corroboration from documents, monuments or excavations. E.g., potsherds unearthed at Tel Ad-Duweir in 1935 bore Hebrew inscriptions confirming part of the narrative of the Books of Kings. We must accept the Biblical account provisionally until it is disproved.* (From *The Story of Civilization; 1. Our Oriental Heritage*, by Will Durant; MJF Books, ©1963; p. 300; footnote). Durant knows more ancient history than you or I know, and he did not believe the miracles of Scripture. Both of these things make him a credible witness as to the accuracy of the history of the Old Testament. These things indicate that he is not predisposed to believe Genesis.

3. An accurate history would suggest that these books were written near the period of time that the history took place (and not several hundred years later). People would logically accept the writings, because they actually lived the events found in these writings (or they knew the events from the word of their parents and grandparents).
4. There is an amazing organizational principle to the Bible—particularly noticeable in the book of Genesis—is the continual use of chiasm throughout. This is a very complex way of recording historical events. One was noted most recently a few lessons back, but there are far more than just this one for what we have recently studied. If the book of Genesis was learned and passed along verbally, this chiasmic organization makes a great deal of sense. It gives the memorizer sort of an outline, which is more easily remembered. We would be less likely to find this sort of organization if this text is the product of several manuscripts which are mixed together at a later date.
5. There are remarkable differences in style and vocabulary in the book of Genesis, which testify to a variety of writers. The record left by Abraham is so much different than that left by Isaac or that left by Joseph. And all of these styles are very different from Genesis 24, which is unique in its style to the Old Testament.
6. There is a development of theology which has commonality; but which is built upon. This is very tricky to have an entire book where theology is built upon theology, and without contradiction. This is known as progressive revelation which, insofar as I know, is unique to the Bible. Progressive revelation means that, each additional truth builds upon, expands, and better explains that which was already taught. New revelation does not contradict, supersede, replace or nullify previous revelation, but builds upon that which is past and upon that which is foundational.
  - 1) The writings of the Koran, which I believe were written in their entirety by one man, contain contradictions, which is to be expected. I think differently today than I did 30 years ago; therefore, there are things which I would state today which would contradict what I wrote 30 years ago. This happened to Mohammed (this is well-attested to; Muslims do not dispute this). So the explanation of current Islamic teaching is, if two passages contradict one another, then the later passage is to be accepted as being the accurate passage.
  - 2) However, this does not occur in the Bible. Even though there are different

## Reasons Why Genesis Was Written at the Time of These Events

- dispensations in the Bible, there is no contradiction in this. We no longer slaughter animals because (1) this was done in the Age of Israel; and (2) these sacrifices looked forward to the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Once these things were fulfilled in the Person of Jesus Christ, they did not have to be repeated (this is a major theme in the book of Hebrews in the New Testament).
- 3) In the Church Age, we do dispense with a great many traditions, holidays (feast days) and rituals. All of these things pointed to the day of the Messiah and to His death on the cross. Since we are no longer looking forward to the Messiah dying for our sins, all of those things are set aside. They are not forgotten; they are simply no longer observed. Ideally speaking, even New Testament churches should teach these things (which is why most of my work is done in the Old Testament).
  - 4) When I was a young kid, I had a wrestling ring made out of a block of wood, 3" nails and rubber bands; and I had toy soldiers and the like who I renamed and re-purposed as wrestlers. And then, at some point in time, I stopped playing with it. None of that is an inherent contradiction; I just grew up. Things in my life changed as a result of growing up. The New Testament Scriptures do not contradict the Old Testament rituals. The New Testament Jesus fulfills the Old Testament rituals. Just as the adult version of me is a culmination of my life and natural growth, the New Testament Church Age is the *grown-up version* of the Old Testament.
7. There are traditions found throughout Scripture which make sense if these traditions began soon after the historical event to which they refer. It makes a lot sense to talk about a tradition from 1900 B.C., which was originally presented in a document from that time period. It makes less sense for a tradition to begin 1900 B.C., but it is first mentioned in a document written in 900 B.C.

Summing up, all of this makes sense and fits together if the book of Genesis was written by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph and others. It makes a lot less sense to be written by different men a millennium later and then woven together by another set of men, and then sold to the public as the original Word of God.

### Lesson 361 Addendum: Genesis 32:1–32

### A brief review of Genesis 32

#### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 32:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being

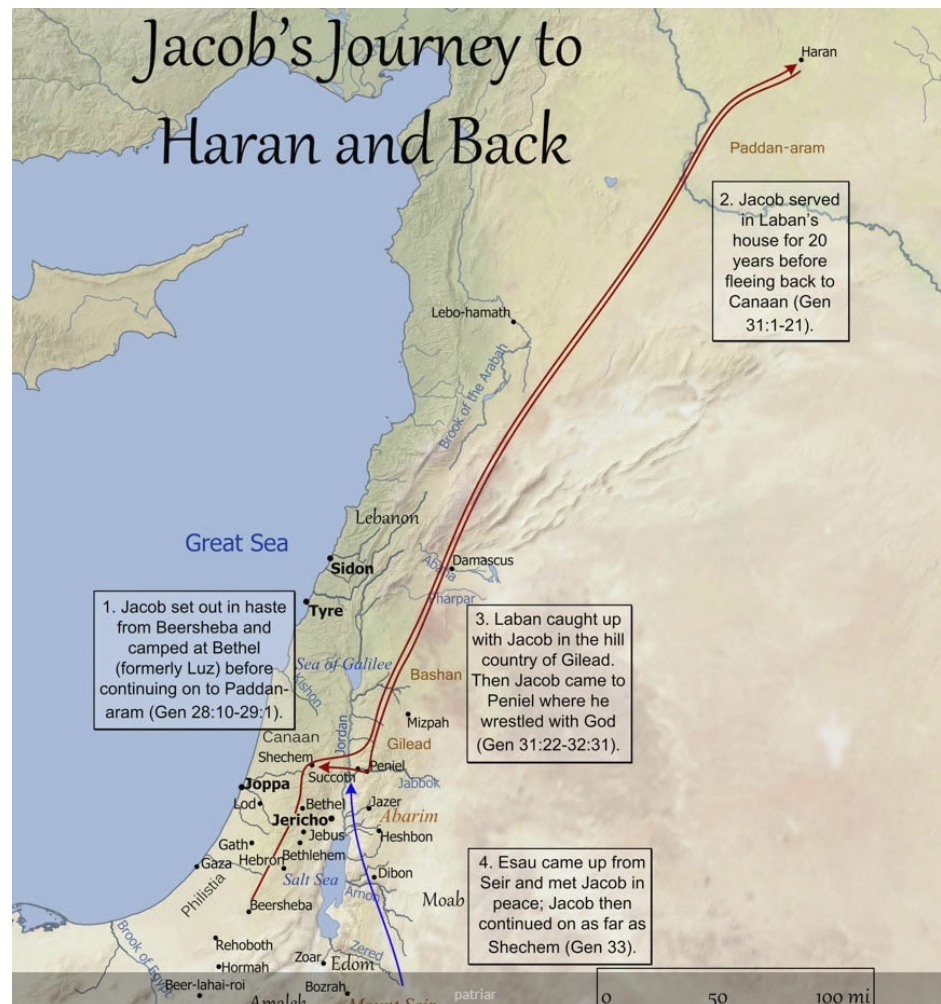
so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masorettes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

In the previous chapter, Jacob left Haran, bringing his wives and children with him. Laban caught up with him, but they resolved their differences. Laban returned to Haran and Jacob continued toward Canaan—and toward his twin brother.

Genesis 32:1 **And Ya'aqob [= Jacob] went on his way, and the messengers of Elohim [= God] met him.**

When *messenger* is in the singular, this often refers to the preincarnate Christ. In the plural refers to angels (sometimes to Christ and some angels with Him).

Genesis 32:2 **And when Ya'aqob saw them, he said, "This is the camp of Elohim." And he called the name of that place Maḥanayim.**



Machānayim (מַחֲנַיִם) [pronounced *mahkh-uh-AH-yim*] means, *two camps*; and is transliterated *Mahanaim*. Strong's #4266 BDB #334. There is Jacob's camp and the camp of God.

**Jacob's Journey** (a map); from [Headwaters](#); accessed July 12, 2024.

Genesis 32:3–4 And Ya'aqob sent messengers before him to Ęsaw [= *Esau*] his brother in the land of Sě'ir, the field of Edom and he commanded them, saying, "Say this to my master Ęsaw, 'Your servant Ya'aqob said this, "I have sojourned with Laban and stayed there until now.

Jacob was expecting to see Esau next. He was not expecting to see God or messengers from God.

Jacob sends some of his own messengers to Esau, hoping that such a meeting will not result in his death.

Esau did not live in Canaan, but in Seir, which is more or less adjacent to Canaan. Edom is a small section in the northern portion of Seir where Esau and his family lives.

Jacob tells Esau, through his messengers, that he has been staying with Laban all of this time. Esau would know who this is (Laban is the brother of their mother).

Genesis 32:5 "And I have bulls, and donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants. And I have sent to inform my master, to find favour in your eyes." ' "

Jacob indicates that he has many possessions. This is like opening one's safe deposit box and showing everyone your gold coins (or silver certificates or whatever).

Genesis 32:6 So the messengers returned to Ya'aqob, saying, "We came to your brother Ęsaw, and he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men with him."

The messengers come back to Jacob. Esau did not have to give them any message. There were 400 men with him. He knew that message would be relayed.

Genesis 32:7–8 And Ya'aqob was greatly afraid and distressed. So he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two groups, and he said, "If Ęsaw comes to the one group and strikes it, then the other group which is left shall escape."

Jacob is worried that his brother will plunder what he has and kill everyone with him. He divides his people and animals into two groups. If the first one is destroyed by Esau, the second will know to try to escape. Obviously, the second group cannot be seen.

Genesis 32:9 And Ya'aqob said, "O Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Yitshaq, הוהי [= YHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah] who said to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives, and I do good to you,'

At this point, Jacob prays. He is reminding God that He told him to leave Haran and return to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 32:10 "I do not deserve the least of all the loving-commitment and all the truth which You have shown Your servant, for I passed over this Yardēn [= *The River Jordan*] with my staff, and now I have become two groups.

Jacob recognizes how unworthy he is before God.

Genesis 32:11 "Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Ĕsaw, for I fear him, lest he come and shall strike me and the mother with the children.

Jacob prays to be delivered from Esau, that he is not struck down with his family.

Now, remember, God has already promised Jacob a future in the land with his seed (that is, his descendants).

Genesis 32:12 "For You said, 'I shall certainly do good to you, and shall make your seed as the sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.' "

Jacob reminds God what He has promised. Ideally speaking, what God has promised should be good enough; but Jacob will take additional precautions.

Genesis 32:13–15 And he spent the night there, and took what came to his hand as a present for Ĕsaw his brother – two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty suckling-camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals.

Despite the fact that God told him to return to Canaan and despite the promises God has given him, Jacob decides that the best thing to do is to give much of his wealth to Esau.

Genesis 32:16 And he gave into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between drove and drove."

The way that Jacob sets this up is, he will send along a number of livestock; then there would be some space, and another group of livestock would come next. It makes his gift to Esau seem greater.

Genesis 32:17 And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Ĕsaw my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? And whose are these in front of you?' ...



Jacob tells his servants, "Listen, Esau is going to ask about these animals."

Genesis 32:18 ...then you shall say, 'They are your servant Ya'aqob's. It is a present sent to my master Esau. And see, he also is behind us.' "

Jacob messengers are to tell Esau that these animals are a gift from him to Esau.

Genesis 32:19–20 So he commanded the second, and the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "Speak to Esau this same word when you find him, and you shall say, 'Also look, your servant Ya'aqob is behind us.' " For he said, "Let me appease him with the present that goes before me, and after that see his face. He might accept me."

Jacob is very concerned that Esau still bears a grudge against him.

Genesis 32:21 And the present passed over before him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

Jacob sent the messengers and his livestock ahead, but he hangs back for the night.

Genesis 32:22 And he rose up that night and took his two wives, and his two female servants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford of Yabboq [= *Jabbok*].

Jacob decides that he wants to separate his family out, that perhaps they might be saved.

Genesis 32:23 And he took them and sent them over the stream, and sent over what he had.

He sends them over a stream to the intent of preserving them.

Genesis 32:24 And Ya'aqob was left alone. And a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.

This leaves Jacob alone, and a man wrestles with him for the rest of the evening until dawn. He is wrestling with the Lord.

Genesis 32:25 And when He saw that He did not overcome him, He touched the socket of his hip. And the socket of Ya'aqob's hip was dislocated as He wrestled with him.

The Lord dislocates Jacob's hip. He will limp for the rest of his life, and remember back to this time because of that.

Genesis 32:26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks." But he said, "I am not letting You go until You have blessed me!"

The Lord is being held onto by Jacob and Jacob says, "I will not let go until You bless me." Jacob finally understands that the key to his blessing is being blessed by the Lord. Nothing



else matters. Not what his father said, not what his mother concocted; not his birthright; and not what Laban did to him. Those are all non-issues. It is Jacob's relationship with God that is key to his blessing.

Remember that.

Genesis 32:27 So He asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Ya'aqob."

God asks him, "What is your name?" Jacob gives his name.

Genesis 32:28 And He said, "Your name is no longer called Ya'aqob, but Yisra'ël,<sup>a</sup> because you have striven with Elohim and with men, and have overcome."

<sup>a</sup>Yisra'ël means "to strive with Ĕl; to overcome with Ĕl; to rule with Ĕl".

God gives him a new name.

There will be times when the name *Jacob* is used, and that can refer to being hard-headed and obstinate; and when the name *Israel* is used, that can indicate being Authority orientated to God and therefore blessed by God.

Genesis 32:29 And Ya'aqob asked Him, saying, "Please let me know Your Name." And He said, "Why do you ask about My Name?" And He blessed him there.

Jacob believes that his struggle here is with God. He wants God to say this and confirm his notion.

Genesis 32:30 And Ya'aqob called the name of the place Peni'ël, "For I have seen Elohim face to face, and my life is preserved."

Jacob called this place P<sup>e</sup>nîy'ël (פְּנִי'אֵל) [pronounced *pehn-ee-ALE*], which means, *facing God*; and it is transliterated *Penuel*, *Peniel*. Strong's #6439 BDB #819

Genesis 32:31 And the sun rose on him as he passed over Penu'ël, and he limped on his hip.

The sun now comes up and Jacob passes over Penuel, limping along.

Genesis 32:32 That is why the children of Yisra'ël to this day do not eat the sinew of the hip, which is on the socket of the thigh, because He touched the socket of the thigh of Ya'aqob, in the sinew of the hip.

Throughout the history of Israel, various things would happen, and a tradition would arise from that incident, to mark this historicity of that incident.

Before we move into Genesis 33, let's take a look back at Genesis 32, to see how this chapter is chiasmically organized.

There are actually several [overlapping chiasmi](#) in Genesis 32–33. This is simply the overarching view of Genesis 32.

### William Ramey's Chasmos of Genesis 32

- A The angels of God encounter Jacob -- place name changed to "Mahanaim" (1-2)
- B Jacob sent messengers, listing possessions to Esau (3-8)
- X Jacob's prayer to the LORD (9-12)
- B' Jacob sent messengers and gifts to Esau (13-21)
- A' A "man" opposes Jacob, blesses and changes his name to Israel, after which Jacob renames the place as "Peniel" (22-31)

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

Documentary Hypothesis (also called form criticism; also called the JEPD theory) teaches *that the first five books of the Bible were written close to one thousand years after Moses' death and were the result of a process of writing, rewriting, editing, and compiling by various anonymous editors or redactors.*<sup>55</sup> This has been taught for over a hundred years in many seminaries throughout the United States, and was based upon the theory that nobody wrote stuff down in the time of Abraham or Moses (an assumption which has been shown to be historically false). However, this false theory remains, even though the foundation for this theory no longer exists.

I mention this because the structure of parts of Genesis is very well-organized, designed perhaps in a way to be more easily memorized.

I often wondered if Darwin was inspired by life seeming to appear out of nowhere in a bucket of water? (Barrels of water would have been common in his day) The connection here is, coming up with a theory based upon some incorrect observations.

Anyway, in the original Hebrew, there were no chapter breaks; chapter breaks were added hundreds of years later. There is little which separates Genesis 32 from 33. They could have been combined into one long chapter instead. However, one could argue that Jacob's mental attitude had dramatically changed from the previous chapter to this one—overnight, as it were—and thereby justify the splitting of the chapters.

In the previous chapter, Jacob was anticipating his meeting with Esau with no little trepidation; and in this chapter, he will meet Esau face to face after 20 years. Between his concern over this meeting and the actual meeting, Jacob finds himself wrestling with God.

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<sup>55</sup> Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1999 by Josh McDowell; p. 391.

He demands a blessing from God, which he receives; along with a name change. He was no longer Jacob; his new name was Israel.

Robert Dean: *Jacob [now] realizes that God is his strength, his protection, is source of security, and he is now able to relax and to meet Esau without relying upon his own schemes and manipulations. This is where we see a major turning point in the life of Jacob as he becomes Israel, and then that name, Israel, becomes significant, and later on throughout the prophets it is interesting to see how when the nation is being obedient to God frequently (but not always) the term Israel is emphasized, but when they are out of fellowship in rebellion they will be called Jacob. For example, the period of the Tribulation, which is a judgment on the nation, is not known as a time of Israel's trouble but a time of Jacob's trouble.*<sup>56</sup>

In this chapter, Jacob actually meets his twin brother Esau, after 20 years. Both men are quite successful and both men have been greatly blessed by God.

Over these past 20 years, becoming a husband and father, having many responsibilities, having met God, and having been cheated on many occasions by his Uncle Laban, Jacob has apparently enjoyed some spiritual growth. Some of this came at the time of his wrestling match with God, where Jacob realized that his blessing comes directly from God.

In other words, Jacob has become somewhat more grace oriented. Remember that **God resists the arrogant, but He gives grace to the grace oriented [believer]**. (1Peter 5:5 Prov. 3:34).

Grace is an key word in this chapter. In the Hebrew, the word is chên (חַן) [pronounced *khayn*], and it is found 3x in this chapter. Strong's #2580 BDB #336.

Robert Dean: *Giving more grace indicates the successive stages of grace reception in the spiritual life where there is saving grace, logistical grace, an accumulation of more and more grace that God gives as we walk in obedience and grow spiritually.*<sup>57</sup>

The *arrogant* is Jacob, always doing things his own way, following his own instincts, attempting to wrest what he wanted from others. The Lord Jesus Christ, as a theophany, had to knock Jacob around a bit to put him on track.

So that there is no misunderstanding, Jacob never attains the spiritual maturity of his grandfather Abraham. He will never be called *the friend of God*. His name occurs 27 times in the New Testament; Abraham's 75 times. Jacob has moved forward in his spiritual trek, learning the hard way most of the time. However, he is anything but perfect, as subsequent chapters will bear out.

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<sup>56</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.

<sup>57</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.

However, I am personally comforted more by Jacob than I am by Abraham. I find solace in the failures of Peter and Paul, given my own extensive failures in life.

**Genesis 33:1** And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, Esau came, and four hundred men with him. And he divided the children to Leah, and to Rachel, and to the two handmaids.

In the Hebrew, often when there are a series of wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, we are looking at a set of consecutive (or coterminous) actions. Remember in the previous chapter where it appeared that Jacob was going to hide his family in a second camp, out of Esau's sight? That does not appear to be the case now.

What happened in between Jacob making two camps and now Jacob approach Esau with his whole family in tow? Jacob wrestled with God. God renamed Jacob. Jacob has a lifelong injury to remind him of this event. And now, he is approaching Esau differently. Jacob is limping and he appears to have a different mental attitude.

Jacob was concerned about his meeting with Esau. He left the Land of Promise because Esau had promised to kill him. He left, essentially taking Esau's blessing with him. Remember, that the Hebrews believed that, when you said something, it meant something. That is, when you made a vow, or gave a blessing or a cursing, this was more than just empty words uttered into the wind. These things all involved God. A vow was taken before God, telling God that there was something that you would or would not do. A blessing indicated that you were, in essence, praying to God to do this or that on behalf of the person you are blessing. Cursing is pretty much the same thing, except to ask for God to curse that person. Because they believed strongly in an interactive God, these things were significant. The very words you spoke were significant, no matter who was around.

What is said and done by God's people is significant to the angels who observe us. They see us, they see what we do, they hear what we say; and they see what God does as a result. It is problematic for the words of God's people to just filter out aimlessly into thin air, to be completely ignored by God.

**Genesis 33:2** And he put the slave women and their children first, and Leah and her children afterward, and Rachel and Joseph last.

Interestingly enough, Jacob places his wives and mistresses right behind him. My guess is, he hopes that Esau will see them, and not want to harm them; and, in addition, not want to harm their husband.

Or, Jacob now has new-found confidence in his own future. I think that this is more likely. Remember, Jacob fought with God, and he is still alive. How can he fear Esau now? If God chose not to kill him—and quite obviously, God could have done that quite easily—then how can Jacob fear Esau?

Note the order of his wives—Jacob has the least emotional connection to the two personal maids, and the most to Rachel and her son—so he places the maids at the very front.

**Genesis 33:3** And he passed over in front of them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Jacob sets up his wives and mistresses and children so that they can be seen, but he goes ahead of them, bowing himself before his brother. Before, it appeared that he would gather them into their own camp and hide them, just in case he is attacked and killed.

The bowing before Esau indicates subservience. Jacob was no longer trying to elevate himself over Esau; he was placing himself under Esau. He had actually developed a little grace orientation.

Grace orientation is a more modern designation for the word *humility*.

### **Robert Dean on Humility**

What is humility? Humility is a primary virtue in the spiritual life. Humility in the Scripture is always contrasted with pride, arrogance, and self-absorption. Too often people think that humility is some sort of self-deprecation, low self-esteem, somebody who is walked all over by somebody else, and never asserts themselves in any situation. But that is not the biblical concept of humility. The biblical concept of humility is authority orientation. It is a biblical perception of who one is—understanding who you are properly in the plan of God and who you are in the chain of command, so to speak. And it is orientation to divine authority. That is at the core of being able to advance in any circumstance in Scripture. So humility is a biblical perception of who one is—an orientation to God's authority. We are told in the Old Testament that Moses was the most humble man in the Old Testament. The reason was that he was completely oriented to the authority of God. The New Testament picture of humility is given in Philippians 2:5-11. It gives us that picture of humility in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Humility is foundational to grace orientation. Grace orientation means that we recognize that all that we are and all that we have is from God, and this is what Jacob expresses in the main part of this chapter. In arrogance we think that any part of what we have and any part of what we are is what we have accomplished. The emphasis is on our own achievements as opposed to what God has provided for us.

Humility is foundational to learning, to growing, and to loving others, because humility is authority orientation. To learn anything we have to submit to an authority. We have to be willing to be taught, willing to admit we are wrong, willing to admit that the ideas that we have might not be correct. So there has to be a level of humility and teachability. Humility is foundational for learning, for growing spiritually, and to loving others. When we are self-absorbed we can't love anybody because we are too busy focusing on ourselves.

## Robert Dean on Humility

Humility, then, is foundational to forgiveness and reconciliation. In any human relationship there has to be forgiveness and reconciliation because we are all sinners and every one of us fails at times.

From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.

Dean continues: *Jacob is demonstrating this expression of humility toward his brother Esau. There is genuine humility here. He is not just bowing and scraping because he was afraid Esau was going to do something. There has been a real and genuine transformation in his character.*<sup>58</sup>

**Genesis 33:4** And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. And they wept.

There appears to be no vindictiveness; no anger; no long-term mental attitude sins which have been stewing. Both men meet and embrace one another. What had been before was left in the past.

The interaction between these two men is fascinating. Jacob is bowing and scraping; but Esau runs to him, to embrace him; seeing him as a long lost brother or friend, more than a former enemy.

Esau has also shown some personal change. 20 years ago, he wanted to kill Jacob. Now he welcomes Jacob enthusiastically, with both love and interest.

Just as fascinating is, Esau will initiate the conversation throughout, speaking first and asking most of the questions. This suggests that he has been thinking about Jacob, about his life, about his brother whom he had not seen for 20 years, and that he simply had a lot of say to him. This may even suggest some guilt felt by him over this time.

### Lesson 363: Genesis 33:1–16

### Esau Meets Jacob's Family

Jacob and Esau are meeting for the very first time 20 years after their falling out (for which, Jacob was to blame).

Gen. 33:1–4 And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and noticed that Esau was coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children to Leah, and to Rachel, and to the two female slaves. And he put the female slaves and their children first, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph last. And he himself passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

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<sup>58</sup> From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 14, 2015.



And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept. (UPDV)

Jacob has lined up his family, each wife with her children, in order, apparently, of his preference. His surrogate mothers (the personal slaves of Leah and Rachel) come first, then Leah, then Rachel, each woman with her respective children. It is likely that each woman is accompanied by a slave.

Jacob moves out ahead of them, and bows before Esau.

**Genesis 33:5** And he [Esau] lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the boys, and said, "Who are these with you?" And he [Jacob] said, "The boys with whom God has favored your servant."

Esau inquires about the women and children (obviously, he assumes that they all belong to Jacob).

Interestingly enough, Esau is the one doing most of the speaking and asking of questions here. To be fair, this does not mean that Jacob is uninterested in Esau. Remember that Jacob was originally afraid of Esau, particularly after hearing that he had 400 men with him. So he might be getting over the shock and still adjusting to Esau's response.

**Genesis 33:6** Then the slave women came near, they and their boys, and they bowed themselves.

Jacob, no doubt, introduces them, person by person, in groups of the mother with their children. Each servant-mistress has two sons (and we don't know how many daughters).

**Genesis 33:7** And Leah also, and her children, came near and bowed themselves. And afterward Joseph and Rachel came near and bowed.

You will recall that Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah; but soon afterwards, also married her younger sister, Rachel (he worked an additional 7 years for Rachel, but apparently married her soon after marrying Leah). Rachel is the woman that Jacob was in love with.

If memory serves, he has had 6 sons and at least one daughter by Leah; and 1 son by Rachel. This would indicate that Jacob did not hate Leah; and, as we have previously studied, it appears that Leah refocused her attention upon God rather than upon Jacob, which would have made her an easier woman to live with.

Joseph is the youngest of Jacob's sons, and the only son of Rachel.

**Genesis 33:8** He [Esau] asked, "Whose is all this camp which I met?" And he [Jacob] said, "To find grace in the sight of my lord."

What was sent ahead was all of the animals, which was put before Esau, as a gift to him. This was the first camp that Esau was met with. Then came Jacob leading his family. All of these would have been classified as Jacob's possessions.

**Genesis 33:9** And Esau said, "I have enough, my brother. Keep what you have yourself."

Esau has been greatly blessed in life with material things—probably more than Jacob—up to this point in time. He is the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham; so he would be blessed by God.

As we have studied, Esau and Ishmael were not terrible people (they are the heads of the lines *not* of promise). They were sons of the patriarchs and they had been raised by Isaac and Abraham respectively. Therefore, they would have clearly had faith in the God of Abraham. Both men clearly exercised faith in the God of Abraham.

The problem is with their progeny but not with them. Esau had a reason to be mad at Jacob, but he has gotten over it. Ishmael had a reason to feel some anger toward his father, as well as possibly some jealousy toward Isaac, but he appeared to get over it as well. However, the lines of Esau and of Ishmael eventually cultivated great animus against the Jews, becoming the most long-standing grudges in world history.

And so that there is no misunderstanding, this anger and hatred is renewed with each generation. It is incorrect to say, "Well, this goes back hundreds of years; they cannot help it." We were at war with Japan; we were at war with Germany; and now, these two nations are great allies of ours. We do not hold a grudge against present-day Japan and the current people of Japan because of Pearl Harbor. Each new generation either renews its hatred or it leaves that hatred behind with the previous generations. This is a generational decision—one certainly influenced by the words of their parents.

I should add that, part of the reason that we are allies today is that, we summarily and decisively defeated the Germans and the Japanese. We did not simply *end the war*. We defeated them militarily; we defeated them completely. This was a military solution. It was known as unconditional surrender, something our current president does not appear to understand (I write this in 2015). That put the United States in control; and, after WWII, we did that which was unthinkable at the time. We oversaw Japan and Germany's recovery, providing them with missionaries and the gospel message of Jesus Christ, law and order, and guidance; and then, when the time was right, we restored to them their freedom and independence. At the same time, Russia tried to suck up and subjugate every square foot of conquered land that they could. In the modern era, Russia has been successful in selling the propaganda today that the United States is the imperialist nation, even while they continue to conquer more land.

Back to Jacob meeting Esau.

**Genesis 33:10** And Jacob said, “No, please, if now I have found grace in your sight, then receive my present at my hand. For therefore have I seen your face, as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me.

The idea here is, Jacob is glad to see Esau’s face—he is glad that Esau looks at him in a friendly way, so it is as if he is seeing the face of God. Jacob had no doubt been stressed over this eventual meeting with Esau, and until the actual day of the meeting, believed that he and his wives and children were in danger of being killed by Esau.

**Genesis 33:11** Please take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” And he [Jacob] urged him, and he [Esau] accepted.

It is probably the custom there to refuse such a gift outright; and both men have been greatly blessed in their lives. Similarly, it would have been an insult for Esau to ultimately refuse Jacob’s gift.

**Genesis 33:12** And he [Esau] said, “Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before you.”

Esau offers to lead the way. Esau would be going south, along the east side of the Dead Sea, to his home in Edom (Seir).

A map will be provided a little later, but understanding the basic geography is helpful, as there is information in this chapter which is left out. If you do not read the text carefully, you would think that Esau will go first, and that Isaac would then follow him. However, that is not the case. Esau will travel south, along to the Dead Sea, but Jacob will then go west, stopping for a time east of the Jordan River; and soon thereafter, crossing over the Jordan River.

Later on, Esau will apparently come up and live with Jacob (or near Jacob) in the Land of Promise—probably when their father dies. However, he will eventually return back home to Edom. There is no clear explanation of these things in the history which we have. Why did Isaac not follow Esau? We are not told. When did Esau decide to come up and live near Jacob? We are not told. We will *not* read, “Esau took his men and returned home to Edom, but Jacob chose not to follow him, but to travel closer to the Jordan.”

Have you ever started talking to someone, but suddenly you are lost in the conversation, because they have not filled you in on the details or the foundation for the conversation? They seem to be involved in one of life’s battles, but you have no idea why, because they do not give you enough back story for you to understand. They’re upset, they’re animated, but you really have no idea why. That will be the case with Jacob and Esau.

It is interesting that Esau seems to have a great deal of interest in Jacob and his family; but the converse is not recorded here. Furthermore, as mentioned, we are not told very much about Esau, when or why he moved about; or why Jacob did not follow him.

At some point in time, Jacob learned all of Esau's family, and this is recorded in Genesis 36. We do not know if Jacob learned this information at this point, or later when they lived adjacent to one another (more than likely, the latter). What appears to be the case, although this is not clearly laid out for us, is that Jacob and Esau apparently separated here, but that they saw one another again when Isaac died (Genesis 35:28–29). After burying their father, these men apparently chose to live near one another. However, their wealth was so great that Esau decided to return to Edom (Genesis 36:6–8).

**Genesis 33:13** And he [Jacob] said to him, “My lord knows that the boys are tender, and the flocks and herds with me are suckling. And if the men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

Jacob expresses concern that Esau may travel more quickly than Jacob is able, given that he is traveling with young children and young in his flocks and herds.

There is the possibility that Jacob has no intention of following Esau; or that, after Esau leaves, he decides not to follow him.

**Genesis 33:14** Please let my lord pass over before his servant, and I will lead on softly, according as the flocks that go before me, and the boys, are able to endure, until I come to my lord to Seir.”

Jacob assures Esau that he is coming to him in Seir, but that he will probably travel more slowly.

It appears, however, that Jacob will not actually go to Seir (due south), but to Succoth (due west). Map to follow.

This is an odd thing. Is Jacob lying to Esau? Does Jacob plan, from the beginning, to go west, rather than to follow Esau south? We can only speculate.

**Genesis 33:15** And Esau said, “Let me now leave with you some of the people with me.” And he said, “Why this? I have found grace in the sight of my lord.”

I believe that I have primarily used the MKJV, but it reads *Let me find grace in the sight of my lord*. However, there is no reason to translate it in that way. Literally, the second part of this verse reads, *I have found grace in the sight of my lord*.

Esau is offering Jacob some protection; some muscle. This is so that he is not plundered along the way. Jacob recognizes that Esau is being gracious.

**Genesis 33:16** And Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

Esau has established himself in Seir, so that is where he will return to.

This trip north, with 400 men, was not an easy or a quick trip (although they probably used the established King's Highway, which was a popular trading route). It was not a highway as we understand a highway to be.

It is also clear by the interaction between the two men that Esau was anxious to see Jacob again, and he seemed to be genuinely interested in Jacob and his family.

What we would expect is, Esau will return to his home in Seir, and for Jacob to follow him and stay there for awhile. However, Jacob does not appear to follow him.

## Lesson 364: Genesis 33:1–18

## Map and Unanswered Questions

We are coming near to the end of this chapter. This is what we have studied so far:

Jacob left his Uncle Laban's ranch complex and led his own extensive family west, back to the Land of Promise. At the end of Genesis 32, Jacob, while alone, wrestled with the Lord Jesus Christ, which is representative of what Jacob had been doing all of his life.

Gen 33:1–3 *And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.*

At this point, Jacob comes face to face with his brother Esau, the man he had cheated on at least two previous occasions, who was ready to kill Jacob 20 years ago.

Now, Jacob approaches Esau with great humility. He sent a present first, then he came, bowing before Esau, and his wives and family were behind him.

Gen 33:4–5 *But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant."*

Esau runs to him and embraces him, and they weep together like a couple of old girls, and then Esau asks about Jacob's family.

Gen 33:6–7 *Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down.*

Jacob has arranged his wives and mistresses into 4 groups—each woman with her children. Each group came before Esau and bowed before him.

Gen 33:8–9 Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

Esau asks about what was sent over first. Servants led various groupings of animals all meant for Esau as presents. Jacob tells Esau as much, and Esau refuses the present.

Gen 33:10–11 Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob insists that Esau receive this present, and Esau relents and takes it.

Gen 33:12 Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you."

Esau offers to lead Jacob and company back to Seir.

Gen 33:13–14 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the nursing flocks and herds are a care to me. If they are driven hard for one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

Jacob says that Esau's pace would be moving too quickly for him and his family, and he declines this offer. However, he promises that he will follow at a measured pace behind Esau and come to him in Seir, which is south of the Mediterranean Sea.

Gen 33:15 So Esau said, "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."

Esau offers to leave some servants with Jacob to help guide and protect him, but Jacob refuses. This suggests that Jacob may be having second thoughts about traveling to Seir. However, he does not say anything to Esau about this.

Gen 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

Esau, and his 400 men, return to Seir. However, Jacob does not appear to follow him.

**Genesis 33:17** And Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

It is at this point that we are somewhat confused. Jacob had promised to come to his brother in Seir, but he goes west instead.



**Map of the Meeting of Jacob and Esau;** from [Children's Bible School Lessons](#); accessed June 8, 2015. From the map below, Esau has journeyed up from Seir (Mount Seir is due south of the Dead Sea). Jacob on the map is coming from the north, but he has come from the northeast originally. He comes down as far as Succoth (there is different Succoth in Egypt mentioned in the Exodus) and appears to settle there. However, that will suddenly change.

Whatever the case, it does not appear that Jacob ever followed Esau on his trip back to Mount Seir.

We have several possibilities: (1) Jacob did follow Esau to Edom, but soon thereafter, went north up to Succoth. (2) Jacob lied to Esau, and was planning on going westward all along. (3) Jacob was going to follow Esau, but changed his mind and went due west to Succoth instead (for what reason, we do not know). (4) Jacob was unsure of what he was going to do, made the excuse why he would not go with Esau south; and soon thereafter decided not to follow him.

About the only option that we can easily dismiss is Jacob following Esau to Seir. There appears to be no indication of that. There is every indication that Jacob just went west; than he never followed his brother. Jacob instead moved to Succoth.

About the only thing that we can get out of the text is, Esau kept making suggestions to help Jacob safely make the trip south to Edom, and Jacob kept politely dismissing each offer of help.



So Jacob does not even cross over the Jabbok River, but he moves first to Succoth.

[Genesis 33:17](#) And Jacob journeyed to Succoth and built himself a house, and made booths for his cattle. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

From this verse, it sounds very much as if Jacob is looking to settle his family in Succoth. God has brought him to the Land of Promise, and Jacob appears that he will settle, building a house as well as shelter for his livestock.

*Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge on Succoth: [Succoth means] Booths. Succoth was on the east of Jordan, between the brook Jabbok and that river, about 40 miles from Jerusalem, and consequently near Penuel; where a city was afterwards built, which Joshua assigned to the tribe of Gad. Jerome says, that Succoth was in the district of Scythopolis; and the Jews inform us, that the name of Darala was sometime after applied to it.*<sup>59</sup>

V. 17 sounds as if Jacob is going to settle in Succoth, but then we read this:

**Genesis 33:18** And Jacob came in peace to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram. And he pitched his tent in front of the city.

Jacob's travels are chronicled, and at no time is there any indication that he first went south to Seir. He did not cover much ground when going to Succoth; and then he travels a relatively short distance further west to go to Shechem.

*Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: [Shechem] was situated in a narrow valley, abounding with springs, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, having the former on the north, and the latter on the south; 10 miles from Shiloh, and 34 from Jerusalem. It became the capital of Samaria, after the ruin of the city of that name.*<sup>60</sup>

Shechem is where God first appeared to Abraham; and it appears to be the first place where Abram stopped upon entering into the land. **And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.** (Gen 12:5–6; ESV)

We are not really given any reason for Jacob's move to Shechem. In Succoth, Jacob is building what appears to be a permanent place to live—a house for himself and booths for the cattle; but then, in the next verse, he is coming to Shechem, which is on the other side of the Jordan River.

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<sup>59</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 33:17.

<sup>60</sup> *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 33:18.

We are only given the facts of the move; we are not given any reason why (the same is true about Jacob not following his brother Esau down to Seir). The wording is unusual. Instead of saying, *And Jacob then moved from Succoth to Shechem*, it reads *Jacob then came safely to the city of Shechem, which [is] in the land of Canaan on his coming from Paddan-aram. He camped out before [this] city.* (Which is a reasonably literal translation). For some reason, his move to Shechem is associated with Paddan-aram, which is where Jacob has been living and working for Laban. The impression given is, Jacob and his family did not live long in Succoth (despite building a house and animal shelters); and he did not go south from there to Esau; but he entered the land of Canaan, traveling over the Jordan River.

Why did he make this move? No reason is given. What was the time frame? None is given, although the mention of Paddan-aram (Laban's land) makes it sound as if he chose not to live for very long in Succoth.

Such things do happen in real life. There was this neighborhood in the Houston area that I wanted to move to for perhaps 5 or more years. I sort of saw this as the best place in Houston to live (given my own limited means). When home prices were low enough, due to a downturn in the economy, I purchased a house in my dream neighborhood, only to live there for a year, and move to another house, something I never thought I would do.

Did God speak to Jacob? (I doubt that, as God is not mentioned.) Did Jacob realize that he was not far enough into the land of Canaan? Well, in Succoth, he was outside the land of Canaan proper. It is all somewhat of a mystery.

Most of Genesis is narrative; and if the author does not comment, we are left with a number of questions.

### **The Unanswered Questions of Genesis 33**

1. Did Jacob really mean to let Esau push on ahead, and that he would catch up to him in Seir? Everything which Esau suggested (traveling together, leaving some servants with Jacob to help guide and protect him) was refused.
2. At what point did Jacob decide to not go to Seir? A reasonable guess would be, he made this decision before Esau offered him help to come south. However, that is just a reasonable guess.
3. Why did Jacob and family stop suddenly in Succoth? What in Succoth caught their attention?
4. Why did Jacob build some permanent structures in Succoth? Again, a reasonable conjecture would be, he originally planned to stay there.
5. Then, why did Jacob move suddenly to Shechem? This is one of the most baffling questions.
6. Did God tell Jacob to move there? I would suggest that He did not, as this is not recorded (it would be logical that all or nearly all interaction between God and the patriarchs is recorded).
7. Did Jacob move there because he realized that is where God wanted him? God

## The Unanswered Questions of Genesis 33

- never handed any of the patriarchs a map, and indicate exactly where the borders of the Land of Promise were (when God showed Abraham the land from a mountain, the area taken in was much larger than what Israel has ever occupied).
8. Genesis 33:18 makes it sound as if this were a sudden move (Paddan-aram and Shechem are both named, but Succoth is not)?

Sometimes, God gives us the motivations for the actions of this or that person; and many times, the Bible does not speak to their motivations, which would therefore, be unimportant to the overall narrative. So, even though this chapter leaves us with a great many unanswered questions, we may reasonably assume that knowing the answers would not be helpful to us spiritually speaking. Perhaps they will be fodder for our discussions with Jacob in eternity future.

One thing which will become obvious is, the style of Joseph, in subsequent chapters, where motivations and actions are often easily determined; as opposed to chapters like this, presumably written by Jacob, where we are left confused.

We will come across a whole new set of unanswered questions regarding Jacob and Esau in Genesis 36:6–8 **Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock. So Esau settled in the hill country of Seir. (Esau is Edom.) (ESV)**

On the other hand, we will be given the reasons why Jacob and company move out of Shechem, and that is clearly one of the oddest chapters in Scripture. It will be difficult to gain spiritual growth from that chapter, as finding anyone who does the right thing will be pretty much impossible. So, perhaps the sudden move out of Succoth and perhaps the reason for not going down to Seir are not really edifying to us; and, for that reason, are left out of the narrative.

### Lesson 365: Genesis 33:1–20

### Two Chiasmi for Gen. 33

We still have two more verses to go in order to complete Genesis 33. First, let's get an overview of this chapter:

Many chapters and sections in the Bible have a chiasmic structure to them. Sometimes we better appreciate this structure *after* studying the contents of the chapter.

### The Chiasmic Structure of Genesis 33 (from Hajime Murai)

A(33:1-3)      Jacob fears and kneels before Esau  
B(33:4)              Esau runs to embrace Jacob

## The Chiasmic Structure of Genesis 33 (from Hajime Murai)

C(33:5-7)	Esau asks about children (מידליה = <i>children</i> )
D(33:8-11)	Esau accepts Jacob's gift
C'(33:12-15)	Jacob excused regarding his children (מידליה)
B'(33:16)	Esau returns
A'(33:17-20)	Jacob thanks God and makes an altar

A: Fear/Respect/Worship. B: Meeting with and departure of Esau. C: Jacob's children. D: Esau accepts Jacob's gift (which is a much better outcome than Esau attacking and slaughtering Jacob).

Esau accepting Jacob's gift marks the official end of their jealousy and strife.

From [http://www.valdes.titech.ac.jp/~h\\_murai/bible/01\\_Genesis\\_pericope\\_e.html](http://www.valdes.titech.ac.jp/~h_murai/bible/01_Genesis_pericope_e.html) accessed October 12, 2015 (and edited).

Gen 33:1–3 And Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two female servants. And he put the servants with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. He himself went on before them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

Jacob reveals a much more humble side of himself upon his return to the Land of Promise, bowing before his brother 7 times.

Gen 33:4 But Esau ran to meet him and embraced him and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Esau reveals a much more compassionate side to Jacob in this passage. This time apart made these brothers yearn for one another's company (at least this was the case for Esau). Genetically, we are closer to our brothers or sisters than we are to even our parents.

Gen 33:5–7 And when Esau lifted up his eyes and saw the women and children, he said, "Who are these with you?" Jacob said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." Then the servants drew near, they and their children, and bowed down. Leah likewise and her children drew near and bowed down. And last, Joseph and Rachel drew near, and they bowed down.

Jacob introduces his family to Esau.

Gen 33:8–9 Esau said, "What do you mean by all this company that I met?" Jacob answered, "To find favor in the sight of my lord." But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

Esau is referring to the livestock which Jacob sent first as a present to Esau.



Gen 33:10–11 Jacob said, "No, please, if I have found favor in your sight, then accept my present from my hand. For I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of God, and you have accepted me. Please accept my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough." Thus he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob presents Esau with a very generous gift—something which Esau clearly does not need, but Jacob urges him to accept it and he does. Much of that could be the proper culture response from each man.

Gen 33:12 Then Esau said, "Let us journey on our way, and I will go ahead of you."

Esau is proposing that they go together, with Esau leading them.

Gen 33:13–14 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children are frail, and that the nursing flocks and herds are a care to me. If they are driven hard for one day, all the flocks will die. Let my lord pass on ahead of his servant, and I will lead on slowly, at the pace of the livestock that are ahead of me and at the pace of the children, until I come to my lord in Seir."

Esau will make two offers to Jacob, each of which would have insured Jacob's safe travels to Seir, Jacob refuses both offers.

Gen 33:15 So Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "What need is there? Let me find favor [= grace] in the sight of my lord."

Jacob clearly refuses Esau's gracious offers, which suggests that Jacob was not going to follow him. Asking for favor or grace is Jacob asking to do this his own way.

Gen 33:16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.

Esau began traveling toward Seir on this day.

Gen 33:17–18 But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. (ESV)

Esau goes due south to Seir; and, despite what he said, Jacob does not follow him, but goes west to Succoth and then further west, across the Jordan River, to Shechem. The only reasonable explanation I can come up with for the sudden leave from Succoth is, some of Jacob's sons acted in a manner that caused them to no longer be welcome in Succoth. This is only a guess and based upon the events of Genesis 34 which follows. The problem with that theory is, the children are quite young at this point (the oldest would



be 12<sup>61</sup>). The way that this is spoken of, associating Succoth, Shechem and Paddan-aram all in the same passage, it suggests that the family did not stay in Succoth for a long time.

There are no contradictions here; it is simply that there are some facts and motivations which are not told to us.

What we do know may offer some clues to answer the questions above.

### Some of the things we know about Jacob and Esau

1. Jacob first lived in Succoth and then in Shechem. These cities are on opposite sides of the Jordan River from one another and north of the Dead Sea.
2. Esau lives in Seir, which is south of the Dead Sea.
3. Therefore, Esau lives quite a distance from both Succoth and Shechem. Although moving to Shechem makes a trip to Seir less likely, Jacob was nowhere close to Seir when living in Succoth.
4. In any case, it does not appear as if Jacob had any intention of going down to Seir, although motivations regarding this are not discussed.
5. For the early period, God seemed to have the patriarchs concentrate on the land of Canaan (which is really a smaller area between the Jordan River, the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea).
6. This appears to be the case when Moses leads the people up along the east side of the Dead Sea. They actually conquer some of the land east of the Jordan. In fact, this is the first land held by the Jewish people. However, even though this is spoken of often, it is never presented like *first you will conquer the land east of the Jordan; and then you will cross the Jordan and conquer the land of Canaan*. Conquering the territory in the east is presented as necessary but incidental to the invasion of Canaan. They had to do that in order to get to the Jordan River in the first place.
7. So, perhaps Jacob only felt like he was in God's will if he moved west of the Jordan. Just a guess.
8. In any case, Jacob and Esau are no longer estranged. Esau clearly had enough men with him to wipe out Jacob and family if he wanted to. Obviously, he did not.
9. As we observed, Esau appeared to be genuinely affectionate and interested in Jacob and his life. If Jacob was conversely interested at this reuniting, it is not recorded. However, I believe that Jacob wrote many chapters in Scripture; and he will devote Genesis 36 to Esau's family.
10. Living near Shechem is going to land Jacob and his family into a jackpot. Their sister will be raped and her brothers will overreact to it (meaning, they will kill a number of innocent people as a result of this rape).
11. Sometime later, Esau and Jacob will reunite once again when their father, Isaac, dies.
12. However, Esau will live permanently in Seir; Jacob and his family will primarily live

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<sup>61</sup> Jacob lived with Laban for 20 years. He married Leah at the end of year 7 and Rachel probably soon thereafter. If Leah conceived on their wedding night, that son would be 12 when they left Paddan-aram.

## Some of the things we know about Jacob and Esau

- in the land of Canaan (although a famine will cause Jacob's family to later move to Egypt near the end of the book of Genesis).
13. It appears from Genesis 36:6–8 that, for a period of time, perhaps soon after the funeral of their father Isaac, Jacob and Esau lived together or near one another in Canaan. This would suggest that Esau moved once to settle in Seir, returned to Canaan for an unspecified time, but then went back to Seir to live out his days.
  14. It would make sense for Esau to meet up with Jacob at the death of their father, and then choose to remain in Canaan for some time after that to be near his brother, realizing that Jacob was not going to come down to Seir.
  15. Have you ever heard the expression, *you can't go home again*? Esau was originally raised in Canaan by Isaac and Rebekah; with Jacob. For whatever reason, he has moved to Seir. However, his genuine affection for Jacob along with the loss of their father might explain his moving back to Canaan—although this will be a temporary move. He returns to the land of his youth, but he apparently does not remain there for a lengthy period of time.

This helps to fill in some of the blanks in the history of Jacob and Esau. Unlike the chapters of Genesis written by Abraham, Jacob tends to leave out a great deal of history. It is reasonable to assume that much of this information is not spiritually edifying.

There is something very subtle here, and easy to miss.

Gen 33:17–18 [But Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built himself a house and made booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called Succoth. And Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, on his way from Paddan-aram, and he camped before the city. \(ESV\)](#)

It looks as if Jacob travels to Succoth (not too far from his meeting place with Esau), and this looks like a place he would live for a long time. Notice that he builds himself a house and he builds shelter for his flocks. But what does he not build? An altar to God. God brought him safely back to the Land of Promise, and Jacob had asked for; but in the first place where he settles, Jacob does not appear to be thinking about God.

Now think back on his meeting with Esau; did they sacrifice an animal to God? There was no mention of God. Both sons, perhaps overly concerned about God's promised blessing in their youth, do not appear to speak of that when they meet. God has clearly blessed both men greatly, and yet they do not acknowledge this fact.

Jacob's wrestling match with God got him through his meeting with Esau; it refocused Jacob's attention for a short while, but Jacob is back to focusing upon his own life and what he needs to do for himself and his family—without understanding that God is integral to all of this. As a result, Succoth will not be a place where Jacob remains long.

**Genesis 33:19** And he bought a piece of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for a hundred pieces of silver.

The patriarchs owned very little land in Canaan. Abraham purchased a plot of land to be buried on; and here, Jacob is buying some land apparently for his extended family to live on.

Although this was not spoken of before, Jacob apparently had some money which he had been saving. Although we are only told a little about his livestock, which came with him from Paddan-aram, at some point, Jacob acquired a fair amount of silver as well (whether this came with him from Paddan-aram or whether he sold some of his animals in Succoth, we do not know).

Insofar as I can recall, this may be only the second purchase of land by the patriarchs.

Finally, Jacob does what he should have done a long time ago:

**Genesis 33:20** And he erected there an altar, and called it El, the God of Israel.

It is only on occasion that Jacob is said to worship God. Here he builds an altar (he will be directed by God to build another altar in Genesis 35). You will recall that, when we studied Abraham, almost every place that he stopped, he is said to build an altar (I exaggerate only slightly). This helps to explain the dramatic difference between Abraham and Jacob—God seemed to be on Abraham's mind a great deal. However, Jacob did not spend as much time considering God in his own life.

Recall Jacob's promise, when he originally left Canaan: **Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."** (Gen 28:20–22; ESV)

Jacob laid a great many qualifications which God had to meet in order for him to worship Him; yet God did for Jacob what he asked. *That* is grace.

It is interesting that Jacob builds some permanent structures in Succoth; and then moves to Shechem, actually purchasing land there. However, there will be trouble in Shechem (which is the subject of Genesis 34).

Now that we have studied these two chapters, notice how they all fit together as a chiasm.

### **William Ramey's Chiasm of Genesis 32:1--33:20**

- A Jacob continues his journey to Canaan (32:1a)
- B Angels of God encounter Jacob and he names the place "two camps" (32:1b-2)

## William Ramey's Chiasm of Genesis 32:1--33:20

C	Jacob's entourage to Esau (32:3-6)
D	Jacob fearfully prepares to meet Esau (32:7-21)
E	Jacob and his entourage prepare to meet Esau (32:7-21)
X	Jacob wrestles with a "man" and his name is changed to "Israel" (32:24-32)
E'	Jacob prepares entourage to meet Esau (33:1-2)
D'	Jacob meets Esau and bows seven times (33:3)
C'	Jacob and Esau greet each other (33:4-7)
B'	Jacob explains his "two camps" to Esau and departs (33:8-16)
A'	Jacob arrives in Canaan (33:17-20)

What is in the center of the chiasm is the most important aspect of it—which is the wrestling match between Jacob and Jesus Christ. Secondly, recall that for E and E', Jacob apparently made some changes. Originally, he was going to hide his family, just in case Esau killed him. However, instead, Jacob sends the present first, then his family, all being placed before Esau. The reason for the change was his encounter with Jesus Christ.

What is clearly pivotal regarding these two chapters are Jacob wrestling with God. It is fascinating that we have a chiasm within another chiasm. A chiasm would make it much easier to memorize a chapter or two of text.

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015 (and slightly edited).

### Lesson 365 addendum: Genesis 33:1–20

### A brief Review of Genesis 33

#### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 33:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word.

Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

As we studied in the previous chapter, Jacob is very apprehensive about meeting his brother Esau some 20 years later (20 years after he connived a blessing from his half-blind father, a blessing meant for Esau). When Jacob quickly left Canaan, Esau wanted to kill him.

Genesis 33:1 *And Ya'aqob [= Jacob] lifted his eyes and looked and saw Ěsaw [= Esau] coming, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children among Lě'ah, and Raḥěl [= Rachel], and the two female servants.*

It is a bit confusing that Jacob had determined to divide up his people into two camps, so that the second could escape if Esau attacked the first. It appears that the first camp was made up of all Jacob's servants and the animals that Jacob traveled with. The second camp would be his wives and children, along with more animals. When we get to the actual meeting, however, there does not appear to be a separation of camps.

The confusion could come down to Jacob talking about one way of doing things, but then, doing something else.

Genesis 33:2 *And he put the female servants and their children in front, and Lě'ah and her children behind, and Raḥěl and Yosěph [= Joseph] last.*

Jacob did put Rachel, his favorite, at the back, and Leah and her in the front.

Genesis 33:3 *And he himself passed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.*

Jacob then began to move to the front, bowing himself to the ground seven times before coming to Esau.

Genesis 33:4 *And Ěsaw ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.*

Esau came to meet Jacob face to face and he fell on his neck and kissed him. Both men wept.

Genesis 33:5 *And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" And he said, "The children with whom Elohim has favoured your servant."*

Then Esau looks over the family that Jacob has arrived with. He asks about them. Jacob says that these are his wives and children.

Genesis 33:6 Then the female servants came near, they and their children, and bowed themselves.

The female servants with the children then come before Esau and bow before him.

Genesis 33:7 And Lě'ah also came near with her children, and they bowed themselves. And Yosěph and Raḥěl came near, and they bowed themselves.

Leah and her children come forward. Joseph and Rachel then come forward to meet Esau.

Genesis 33:8 Then Ěsaw said, "What do you mean by all this company which I met?" And he said, "To find favour in the eyes of my master."

Esau asks, "What is the deal with all of the animals?" Jacob says that this is to find favor in Esau's eyes.

Genesis 33:9 But Ěsaw said, "I have enough, my brother, let what you have remain yours."

Esau tells Jacob to keep his animals. "I have plenty," he tells Jacob.

Genesis 33:10 And Ya'aqob said, "No, please, if I have now found favour in your eyes, then receive my present from my hand, because I have seen your face like seeing the face of Elohim, and you were pleased with me.

Jacob insists that Esau take the animals.

Genesis 33:11 "Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because Elohim has favoured me, and because I have all I need." And he urged him, and he took it.

Jacob continues to press Esau on this, and Esau accepts the gift.

Genesis 33:12 And he said, "Let us depart and go, and let me go before you."

Esau said, "Follow me, I will lead you."

Genesis 33:13 But he said to him, "My master 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 flocks shall die.

Jacob says to give him more time. He explains that his children and young animals could never keep up.



Genesis 33:14 “Please let my master go before his servant, and let me lead on slowly according to the pace of the livestock that go before me, and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my master in Sě'ir.”

“I need to allow my livestock to take their time about moving forward,” Jacob requests.

Genesis 33:15 And Ěsaw said, “Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.” But he said, “Why this? Let me find favour in the eyes of my master.”

Esau wanted to have his own servants travel with Jacob, but Jacob appears to have said no.

Genesis 33:16 And Ěsaw returned that day on his way to Sě'ir.

Esau returns to Seir along with his entourage.

Genesis 33:17 And Ya'aqob set out to Sukkoth [= *Succoth*], and built himself a house, and made booths for his livestock. That is why the name of the place is called Sukkoth.

Jacob instead goes to Sukkoth and builds himself a house there and booths for his livestock.

This helps us to understand the names of places in Genesis. When Jacob went to this place, it was not named Sukkoth. We do not know what its name was. However, once Jacob had been there for awhile and built some houses there, then it was called Succoth. In the future, everyone knows this place as Succoth, so there is no reason to retain the older name (assuming that there was one).

Genesis 33:18 And Ya'aqob came safely to the city of Shekem, which is in the land of Kena'an [= *Canaan*], when he came from Paddan Aram. And he pitched his tent before the city.

Jacob moves further into Canaan. I assume that all of this took place over several years. Maybe even a decade or so.

Genesis 33:19 And he bought the portion of the field where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Ĥamor, Shekem's father, for one hundred qesitah.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>A monetary unit of uncertain value, perhaps in the form of a lamb.

Jacob purchases the land when he is. He does not simply take it.

Genesis 33:20 And he set up a slaughter-place there and called it Ěl Eloĥe Yisra'el.

Jacob sets up an altar where he might worship God.

Jacob and his family are living near the city of Shechem; and this incident takes place after Jacob's sons are young adults. There are many unusual narratives in the book of Genesis, but this is one of the most unusual. The unusual nature of this chapter may suggest that the reason that Jacob and company left Succoth was not for spiritually edifying reasons (that is, us knowing the reasons why they moved from Succoth to Shechem would not be important to us).

Leupold makes a reasonable guess as to the time frame: *If Joseph, according to Genesis 37:2, was seventeen years old at the time there described, which again was shortly after the events of chapter 34, and Joseph was only about six years old at the time of Jacob's arrival in Canaan, it would be safe to assume that the events of our chapter transpired about ten years after the return to Canaan. Dinah must have been at least fourteen years old; fifteen is not impossible.*<sup>62</sup> These are reasonable guesses, but, the events of this chapter point toward such an age as well.

One of the things which we see is the degeneracy of the population of Canaan slowly increasing. Remember back to Abraham interacting with the Philistines of Gerar; and then Isaac did the same in the next generation. There was a change in the attitude of the people from one generation to the next. Now we are with Jacob and his sons, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generations from Abraham; and it will become clear that the people of Canaan have fallen further into degeneration.

*What about Sodom?*, you may ask. *Weren't they a pretty degenerate crew?* And God clearly and unequivocally judged them and brought down hell fire upon them. So this judgement would be known to all the peoples of the land. However, as such judgements are separated from us, further and further in time, they become less relevant to us. A contemporary example would be the judgment of AIDS upon the homosexual community. If anything, the gay movement became much more aggressive after AIDS, which is one of the more horrible wasting diseases ever, and destroyed many of their numbers.

In this chapter, and in previous chapters, we have primarily observed the interactions of the patriarchs with Philistines and others located between the Great Sea and the Dead Sea.

Dean: *[Genesis 34] is the story of a sexual assault, vengeance and retribution.*

### Robert Dean's Introductory Principles to Genesis 34

- 1) When you lie down with dogs you are going to get up with fleas. When you associate with certain kinds of people who always think the same way and have

<sup>62</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.

## Robert Dean's Introductory Principles to Genesis 34

the same value system then you can't help but be influenced by that kind of peer pressure and assimilate to that culture around us. Every believer in every culture is constantly exposed to the input of the pagan culture around it. When you live and operate in a pagan culture without the protection of Bible doctrine functioning as a filter to keep the pagan viewpoints, ideas, and values out, then what will inevitably happen is that you will begin to live and think like the people in the culture around you.

- 2) In this chapter we see several characteristics that are typical of different types of paganism. First of all there is a lax attitude towards sex and sexual norms and standards which are designed by God to be restricted to marriage as a celebration between a man and a woman, which excludes polygamy and homosexuality. In paganism, sex is reduced to simple physical gratification, a physical need and nothing more. With that diminishing of the value of sex comes a diminishing of the value of men as men and women as women, as they are designed by the plan of God. The second characteristic which is typical of paganism is that the role of the sexes is perverted so that males as a class become tyrannical and oppressive toward women as a class. And women as a class seek to subvert the authority of the men.
- 3) Justice is perverted into vengeance. The issue is not vengeance but justice. Vengeance is very different from justice, it takes place when we no longer have an objective external standard and we are concerned about righting a personal wrong from our own personal vantage point.
- 4) We see here two different and wrong responses to evil and injustice. The first is passivity, and this is seen in Jacob when here his daughter gets raped by this man in Shechem and is more concerned about his social acceptance in the community, and the fact that people would accept them and they could live and operate in the community, than he is about the honor of his own daughter. He is conspicuously silent throughout the entire episode. After the brothers overreact at the end of the chapter he accuses them of overreacting and says he will have to move, the people wouldn't accept him and let him live here any more, and look what you have done to my reputation. So one side of it is this passivity toward evil: that somehow we are going to appease evil and compromise with evil, and everything will be okay, just don't rock the boat. Then we have the opposite, which is a harsh overreaction, demonstrated in the actions of the twelve sons of Jacob. An injustice, which is clearly an injustice and a crime, is used to justify an even greater injustice and crime, and it is committed almost in the name of religion. But in neither case is justice served or the victim honored. In both cases it is a self-centered, arrogant type of reaction to evil and injustice and there is little appeal for an external standard.
- 5) The end justifies the means. This rationale is typically operative in paganism because there is no external objective. So the sin nature always seeks to justify itself in terms of its own carnality.
- 6) This event in chapter thirty-four is part of a mosaic which gives us a picture of the spiritual and moral status of the twelve sons of Jacob. All of the sons of Jacob are

## Robert Dean's Introductory Principles to Genesis 34

morally and spiritually bankrupt, and yet God is still true to His promise that He is going to bless all the world through these individuals. The over-arching doctrine in this chapter is the importance of separation from the cosmic system. That is the real issue here. The reason God has to move the descendants of Jacob down to Egypt is because they are assimilating with paganism. The point of all these episodes is to show that as they have rejected doctrine they begin to act just like the pagans around them and if God doesn't do something they are going to assimilate within a couple of generations around them into the Canaanite culture and they won't be any different. They will be lost. So in order for God to achieve His purposes in history he is going to bring them through various means down to Egypt and isolate them so that they can grow to a substantive number and then go back to the land and defeat the Canaanites. This shouldn't be taken as a physical separation per se. There are always legalists who come along and say we need to go off and live in a monastery, etc. Isolating from the world completely is not the right answer. There is a physical element of separation that will be necessary but it is first and foremost a mental separation based on the priority of Bible doctrine. We have to get our thinking aligned with the Word of God and then the consequence of that is that the more we think biblically the more we will be able to rightly discern where to bring about those other separations.

- 7) Another key doctrine in this chapter is the grace of God. It is God's grace that He brings about His plans and purposes, and they are not dependent on who we are and what we do. God's plan is always dependent on His character, not our character.
- 8) A negative theme which we see working itself out in the chapter is that of deception.

Dean: *[Much of] the book of Genesis is laying the foundation for why God has given this land to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all of the ways He has faithfully worked since the promise to give the land to Abraham in Genesis chapter twelve. It reveals to them why it was necessary to go down to Egypt and to become enslaved, and what God's purposes were. Furthermore, it is for them and for us a graphic portrayal of the characteristics of paganism and a warning to the people of that time not to assimilate to the thinking and culture of the Canaanites. For us by application it is a warning of what happens when believers in any age, any era, assimilate to the cultural thinking of their time, whatever it may be.*

From: <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/Genesis.html> (Lesson #136b).

**Genesis 34:1** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

Dinah is one of Jacob's daughters, and the only one of them who is named. Dinah decides that she is going to visit some of the gals in Shechem, where Jacob and company are now all living.

What appears to be the case in the ancient world is, most young women were carefully guarded and protected by their families. Although it was a custom for women to be taken into the families that they married into, the father often received a sizeable dowry for marrying off his daughter (Laban got 7 years of work per daughter from Jacob). If a young woman has been defiled in any way, then the parents will end up supporting that daughter for the rest of their lives. Therefore, it would be normal for parents to protect their daughters from men until they are married.<sup>63</sup> Because of the clear understanding of marriage and fidelity in this era, men would expect to marry a virgin (and vice versa). In our society, that probably seems rather quaint, but it is not quaint—it is God’s perfect plan.

This incident does not mean that Jacob’s family was remiss here; it simply suggests that they felt relatively safe.

There are discussions on whether or not Dinah is violating her parents’ rules—but that is quite irrelevant.

**Genesis 34:2** And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and humbled her.

Shechem appears to have been either settled originally by Shechem or by Hamor who names the city after his son (Hamor is called the father of Shechem in Genesis 33:19—which could mean *ancestor*).

The fact that we keep speaking of the sons of Hamor rather than the sons of Shechem, would imply that Hamor actually settled this area, naming it after his firstborn (an assumption that I am making). It could be the other way around as well. The son may have been named after the existing city as well. Or, in the alternative, the first son and the city could have been named, more or less, simultaneously by Hamor.

It is actually Shechem, the son, who is involved here. He takes Dinah and he lays with her.

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**Lesson 367: Genesis 34:1–2      Contemporary Lessons/The Question of Rape**

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Although this chapter is often entitled *The Rape of Dinah*; that aspect of the story is only in the first 4 verses. Most of this narrative is about the response of Jacob’s sons and the decisions which they make after the rape has occurred.

**Genesis 34:1** And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

It is guessed that Dinah is probably in her middle teens and that this takes place perhaps 10 years after moving to Shechem. This would mean that Jacob’s family is settled in, that

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<sup>63</sup> As has been discussed previously, the stained bed sheets of the marriage-bed were gathered and kept by the woman’s father.

many of the boys are in their teens and 20's (meaning they lack judgment and fear very little for their own lives); and they would all be settled into Shechem. On the other hand, the people of that land would still see them as newcomers and outsiders.

It was normal in that era for parents and brothers to protect the females in the family. Dinah wandering off to see some other gals may or may not have been allowed by her family. Regardless, this did put her into danger.

These points are taken from a much larger summary of the first two verses by Pastor Ron Snider.

### **Contemporary Lessons Found in Genesis 34 (mostly from Snider)**

1. The Canaanites were under a curse (Gen. 9:25), and the prophecy of Gen. 15:16 indicated that it was merely a matter of time before their evil reached a maximum, demanding God's judgment.
2. As undesirable as they were, Jacob chose to settle very near to these people, which, in itself was not necessarily a problem. God did want the patriarchs to walk through the land (Genesis 13:17).
3. Whether or not he emphasized the doctrine of separation to his children or not is unknown, but his very geographic proximity to the Hivites was potential trouble.
4. Jacob's teenage daughter apparently lacked sufficient parental supervision, and associated with the Canaanite girls. Genesis 34:1
5. Jacob may have known well enough not to closely associate with these people, but he did not make certain that his daughter knew the same thing.
6. Dinah, being somewhere between 13-16, was maturing physically and was apparently quite attractive.
7. The problem is that girls of this age are naive, undiscerning, immature emotionally and mentally.
8. The parent's responsibility is to keep a very short leash on a child of this age, and especially if the child is a female. Apparently, Dinah lacked someone to ask her, "Where are you going, What are you doing, and Who are you doing it with?"
9. In our society, which is similar to the Canaanite culture in many ways, too much freedom is given at far too young an age. The parents must stress the doctrine of right man/right woman, which teaches the boy that he is protector of any girl he dates, and teaches the female to be very wary of boys.
10. The fact is that most males at that age are predatory and have no norms and standards regarding this issue. Our own society sends out the message that sex between teens is normal, natural and that there is little that we can do about it, apart from giving children condoms.
11. The only thing which stands between children and potential disaster is the parents, their training, their guidance and their protection.
12. No matter what the cosmic system (that is, contemporary culture) says or thinks, each parent is responsible before the Lord to keep a very tight rein on their young, stupid children.
13. Another issue which clearly surfaces here is that Dinah was socializing with the



## Contemporary Lessons Found in Genesis 34 (mostly from Snider)

- wrong friends. This does not mean we cannot ever allow our children to be out in the world; it simply means that we need to exercise judgment and restraint.
14. We must inculcate our children to understand that other young people in the cosmic system are not, and can never truly be friends with the spiritually mature believer. Whatever norms and standards unbelieving children have are suspect.
  15. When a child has the desire to win their friendship of unbelievers, to where their own norms and standards are compromised, that young believer can become an enemy of God. James. 4:4 1John 2:15ff
  16. Recognition and praise of the world will not make one's child healthy, happy or more well-adjusted, but the Word of God states that it destroys them spiritually. We are not put on earth to seek the favor of men. Gal. 1:10 1Thess. 2:4 Rom. 2:29 As an aside, Christian believers are not to be isolationists. This doctrine is about exercising reasonable care regarding your own children.
  17. Do not let your child associate with the typical Canaanite type, who: (1) Is not interested in spiritual values. (2) Has no concept of right man/right woman. (3) Pursues the opposite sex at an early age. (4) Is not demonstrating positive volition by attending Bible class.
  18. Better to go through life with few associations, than to be ruined spiritually by the wrong type of people. Negative volition is not neutral when it comes to Bible doctrine, they are against the principles we believe and teach.
  19. Although the child of this age is naive and undiscerning, they are deluded and often think that they are smarter than their parents.
  20. They demonstrate their arrogance by talking too much and listening too little.
  21. They also show their sinful trend by the rejection of authority, battling with the parents over these very issues.
  22. They think that know what is right and best for them and that their parents just don't understand. Like Dinah, pride goes before a fall, and an arrogant spirit before destruction. Prov. 16:18 11:2-3 44.
  23. Like Dinah, young people think that it won't happen to them, yet it happens every day. Furthermore, even though it is rape which is discussed in this chapter, probably a much greater contemporary problem today is drug usage (which can be used to knock down the sexual standards of the young believer).
  24. Parents are to teach and insist that children not put themselves into potentially compromising situations.
  25. They should be taught the principle to avoid even the appearance of sexual impropriety. Unchaperoned affairs at an early age, unmarried people spending the night together, etc. This is often thought to be a rite of passage for prom night. Believing parents are not to adopt these cosmic system values.
  26. The Word of God does not say whether this is an isolated incident in Dinah's life, or habitual activity.
  27. As Dinah is out in the wrong place, with the wrong people, the predatory male spots her and moves in.
  28. Shechem is concerned with nothing of her rights and person, he is merely concerned with satisfying himself.

## Contemporary Lessons Found in Genesis 34 (mostly from Snider)

29. Since his father was a powerful person in the region and he has no scruples about this sort of activity, he rapes Dinah. It is possible that the people of Canaan and Egypt regarded unmarried women who are out and about as legitimate prey.
30. Whether that assumption of their values is true or not, Dinah should never have left the house unescorted.
31. Most males today have no norms and standards in regard to right man/right woman.
32. Many young men are arrogant and assume that they are God's gift to women and they have no problem manipulating young women.
33. Such men are often impressed with their own looks, physique, details, income, car, etc. and are certain that women are equally impressed.
34. It is not completely clear how the society of Shechem viewed the status of single women. Did Shechem take this woman by force because he could, because society approved or because his father was the local leader? We have no idea.
35. In any case, there are many points of similarity between our society and that of Shechem's. Therefore, it is not out of the question that your virginal daughter can go out one day, and return not a virgin.
36. As believers, we are not to be gullible and think that people in the cosmos think like we do about these principles.
37. Young, immature girls often put themselves in extremely compromising positions and often end up paying a horrible price. This could just as easily be with a popular boy from the football team, or the quiet, sensitive young man.
38. Again, it is up to the parents of such a one to protect, guide and teach the young woman about the opposite sex.

From [Makairos Bible Church](#);<sup>64</sup> accessed November 11, 2015; and edited.

**Genesis 34:2** And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and humbled her.

The patriarch of that family appears to be Hamor and he also appears to be in charge. We have no idea as to his age or Shechem's age.

If you have read through this chapter already, you may find this discussion superfluous. However, interestingly enough, there are good Bible teachers who maintain that no rape has taken place here.<sup>65</sup> They understand it as Shechem having seduced Dinah. Therefore, we should determine...

### Was Dinah Raped?

1. First of all, the Hebrew language does not have a word for *rape*. Therefore, there

<sup>64</sup> This is a Word document that will open up on your computer.

<sup>65</sup> For instance, the Evangelical Bible College of Western Australia or the [Song of Songs](#) website.

## Was Dinah Raped?

- is more involved here than finding and pointing out a word with that meaning.
2. The language here sounds like rape. Genesis 34:2 reads: **And when Shechem, the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and humbled her.**
    - 1) The first 3 verbs are inconclusive. He saw her, he took her and he lay with her. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> verb are found throughout Scripture used in a sexual way, but not necessarily to mean rape.
    - 2) The fourth verb is stronger, but still inconclusive. It is the Piel imperfect of *ʿânâh* (עָנָה) [pronounced *gaw-NAW*], which means *to humble [humiliate], to mishandle, to afflict; to force; to oppress [depress]*. Strong's #6031 BDB #776. There are other passages where these words can be used, and rape is not involved (Deut. 22:24). We find this same verb in the Piel (the intensive stem) in Deut. 22:29 where rape was not involved (however, this was taking a woman before she is married). Therefore, this word can indicate that the man simply had sex with the woman.
    - 3) Often, the Hebrew language itself solves the problem of *what happened*; but not here.
  3. However, the entire context suggests that rape has occurred. The verbs noted suggest that rape may have occurred, but they are not conclusive.
  4. Because of Deut. 22:24, 29, we cannot ascertain from v. 2 that Dinah was raped. The language is strong enough to suggest rape, but not to unequivocally rule out seduction.
  5. There is another potentially key element to this story which needs to be addressed, which I have not seen discussed elsewhere—Dinah's age as it relates to rape. In our culture, young women under the age of 16 or 17 (depending upon the state she lives in) are unable to give consent. That is, they cannot have *legally* consensual sex. So, in our culture, regardless of the circumstances, a 16 year old girl can have actual consensual sex with her 18 year old boyfriend, and yet the young man can still be legally prosecuted for rape and be identified thereafter as a sex offender.
  6. You may recall that Leupold made a guess as to Dinah's age, guessing her age to be 14 or 15, but we really do not know when Leah gave birth to her. We know Joseph's age on both sides of this event; but that does not give us an exact fix on Dinah's age.
  7. In v. 1, Dinah is said to go out and to visit with the *daughters* of the land. This suggests that she is socializing with young unmarried women—which certainly suggests that Dinah is young, but we do not know how young. The biggest problem here is, she is socializing with the heathen of the land. However, whereas that is arguably a problem, it is not really emphasized here.
  8. It is actually the Hebrew tense system which most strongly suggests that Dinah has been raped and not simply seduced. When we have a series of *wâw* consecutives followed by a series of imperfect verbs, often this means that we are viewing progressive or coterminous actions. After Dinah goes out (imperfect tense), Shechem sees her, he seizes her, he lays with her and he humbles her

## Was Dinah Raped?

(all imperfect tenses in v. 2). Then his soul is drawn to her, he loves her and he speaks to her heart (again, a series of imperfect verbs in v. 3). In a seduction, v. 3 would come first, and then v. 2.

- 1) As an aside, you will not find this imperfect tense rule in any Hebrew grammar book, insofar as I know. It is a simple observation which I have made after exegeting thousands upon thousands of verses word-by-word.
9. Jacob hears that Shechem has *defiled* Dinah. This verb is in the Piel tense, which is the intensive stem. Whereas, this can simply mean to take her virginity; this, along with the other evidence, suggests rape. 3x this verb will be found in Genesis 34 (although this is not exclusively a verb for sexual defilement). So, the evidence mounts to support that rape has occurred.
10. There is a verb used in v. 7 which suggests that rape has taken place; which verb is unfortunately mistranslated *to do folly* in many translations. It will be discussed in further detail when we come to v. 7.
11. Interestingly enough, whether Shechem's father Hamor fully understands what happened or not is not clearly stated in this narrative. For all he knows, Shechem came across this gal, he's in love; so it is time to arrange a marriage.
12. What seems to be most damning is the response of Jacob's sons to this entire affair. We have had a tradition in the United States called a shotgun wedding (when a man impregnates a gal, they get married to provide for the conceived child); and this appears to be what Shechem is suggesting. Instead, the sons of Jacob will seek to not only kill Shechem, but all of his male relatives as well.
13. Therefore, what seems to be conclusive evidence of rape is, the sons of Jacob are so upset that they will kill the men of Shechem (the city of Shechem).

Interestingly enough, since there does not appear to be a verb for *rape* found in the Old Testament, this requires us to dig rather deeply in order to determine when a rape takes place.

[Genesis 34:1–2](#) And Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she bore 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 humbled her.

We have determined that a rape has occurred, and have drawn several principles from this so far.

**Rape of Dinah by Alexandre Cabanel** (a graphic); from the [Song of Songs](#); accessed November 11, 2015.

The narrative is more subtle than we might realize.

[Genesis 34:3](#) And his [Shechem's] soul clung to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke to the heart of the girl.



There are certainly different kinds of rape; and degrees of rape. Shechem may have taken Dinah forcefully, but, at the same time, he found her to be a very attractive and compelling woman. He began speaking tenderly to her, either during or after the rape (*wâw* consecutives combined with a series of imperfect verbs often suggest a series of consecutive or coterminous actions).

This is obviously a man of few social skills. Had he not raped her, and had he used the right approach, he might have legitimately married Dinah. This incident would have ended quite differently had Shechem merely exercised minimal self-control. Jacob's sons understood what he did was completely wrong; Shechem himself does not appear to fully appreciate that.

What is suggested in this chapter—that these two peoples intermarry and become one people—could have been the end result. However, Shechem's very character makes this end impossible.

[Genesis 34:4](#) And Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl for a wife."

All of this takes place in the city of Shechem; but this verse suggests that Shechem is not the founder of the city, as he goes to his father to enact this marriage. So that we are not too judgmental, bear in mind that Abraham sought a wife for 40 year old Isaac.



Shechem apparently did not have much luck speaking with Dinah directly, even though he spoke to her *tenderly* (after the rape). So he asks his father to look into this for him. His father is to determine if there is a way to get this marriage thing to work out.

It appears from the English translation that Shechem wants his father to go out and get this woman to be his wife—referring to Dinah as if she is back at home. However, the Hebrew text suggests rather that Dinah is right there with them or she is nearby—perhaps in Shechem's tent—so Hamor is not going to go get this woman; he is going to go and work out a deal whereby Shechem can take her in marriage.

It appears that, for the most part, marriages in that era were worked out between families. We saw this with Isaac's marriage; but not with Jacob's. However, had Jacob's marriage been arranged between families, then he would not have awakened the next morning with the wrong woman.

In any case, what Shechem was asking was legitimate for that era, setting the rape aside for a moment.

Shechem knows all of what happened; but it is not clear that he told his father Hamor everything. I have not discovered any clues in Genesis 34 which tell me that Hamor knew or did not know about the rape. Similarly, there is no indication that others in the Hamor family knew what Shechem had done.

Dinah also knew all that happened; and she was probably aware that she was sought as Shechem's wife. Even though she appears to be trapped there, it would be reasonable that she understood what was going on (she either pieced things together or asked questions of those bringing her food). And, because she did have female friends among these people (v. 1), it would seem logical that she would attempt to get a message to her family as to her circumstances. We are not given any information regarding how a message was gotten to her family; but they clearly understood what had happened before Hamor came to them.

[Genesis 34:5](#) And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. And his sons were with his cattle in the field. And Jacob kept silent until they had come.

The word *defiled* is *tâmê'* (טָמֵא) [pronounced *taw-MAY*], which means *to declare or to pronounce unclean; to defile (sexually, religiously, ceremonially); to profane (God's name)*. Strong's #2930 BDB #379. So again, the preponderance of the evidence is that Dinah had been raped.

It is interesting that we do not have a specific word for rape in the Hebrew language that I am aware of. Rape as a crime and a sin is recognized by Scripture, but in somewhat of a convoluted way. In the Mosaic Law, a woman who has illicit sex with a man is considered guilty if this takes place in a populated area; but innocent if this takes place in an isolated area (the reasoning being that, the woman can cry out for help in the populated area).



I believe that rape was less of an issue in the ancient world because women in that culture tended to be carefully protected by family. There were fewer opportunities for rape to actually occur, given the family protection, which was simply a cultural norm. The exceptions to this would be when an entire city goes wrong (like Sodom).

How did Jacob come about this information? It is not clear. Did Hamor tell him, "My son just had sex with your daughter; and he wants to marry her." Did Dinah somehow get a message back to her family? We do not know for certain; but it seems more likely that Dinah would have gotten a message to her family than Hamor. Would Hamor go to Jacob and say, "My son raped your daughter; but it is okay, because he wants to marry her"? We do not even know if Hamor knows what happened.

It does not appear that Dinah spoke with her father directly; at least, the way that this reads, someone else appears to have told Jacob about the rape. Jacob says nothing about it until his sons come to him.

It also appears that Dinah is with Shechem's family at this time (vv. 17, 26). We will discuss that later on.

Although it appears that this is given in chronological order, even that is not entirely clear. We have wâw consecutives and imperfect verbs most everywhere (which often indicate chronological order) except in v. 5. In fact, this is striking and it stands out in the Hebrew; but not in the English.

The verbs in v. 5 are all in the perfect tense, which does not indicate a time frame for those actions. Read it again, and bear in mind that there is no chronology hidden in the Hebrew here.

**Genesis 34:5** And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. And his sons were with his cattle in the field. And Jacob kept silent until they had come.

When we start up with v. 6, we are back to a set of verbs in chronological order.

**Genesis 34:6** And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.

Hamor clearly said something along the lines of "My son is interested in marrying your daughter," which is what fathers would do in that era. Jacob is aware of the rape; it is unclear whether Hamor is or not. Therefore, it is unclear how Jacob is made aware of what happened.

Dinah appears to be back in Shechem (the city), so it seems unlikely that Dinah told Jacob, her brothers or anyone else directly. What seems to be most likely is, Dinah somehow got a message out to her family, even though she was being kept at Hamor's homestead.

**Genesis 34:7** And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard. And the men [Dinah's brothers] were furious, and they were very angry, because he had done folly in Israel, in lying with the daughter of Jacob. And it ought not to be done so.

Apparently, Dinah's brothers knew that she had been raped. Who told whom and when Jacob became aware is not entirely clear. Exactly how the brothers knew and how Jacob knew is not known to us (as are many details in this narrative). Because of the mixture of the imperfect and perfect tenses in v. 6, we do not know what came first: the proposal of marriage by Hamor or knowledge of the rape in Jacob's family.

The primary topic here is rape and how the sons of Israel should respond to it, but there is one item which requires some commentary first—something that possibly has never been discussed before. We have the phrase *because he had done folly in Israel*. It is easy to misinterpret this verse, particularly because it is incorrectly translated. It sounds as if this reads: *because he had done folly in [nation] Israel*. However, there is no nation Israel at this time in history; nor do Jacob and his sons understand their little clan to be a national entity.

Throughout this study, I have originally used the Modern King James Version, which is a good translation. Here, they do not quite get it right. What is done is n<sup>e</sup>bâlâh (הַלְבֵן) [pronounced n<sup>eb</sup>vaw-LAW], which means *deceit, deceitful act, senseless deed, vile act, disgraceful thing; punishment for a vile or shameful act*. It is much stronger than *to do folly*, as is found in the KJV (*he had wrought folly*); the KJV2000, the MKJV, the WEB translation, the UPDV translation and Green's literal translation. The KJV often has a powerful impact on modern translations perhaps for many decades still to come, resulting in the occasional toothless translation, as we have before us. Strong's #5039 BDB #615.

The next word to consider is a tiny, but very significant, preposition, not even assigned a number by Strong: the bêyth preposition b<sup>e</sup> (ב) [pronounced b<sup>eh</sup>], which means *in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within*. No Strong's # BDB #88. At this point, I do not know that I can point to a single translation which gets this right (I have around 30 different English translations of the Old Testament on my [e-sword](#), and none of them get it right). Shechem has not committed this shameful act *in* Israel; he has committed this vile deed *against* Israel (who is the father of Dinah; *Israel* is the name which God gave to Jacob). That is the proper way to understand this sentence from the Hebrew.

Now, when there is a rape resulting in death in the book of the Judges, we have nearly the exact same phrase (Judges 20:6), and there it means *to perform a disgraceful act in Israel*, because there was an established nation of Israel at that time. So, even though we have nearly the exact same Hebrew words in both passages,<sup>66</sup> they are properly translated differently, because of the overall context.

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<sup>66</sup> The words are in a different order and Judges 20:6 adds an additional word.

This can be very difficult for some literalists to understand. They believe that, if *abc* is translated as *xyz* in one passage, then it should be translated *xyz* everywhere it is found, but this is clearly not the case. The difference is, in Genesis 34:6, *Israel* is a person; and in Judges 20:6, *Israel* is a nation (even though it is the same word). The correct understanding of the word *Israel* along with the context, determines the proper use of the bēyth preposition.

If this bothers you, you have been recognizing that exact same distinction in this passage that we are studying: *Shechem* can refer to the city where the sons of Israel are living (Genesis 33:18); and *Shechem* can refer to the rapist in this passage (Genesis 34:2, 4). Same word; different reference.

Dinah's brothers, Jacob's sons, were quite upset upon hearing this. Having their sister being taken by this man was undeniably wrong.

Jacob is also upset, but he does not determine what ought to be done. His sons almost immediately formulate a plan.

There is so much detail left out of this. Do the sons of Jacob come up and start swearing at Hamor for what happened? Do they stand off and quietly speak with bitterness amongst one another? Do they follow their father's lead and hold their peace?

## Lesson 369: Genesis 34:1–7

## The Doctrine of Rape

So far, we have studied the first 7 verses of this chapter.

Gen 34:1 [Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land.](#)

I have read a lot of commentary on this passage, and some writers blame Dinah here, and some blame Jacob for letting her go out. There is simply not enough information given for us blame either one. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are *not* told to confine ourselves to contact with other Christians only. We are not supposed to cut ourselves off from family members or from old friends who have not yet believed in our Lord.

Every believer is commissioned as an evangelist; and how can you possibly evangelize unless you have some contact with unbelievers?

What this first verse tells us is, Dinah did not go out to meet Shechem. She did not have a thing going on with Shechem. She was just going out to visit other women.

Gen 34:2–3 [And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her. And his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her.](#)

All that we have here *suggests* rape; and we have previously studied that Shechem did rape her. We have also noted the irony, that had Shechem done things in a different order (spoken tenderly to Dinah from the beginning), things may have been quite different. He got the cart before the horse, suggesting his arrogance and/or his lack of civility.

Gen 34:4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl for my wife."

Based upon later verses, Dinah is right there, with Shechem at this time. Her rapist has taken her prisoner, and now he wants to marry her.

Gen 34:5–7 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. The sons of Jacob had come in from the field as soon as they heard of it, and the men were indignant and very angry, because he had done an outrageous thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing must not be done.

We have no clue who informed Jacob and his sons as to what happened. Although Shechem and his father Hamor may have told them, it would have logically been in the text (*Hamor informed Jacob that Shechem had taken his daughter*). But we do not find that.

Furthermore, even though Jacob and his sons are clearly upset over this situation, they do not reveal this to Hamor and Shechem (compare vv. 5, 11, 13).

We have been studying the rape of Dinah, and although we have clarified one minor aspect of this narrative, we are left with many more questions.

However, before we get into that, we ought to discuss rape as found in the Bible.

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Interestingly enough, I could not find the *Doctrine of Rape* on any doctrinal website.

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### **Rape in the Bible**

1. So that there is no misunderstanding, rape is considered to be wrong by the Bible and it was punishable by death. Critics of the Bible portray the Old Testament God as misogynistic and the Bible as well, suggesting that women were viewed as property and not afforded any real rights or protection. However, that is clearly not the case (as we will see).
  2. There are even some anti-Bible types who think that a man could rape a woman in Bible times, pay her father a few bucks, and keep the daughter as his wife. This narrative of Genesis 34 will show that interpretation of a passage in Deuteronomy to be completely false.
    - 1) As an aside, critics often give a very negative interpretation to various passages in the Bible, and then they criticize the Bible because of how they have interpreted it.
    - 2) In the other hand, this does not mean that the Bible agrees with
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## Rape in the Bible

contemporary society on the issues of the day.

3. We learn from Genesis 34 that different ancient cultures actually treated rape differently. Dinah's brothers recognize that this is a terrible thing which Shechem has done. Hamor, his father, possibly sees this as a minor infraction which can be solved through marriage and promises of intermarriage between the two families in the future. However, in fairness to Hamor, we do not know how much he knew when attempting to arrange this marriage. Did he realize that his son had raped Dinah, or was he led to believe that this was consensual? In any case, Shechem, who committed the rape, thought it reasonable for him to then marry the woman that he just raped. This suggests great barbarity in his culture and upbringing, as well as terrific personal arrogance.
4. There is an implication in Genesis 26 that Philistines might have taken Rebekah and had their way with her, not realizing that she was Isaac's wife. That suggests that rape, in some instances, was reasonably common enough (in some cultures) for Abimelech to make this statement. This will be examined more thoroughly later in this doctrine.
5. In Muslim countries today, women are considered to be [responsible for being raped](#) (they can create an uncontrollable sexual urge in the males); and very often, [rape victims are punished](#) in Islamic cultures.
6. There was often protection afforded women in ancient Jewish culture (and in other cultures of that time period), where women did not easily go out and socialize apart from family members being around. Vestiges of this remained in the 1940's and 50's on chaperoned dates; and this protective approach is enforced by Islamic cultures today. Dinah going out to hang with the women of the land does not appear to be a common experience.
7. Let me suggest, culturally, in ancient Jewish society, that rape was not a common problem. Young, unmarried women were not allowed, generally speaking, to meander off on their own. Nevertheless, that does not mean that rape is ignored in the Bible.
8. Here, Moses is teaching the people: “[1] When it is [that] a young woman—a virgin—[about] to be married to a man, and a man discovers [or, *meets*] her in the city and he lays with her; then you [all] will bring both of them to the city gate and you [all] will stone them with stones and they will die—the young woman because she did not cry out [for help] in the city and the man because he humiliated the [soon-to-be] wife of his neighbor. [By this] you have removed immorality [lit., *evil*] from your midst. [2] If the man finds her in the field—the betrothed young woman—and the man has seized her and he has lain with her, then the man who laid with her will die only. You will not do a thing to the young woman, [for there is] no sin [done] by the young woman [worthy] of death; for just as a man rising up against his neighbor to murder [his] soul, so this thing. For he found her in the field—[if] the betrothed woman called out [for help], [there was] none to save her. [3] When a man finds a young, virgin woman who is not to-be-married and he takes her and he lays with her, but they are discovered; then the man—the one laying with her—will give the young woman's father 50 [shekels of]

## Rape in the Bible

silver and she will become his wife because he has violated her. He is [therefore] unable to send her away all his days." (Deuteronomy 22:23-29; Kukis reasonably literal translation).

- 1) In the first two instances, we are dealing with a woman who has been promised to be married. Arranged marriages in the ancient world were common (they are still common in India and other countries today); so it would not be unusual for even very young women to be promised to a man for the future. As an aside, for those of you who think that an arranged marriage is backward or quaint, my educated guess is, the divorce rate is lower among those whose marriage was arranged.
- 2) In the first circumstance, if a woman, engaged to be married, is discovered to be having sex with another man in a city, both are presumed guilty of adultery (a form of adultery) and both are stoned to death. The logic is, the woman, if she were being raped, would call out for help.
- 3) In the second instance, the man rapes the woman, as this occurs in a secluded area, and the man's guilt is assumed and the woman's innocence is also assumed. This is logical because, if this were an affair, then both partners would have kept quiet about this. No one would know that it occurred. The woman, having been raped, would have reported this to her family.
- 4) In the 3<sup>rd</sup> situation, rape is not what is being discussed. There was no rape in the first instance, rape in the second, and no rape in the third. So, this is not a man who has raped a woman, and then turns around and decides, "I might want to marry this woman." There are no words for rape in the 3<sup>rd</sup> case (despite some incorrect translations which are out there, including the generally excellent NASB). *Violating* the woman does not mean that the man raped her; it means that he took away her virginity. I know that in today's culture, that may not be understood. But in the ancient world, if a woman was not a virgin, then she would not have any suitors.
  - (1) Tamar, the daughter of King David, would be an illustration of this. 2Sam. 13.
  - (2) Ruth, a Moabite, would be an exception to this rule. The Book of Ruth.
- 5) If you doubt the interpretation here, a very detailed study of this passage is found here: **Deuteronomy 22** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).
9. Based upon the second circumstance above in Deut. 22, the Bible clearly indicates that rape is wrong and punishable by death.
10. Genesis 26:6–11 is a fascinating story, where Isaac is living in Gerar, and like his father before him, he lies about Rebekah being his wife, saying that she is his sister. When Abimelech, the king, finds out, he chews Isaac out for this, saying, "What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us." (Genesis 26:10b; ESV) There is the suggestion here that the Philistines of Gerar could possibly have raped Rebekah, not realizing that she is married. So, this indicates that some



## Rape in the Bible

societies in that era did not see rape as a serious crime, even though they recognized that adultery was wrong and that God would punish them for it (which viewpoint is also expressed in this chapter). Some Muslim societies today appear to put the burden of responsibility for rape on the woman, [suggesting](#) that men are overpowered by lust if they find themselves with an attractive, unprotected woman (their explanation is that Allah gave Mohammed, for instance, the [libido of 30 men](#)).

11. Although this may seem counterintuitive, it is possible to overreact to rape. Genesis 34 is an example of that. However, this chapter clearly indicates that raping a woman is wrong and punishable by death. Jacob's sons went overboard and killed a large number of men who did not rape their sister and who had nothing to do with it. Furthermore, there is no indication that the men of Shechem would have protected Hamor's son under these circumstances. Had the men of Shechem (city) been willing to protect Shechem (the man), that would have changed the situation and justify what the sons of Israel did.
12. Despite having the Law of Moses, some of the people of Israel during the time of the Judges were out of control and lawless. Judges 19 is a very sad story about a man who reunites with his unfaithful mistress, and they are returning to his home, passing through Gibeah of Benjamin. Even though a kindly man takes them into his house, when night falls, they are surrounded by homosexual rapists (much like Genesis 19) who demand that this man be sent out to them. His mistress was sent out instead, and these men rape her until she dies, her hands at the threshold of this house when she died. The man broadcasts his story to all the tribes of Israel (in a rather grisly way), and 400,000 men responded. They demanded that the men responsible be given up, but the people of Benjamin would not. They protected those guilty of rape. Nearly all the men of Benjamin were killed as a result (Judges 20).
13. Homosexual rape is threatened in both Genesis 19 and Judges 19.
  - 1) In Genesis 19, God rains down fire and sulfur products from above (possibly the result of a natural gas explosion), to judge Sodom, Gomorrah and 3 other cities for their sexual degeneracy.
  - 2) In Judges 20, since the men of Benjamin protected the rapists (they raped the man's mistress rather than the man), most of the able-bodied men of Benjamin were killed in battle by the other tribes of Israel.
  - 3) There is no confusion in both passages as to the wrongness of the threat of homosexual rape and as to the degeneracy of the people.
14. 2Sam. 13 gives us an idea as to the normal protections afforded young, unmarried women in the ancient world. This chapter is all about Absalom, his sister Tamar and their half-brother Amnon. Amnon is filled with lust towards Tamar, however, he is unable to secure any time alone with her. Obviously, they knew one another, but the family of David did not allow them to be alone together. This suggests that the culture of that day understood that parents should protect their daughters from unwarranted advances (even from their half-brothers). Although we do not know the ages of these young people, all of the clues suggest

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that these are middle, late teens, or very young adults. Amnon goes to a terrific amount of trouble to pretend to be ill and to demand and Tamar take care of him during his illness. When she comes to him, he orders everyone out of the house and then he overpowers her and rapes her. Tamar does what she can to try to talk him out of it, but he rapes her. Then, when he is done, Amnon hates Tamar and throws her out into the street. All that happens after that reveals that rape was taken very seriously. It would have been up to King David to prosecute Amnon, but David was too weak and indulgent as a father to do so. As a result, Absalom killed Amnon. This mess continued until Absalom himself was finally killed, having become a law unto himself.

15. In the New Testament, husbands are to give respect and honor to their wives, and not to abuse them (Eph. 5:25 1Peter 3:7). This is because women are equal to men in their response to the gospel and God's resultant blessing to them (Gal. 3:28 1Peter 3:7).
16. During the Tribulation, armies will line up against Jerusalem, and those who remain in the city will have their homes plundered and their women raped. Zech. 14:2
17. The conclusion is, even though God did not directly speak of rape in the Mosaic Law (Moses did himself in Deuteronomy), the culture of that era were so protective of their women, that this made rape a very rare event. Where the culture did not protect women, the men of that culture were destroyed (examples of Genesis 19 and Judges 20).

Some dishonest critics of the Bible claim that there were instances where Jewish men could rape heathen women; or take heathen women as wives against their will, but that is a misinterpretation of some Pentateuch passages. The [Blaze](#) actually does an article specifically addressing some of the misrepresentations of various Bible passages.

As an aside, those in the gay movement who try to misuse the Bible, say, "Jesus said nothing about homosexuality" (although He did). Putting that aside, Jesus did not say anything about rape, so does that make rape okay? Obviously not. So, the fact that Jesus does not specifically condemn a particular sin does not remove it from the list of sins.

Many of these passages were taken from <http://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Rape> (accessed August 5, 2015).

### Lesson 370: Genesis 34:1–10

### Destroying the Patriarchal Line

So far, we have covered the first 7 verses of this chapter, we have determined that a rape has taken place, and we have studied rape as a topic in the Bible.

I have tried to be methodical and measured in the study of this chapter. I have come across a number of generally good expositors who begin making assumptions from the

very beginning, and then build a whole structure of exposition based upon their early faulty assumptions.

Gen 34:1 Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the women of the land.

This takes place in the second city where Jacob and his family moved, having reentered the Land of Promise. They are now west of the Jordan River.

Gen 34:2–3 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he seized her and lay with her and humiliated her [he raped her and took her virginity]. However, his soul was drawn to Dinah the daughter of Jacob. He loved the young woman and spoke tenderly to her.

As previously discussed, all indications are, Shechem raped Dinah (there are no Hebrew words for *rape*). Two of the terms above *suggest* rape but do not, by themselves, always mean that rape has occurred. However, these words along with the overall context certainly means that Shechem raped Dinah.

Gen 34:4 So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this girl for my wife."

We do not know if Hamor understood fully what happened. In fact, we do not even know if what Shechem did might be considered legitimate within his family.

Based upon later verses, Dinah is with Shechem at this time. So Shechem is not telling his father to go get this girl for him—she is right there with them—but to secure her hand in marriage.

These circumstances must have been unnerving to Dinah, to say the very least. She is raped; then this big galoot speaks kindly to her; and he hauls her to his city and essentially keeps her there as prisoner.

What seems to be most likely to me is, Dinah, panicked, fearful that she might end up being married to this big jerk; realizing that this might be her life. Therefore, she manages to find a sympathetic ear and gets a message out to her family. This is conjecture, but it is a reasonable explanation.

Gen 34:5–7 Now Jacob heard that he had defiled his daughter Dinah. But his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob held his peace until they came. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. The sons of Jacob had come in from the field as soon as they heard of it, and the men were indignant and very angry, because he had done an outrageous thing against Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing must not be done.

We have not progressed very far in this chapter. We have spent a great deal of time showing that a rape occurs and that rape in the Bible is an offense punishable by death.

We spent this extra time so that we do not perpetuate some of the silly notions of today, like the idea that in the Bible, women were simply treated like property.

Jacob is the father; he is the patriarch; therefore, he should take the lead here in what ought to be done. However, he appears to be too shocked by the news to react. His sons by Leah are probably all young adults at this time.

Logically, we are perhaps 10 years out of Paddan-aram; maybe 15.

**Genesis 34:8** And Hamor spoke with them, saying, “The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him for a wife.

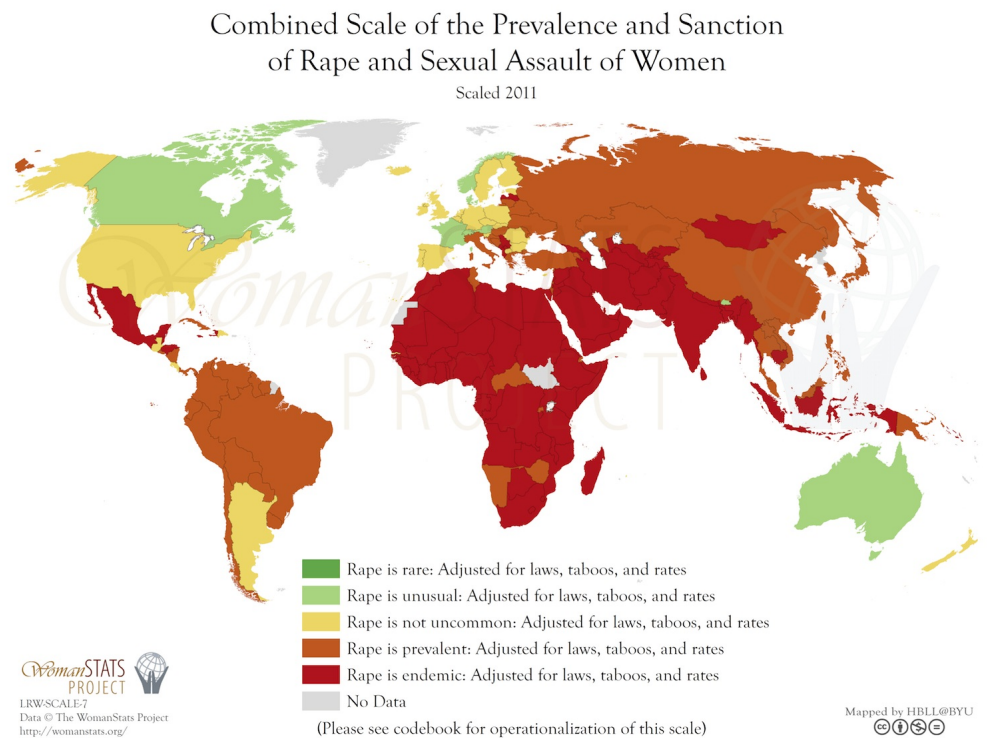
Hamor appears to be making the best of a bad situation. The fact that his son has raped this woman is glossed over; he does not make an issue of it. He talks instead about how his son feels.

To be fair to Hamor, it is possible that his son did not give a fully truthful account of his encounter with Dinah. It is not out of the question that a man might lie to his father about his own wrongful behavior.

**Map of the Prevalence of Rape and Sexual Assault of Woman** (a graphic); from [The Muslim Issue](#) (which has a number of interesting graphics). Accessed August 5, 2015.

**Genesis 34:9** And you make marriages with us, giving your daughters to us, and taking our daughters to you.

The father continues, saying that they can intermix, the two peoples—and this appears to be a fairly common thing in the ancient world. Two families are geographically close to one another; and, if they get along, often they will intermarry.



Genetically, this is actually a healthy thing, for people who are not closely related to intermarry.

However, there is a problem here. God has not raised up the family of Jacob to be intermingled with some random, heathen family. The people of Abraham are set apart, even though Jacob's sons would marry women whose backgrounds are unknown to us. The sons of Jacob must survive and remain as a separate racial entity. This does not mean that they cannot marry Hivites, or Canaanites or Girgashites; but whoever marries the sons of Jacob must become a part of their family and worship their God.

Something about the Canaanites ought to be said as well. God gave the land to Jews and not to the people living in the land of Canaan already. Some of these people are quite degenerate and others are not. Sodom, as we have studied, had become so degenerate that God destroyed them. However, Abraham and Isaac's interaction with the people of Gerar indicated to us that some of them had some moral sensibilities.

My point being, we cannot judge this family of Canaanites based upon the actions of Shechem. Furthermore, despite what has happened, even Shechem himself is not completely lost morally. He clearly raped Dinah; it is clearly wrong. Yet he does want to marry her. I realize that is not a ringing endorsement of his character; but I am trying to differentiate between him and the animals who raped the woman in Judges 19 and killed her through their multiple rapes.

**Genesis 34:10** And you will live with us. And the land will be before you. Live and trade in it, and get possessions in it."

Hamor is still speaking, trying to convince Jacob to intermarry with his family and for them to all become one people.

Even though Jacob is hiding how he feels about Shechem—he is probably not sure how he wants to react to all of this—Hamor no doubt senses some apprehension, and continues to try to convince Jacob of the mutual benefits they would all enjoy.

The people of Hamor were not necessarily guilty of trying to undermine God's plan; however, Satan was certainly attempting to undermine God's plan. Therefore, he is reasonably the inspiration here for the commingling of these two peoples.

*Leupold: Naturally, where two tribes freely intermarry they will "live with" one another. This again was quite feasible because larger stretches of unclaimed country still lay available here and there in those days: "the land lies open before you." Then Hamor tries to paint an attractive picture of the advantages accruing to Israel from such an alliance: they "may dwell" in the land, "travel back and forth in it" (sachar, however, implies travelling mostly for the purpose of trading) and they "may establish themselves in it," departing from their more nomadic way of life and adopting agricultural*

*habits. In v. 5v. 8 "Shechem" stands first—nominative absolute—his attitude is primarily under consideration.<sup>67</sup>*

Sometimes a family line or a people seem to disappear or they appear to become associated with another people. This simply describes the process. Sometimes two families or even two tribes are dwelling near one another and they decide to band together rather than to go to war.

However, the problem is, in the end, we would no longer have the sons of Abraham, but we would have this intermingling of this whole other family which has a clear identity. This is certainly not God's plan for Jacob's family. The sons of Jacob could marry a variety of women, but God could not allow them to become completely intermixed with another people.

The Bible is very careful, particularly in these early years, of the family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to present them as a separate people. Very little is said about the wives of 12 sons of Jacob (at this point, some of the males are barely old enough to marry—however, they will all have families by the time that we get to Genesis 46). The wives and their children will all be seen as descendants of Abraham.

They will continue to act like a family unit. Even though they are related to Esau and to Ishmael, as well as to the Ammonites and the Moabites, the sons of Jacob and their sons will remain together, moving and relocating as a group; and functioning as a family or clannish unit, separated from the rest of the peoples of the land.

When they move as a group to Egypt, they will become even more isolated as a clan. In fact, they will grow into a population of 2 million, and yet remain completely separate from the Egyptians (although, there will be some sympathizers).

**Genesis 34:10** And you will live with us. And the land will be before you. Live and trade in it, and get possessions in it."

Notice what they are being offered by Hamor—everything that God has promised them about the land, Hamor is promising them.

The ESV; capitalized is used below; quotation marks are added when this is spoken.

Hamor was making very similar promises to those made by God. Obviously, he may not realize what God has promised the family of Jacob.

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<sup>67</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.



## Shortcuts in the Spiritual Life

What Hamor is Offering	God's Promises to Abraham
Marriage into a royal family.	"I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great; and you will be a blessing." (Genesis 12:2)
Genetic prosperity (the opportunity to have a lot of children as a result of intermarriage)	"I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the shore of the sea." (Genesis 22:17b)
Residing in the relative safety of an established race.	"I will make your seed as the dust of the earth, so that if a man can count the dust of the earth, then your seed also will be counted." (Genesis 13:16)
Acquiring and owning real estate.	"I will give this land to your seed." (Genesis 12:7b)
Economic prosperity.	"...afterward they shall come out with great substance." (Genesis 15:14b)

Y<sup>e</sup>howah Elohim had made similar promises directly to Jacob: "And, behold, Jehovah stood above it and said, I am Jehovah the God of your father Abraham, and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying, I will give it to you and to your seed. And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and you shall spread to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your Seed. And, behold, I will be with you and will guard you in every place in which you may go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not forsake you until I have surely done that which I have spoken to you." (Genesis 28:13–15)

God's promises are always greater than the promises of the world.

Most of the first column was taken from [Ron Snider](#).

A similar approach is taken by Satan when he tempted Jesus in Matt. 4. All Jesus had to do was step outside of God's plan, and Satan would give Him anything—even all the kingdoms of the world.

Now, think about what we are studying, because there is this parallel throughout. Shechem is shortcutting the normal marriage process. He is supposed to see this woman, fall in love, possibly speak to her from time to time, and have his father ask Dinah's father to give his approval for marriage. Shechem did not do this; he bypassed the civilized process of marriage.

Hamor is suggesting to Israel's family that they bypass the timeline of God, and to receive the things which God has promised them by intermarrying with his sons. What God has promised, Hamor is offering to Jacob. All he has to do is overlook the sin upon which this will be based.

Ron Snider: *[Similarly,] Satan offers cosmic convenience, safety and prosperity to the believer who will compromise with him.*<sup>68</sup>

## Lesson 371: Genesis 34:11–18

## The Conspiracy of Jacob's Sons

What has happened so far is, Shechem, the firstborn son of Hamor, raped Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. He had decided that he really liked her, and took her home to her family, insisting that his father work out a deal so that they could marry.

He and his father went to Jacob, suggesting that their two families intermarry. At this point, Hamor and Shechem are discussing this marriage and possibly intermarriage between the two clans, which would have made them one family (or, clan).

Even without the rape having occurred, there is a problem with this whole proposal. God had set the family of Abraham apart from all other races/families/clans for special blessing. People would be brought into their family (that is, wives), but there was not to be a coalition with another clan.

Although we do not know about the rest of the Hivites, we know about Shechem and how he seems to think that what he did was okay. Nowhere does he explain himself or apologize. What he is willing to do is, cough up as much money as would make Jacob and his family accept the situation. Furthermore, he is not even coughing up his own money; that is why his father is along. His father has the checkbook.

**Genesis 34:11** And Shechem said to her father and to her brothers, “Let me find grace in your eyes, and whatever you will say to me I will give.

This is the first time that we know that Shechem is here. Shechem looks to his father, but the proposal is being made to the brothers of Dinah. Whether or not his father knows, Shechem may even think that Dinah's brothers do not know what happened. It appears that Dinah has been with the Hamor clan since this incident first occurred.

Throughout this interaction, neither Hamor or Shechem admit that any wrongdoing has occurred. Dinah's brothers are also playing their cards close to the vest; they are not revealing that they know what happened and how upset they are.

Shechem has raped Dinah, but he hopes to marry her and make everything all better.

Leupold indicts<sup>69</sup> the entire Canaanite race based upon this incident, but we really do not know how many relatives of Shechem know what he did. When someone has done wrong, it is not normal for them to go around and brag about what they have done (unless they are proud of having done wrong, which is then an indictment of his society).

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<sup>68</sup> From [www.makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen34.doc](http://www.makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen34.doc) accessed November 17, 2015.

<sup>69</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.

Whereas, Shechem obviously feels some guilt, based upon his offering any dowry necessary; there is nothing in this narrative that indicates the Hamor knows what happened. There is no indication that anyone else in his family is aware of what he did.

On the other hand, Jacob and his sons know what Shechem did.

**Genesis 34:12** Heap upon me ever so much price and dowry, and I will give according as you will say to me. But give me the girl for a wife.”

Shechem believes that he can solve this problem with money. He will give as much money as is necessary in order to fix things. He is obviously quite taken by Dinah, despite the fact that he is a barbarian (I mean that in the general sense).

Here, we might be able to draw **Some Conclusions About Shechem** based upon the text:

1. Shechem would have been seen as a desirable bachelor. His father is the ruler of that area, and it is possible that the city was named for him.
2. Many times, when a person is the son of someone who is rich and famous, he ends up being spoiled as a result. Much of this can occur because of the neglect of his father, not by the training of his father. Good parenting can overcome any obstacle of poverty or wealth.
3. We will see this with King David and his sons from his first wives. They grew up to feel entitled and lawless, despite the fact that David was a godly man.
4. Shechem appears to have a great deal in common with King David's sons (Amnon and Absalom). He wants what he wants when he wants it. And he is willing for his father to part with any amount of money to make it happen.
5. However, this chapter also indicates that he has some conscience; that he understands that there is some protocol involved in taking a wife.
6. My point in all of this is not to present Shechem as a sterling citizen; but to recognize that his degeneracy is not on the level of the rapists in Sodom or in Gibeah (in Judges 19), or even of Amnon, King David's son.

**Genesis 34:12** Heap upon me ever so much price and dowry, and I will give according as you will say to me. But give me the girl for a wife.”

This is one of the few times there is an inkling of Shechem's guilt. He tells Jacob's family, "I will agree to whatever price you want." The money is not just about recognizing the value of Dinah, but it is guilt money for what Shechem has done (this is an assumption that I am making). This suggests to me that Shechem has a conscience, despite all the negative things that we know about him. This also suggests that he has a sense of entitlement. These two things can exist simultaneously in the same person.

It is worth noting that this money that he is willing to pay, may come from his father's pocket.

**Genesis 34:13** And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, speaking with deceit because he had defiled Dinah their sister.

Whereas, one would expect the fathers to sort out a possible marriage, first Shechem and then the sons of Jacob decide to speak. However, it appears that the sons took an active part in the affairs of the family. Back when Abraham sent his servant to get a wife for Isaac, the brother of Rachel (Laban) seemed to be just as involved in the proceedings as his father was.

That the sons of Jacob are speaking with deceit suggests that they did not let on that they were upset, that they knew about the rape, and that they were plotting evil in their hearts. They could not reveal their anger. So these are not honest negotiations on their part. They have a whole other agenda planned.

Apparently Jacob's sons have formulated a plan, which they will lay out. This suggests that, at whatever point they became aware the Shechem wanted to marry Dinah, that they huddled and decided what they would do. None of this is in the text. We have to get that from v. 14, which is the basis of their plot against Shechem and his family.

**Genesis 34:14** And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised. For it is a reproach to us.

Their demand seems simple; they have a fairly small religious requirement—they ask that the men of Hamor be circumcised. They are not even requesting animal sacrifices, a pledging of allegiance to their God; just circumcisions for the males.

We have studied circumcision in the past, and the idea is, the "dead" skin is cut away, and from this comes new life (Abraham was circumcised to represent this new life; because he and Sarah could not have children due to their advanced years). Abraham's circumcision represented new life in the Lord Y<sup>e</sup>howah; and all of his sons were circumcised as an identifying mark and as a testimony to their new life (that is, they were born again).

There is no indication that they explain much about their relationship to God; and it is possible that Jacob's sons themselves did not really appreciate the unique relationship with God that they had.

### **The Sons of Jacob Conspire**

1. There is more in this chapter that we do not know than what we know.
2. There is great pain associated with circumcision in an adult and a recovery period; this will be used by Jacob's sons against the males of Shechem.
3. There is reasonably a plan put together by the sons of Jacob, which would have been put together after they knew about the rape and about Shechem's intentions.

## The Sons of Jacob Conspire

4. At what point they knew both of these things is unknown to us. Much of that depends upon who informed Jacob and who informed the sons of the rape—something about which we can only speculate. What seemed to make the most sense is, Dinah, being held somewhat as a captive in Shechem, was able to find a sympathetic ear and to get a message out to her family as to what had happened.
5. It would make sense that the requirement of circumcision be made *after* a plan had been formulated. However, the circumcision was not designed to bring the families closer together to one another through God; the circumcision was designed to weaken the males of Hamor's clan.
6. When the sons huddled and discussed this plan is unknown to us.
7. Sometimes conversations in the Bible are presented as a continuous discussion, when they are not. Did the sons say, "Let us go aside and discuss this"? Did Hamor say, "How about if I return in the morning and you give me your answer then"?
8. It is possible that this intermarriage idea was proposed, the family of Jacob said, "Let us sleep on it" and then they came up with a plan.
9. In any case, it is logical that, at some point, before the sons came up or in the midst of the recorded conversation, a plan was put together.

The sons of Jacob are using their spiritual heritage in order to take their revenge. This is reprehensible!

**Genesis 34:15–16** But in this we will agree with you, if you will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will live with you, and we will become one people.

Jacob's sons have all been circumcised; and this is a part of their sacred relationship to God. However, here they will use circumcision in order to accomplish nefarious ends.

Remember what kind of a person Jacob has been? He is a manipulator and a *heel-grabber*; and his sons have continued with his characteristics. They are going to be sneaky and underhanded as well.

There is not a hint to Shechem that Jacob's sons know what has transpired. They don't indignantly proclaim, "But you raped our sister; it will be a cold day in hell before we ally ourselves with you." Instead, they carry out a plan, which plan requires cool deception and a united front.

Shechem is immediately put at ease. He assumes that they do not know what he has done (he has their sister at his compound). If he noticed any reticence, it was because of the peculiar religious practices of these men (I am making these logical assumptions based upon the narrative).

Genesis 34:17 But if you will not listen to us, to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter, and we will go.”

“Look, if you are not interested, then, no problem. We are out of here.”

Shechem apparently has Dinah. It is possible that Shechem raped her and then brought her home, all the while speaking tenderly to her. This makes the most sense; it is less likely that Dinah would be raped, returned home, and then brought to Shechem’s at a later time.

She is called a daughter here, simply because that appears to be a general designation for the female portion of a group.

Genesis 34:18 And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son.

What appears to be the case is, Hamor has never told his son *no*. Whatever he has wanted, Hamor, as his father, has come through on that request. Being the father of that clan, Hamor could choose to do whatever he wanted and to give his son whatever he wanted. However, he did not develop any character in his son; he did not, apparently, teach him right from wrong.

This seems like true acceptance to Hamor and Shechem. They are becoming a part of the faith of Abraham. They really don’t know anything about that faith, because none of Jacob’s sons have demanded anything beyond circumcision. To Hamor and Shechem, this is simply a religious ritual, but without any clear significance.

Very likely, Shechem is certain that they do not know that he raped Dinah. She has apparently been with his family the entire time. This is why Shechem feels reasonably safe. How word was brought to the family of Jacob is unknown to us; but they do know what happened.

You will notice what is emphasized is the ritual, but not the God of Abraham. Furthermore, this ritual is being used by the sons of Jacob not to bring these people into their family, but to deceive them.

One of the concepts of circumcision is, this separates the people of Israel unto God. This incident is all about keeping the people of Israel from being assimilated by the people of the land of Canaan.

Even though the sons of Jacob are using circumcision in an unauthorized way, the overall theme of this chapter is still preserved. “Despite who you are,” God is saying, “I am going to keep you separate to Myself.”



Shechem has raped Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and the sister of Leah's sons. Although we do not know every detail, it appears that Shechem took her immediately to his home, where she has been kept for the past several days. Shechem asks his father to see about getting her hand in marriage.

When Shechem and his father Hamor go to speak to Jacob about Shechem marrying Dinah, we knew the following things:

### Summary of Genesis 34:1–18

1. Dinah went to visit the daughters of the land, and Shechem raped her. Genesis 34:2
2. Dinah appears to be kept at Shechem's compound after the rape. The sons speak of taking her home with them, which implies that she is not with them. Genesis 34:17
3. Shechem knows that he raped her; Jacob knows that Dinah was raped; and his sons all know that she was raped. It is not clear if Hamor, Shechem's father, knows this. Genesis 34:2, 5, 7
4. Therefore, there was to be some way in which Jacob and his sons found out about the rape and they seemed to know about this before their meeting with Hamor and Shechem. The most logical explanation is, Dinah found a sympathetic ear at Shechem's compound, and sent a message to her family, telling them of what she has endured. That is not in the text; it is something I have assumed.
5. The sons of Jacob have formed a plan. At some point, they had to have huddled together and worked out a plan amongst themselves (apart from their father, who takes no action and who knows what has happened, but says nothing about it). Genesis 34:13–17
6. The sons say that they cannot allow their sister to be married to a man who is uncircumcised; and that they cannot agree to intermarry with a clan of uncircumcised men. Genesis 34:15–17
7. Therefore, the men of Shechem would be required to all be circumcised, or they would just take their sister back home. Genesis 34:17
8. The sons of Jacob are using the trappings of their faith to destroy the family of Shechem. This suggests that they do not really take their faith in Y<sup>e</sup>howah seriously.
9. Shechem and Hamor are pleased with this decision and they agree to be circumcised. Genesis 34:18
10. In this final section of Genesis 34, Jacob's sons will use the recovery period from circumcision as a time to attack and kill all of the males in Shechem. So that there is no misunderstanding, God is *not* presenting this as stellar behavior among the sons of Jacob.

The end result will be, the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will remain pure and not intermixed with another family line.

**Genesis 34:19** And the young man did not hesitate to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter. And he was more honorable than all the house of his father.

The Modern KJV reads: **And he was more honorable than all the house of his father.** However, this confusing sentence is cleared up by other translations: **Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.** (The Scriptures) **Now he was the most honored of all his father's house.** (ESV)

So, the Bible is not calling this man honorable; but among his family, he is the most respected or honored person. This appears to be a backhanded way of saying, "His family is far worse than he is, and he is a rapist."

This also indicates that, he had great influence in his family. That is, he could make demands upon the rest of the family, and they would be considered carefully, due to his position in the clan.

We see this in politics all the time. In the Senate or House, relationships are built up over a period of time, so that, Senator A could offer a bill or an amendment, and if he has the right relationships, many would support him. However, if he is a brash, first year Senator, who puts forth a bill (or amendment)—which may be good for the country, but he has no relationships established in the Senate—that bill (or amendment) will probably go nowhere.

In politics, the relationships that have been built up—which can include relationships with donors and lobbyists—can be far more important in what gets done in Washington, than whether or not a bill is actually good for America.

We see this in office politics all of the time—those with the right relationships are given preferential treatment over those who might be more competent and harder workers.

**Genesis 34:20–21** And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the gate of their city, and talked with the men of their city, saying, "These men are at peace with us. Therefore let them live in the land, and trade in it. For behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

This circumcision needs to be sold to the men of this area. Shechem is getting a wife out of this deal; but Hamor and Shechem need to convince the other males that they will in turn receive benefits from this relationship as well.

There was very little that passed for law and order in those days from without. Being closely allied with another group of people provides some sense of additional protection from without. A society may be reasonably well-ordered from within, but people from outside that society may be quite a different matter altogether. So, the larger a clan is, the better off they were with regards to security.

The coalescing of two families sounds quite normal, and we must assume that this sort of thing occurred a great deal in the ancient world (we will see this with the clans of Edom and Seir in Genesis 36).

However, bear in mind that Shechem raped Dinah. It's not like he met her and fell in love, and wants to do the right thing. He met her, raped her, fell in love, and now wants to do the *right* thing. It is not surprising that her brothers are quite miffed.

**Genesis 34:22** Only on this condition will the men agree to us, to live with us, to be one people, if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised.”

So, they agree to be circumcised, and all of the males are circumcised. Notice that there is no discussion here of the Revealed God; there is no discussion of the God of Abraham. The emphasis is upon the ritual, which for them, has no meaning. They might as well be getting matching tattoos.

This also suggests that circumcision has little religious significance among Jacob's children. Why would they suggest such a thing, if they understood how this tied them to God?

It is hard to come up with a similar situation in today's world, but let's say you attend church for business reasons. You make contacts within the church, and these contacts become business opportunities. What is being taught in the church may have little importance to you; but the business contacts that you make are what is key.

It is just like a woman who goes to a church to meet a mate, knowing that there are better men to choose from than what can be found in a bar. The doctrine being taught may mean very little to her, except that there is some level of morality that is found in the church, clearly superior to that found in a bar. Jesus Christ dying for her sins and the spiritual life may mean very little to this young woman.

**Genesis 34:23** Will not their cattle and their substance and every animal of theirs be ours? Only let us agree with them, and they will live with us.”

Shechem continues to try to convince his brothers. He explains that, if they become attached to this family, they will have all of their wealth as well. Jacob and his family have considerable wealth, as God has blessed them.

All of this is about allying these two families together. Shechem has to really sell this, because he is asking all of his brothers to be willing to be circumcised in order for this to happen.

**Genesis 34:24** And all that went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to Shechem his son. And every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

This is a city (we might think of it more like a hamlet); and there is a city gate, and Shechem and his father are out there at the city gate. They are speaking to men 1 at a time, or 2 or 3 at a time. They are there all day long. Obviously, Shechem and Hamor are well known, as Hamor is the father of many of the men in their city. Shechem is the firstborn.

They have sold the idea; now they are circumcising the males in the city.

**Genesis 34:25** And it happened on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took each his sword and came upon the city boldly, and killed all the males.

We have no idea how many males that we are talking about, but Simeon and Levi then came into the city and killed all of the men, who were still in pain from being circumcised a couple days previous.

**Genesis 34:26** And they killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

These are murders which are taking place. The Bible offers up no justification for them. Throughout Scripture, men do wrong things—including the patriarchs. The relevant information is included, but not to excuse these actions.

This had not been clearly revealed before. Dinah has kept in this household this entire time. With the circumcision, Shechem would not have had sex with her again.

**Genesis 34:27** The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister.

This sounds like the other sons of Jacob came into this city and plundered it. In the Judges incident, the people of the city protected the rapists. This made the people culpable after the fact. However, we do not know this about Shechem. It seems unlikely that anyone knew what Shechem had done (although it is likely that some sympathetic soul spoke to Dinah and got a message off to her family early on). We have no reason to think that the other men of that land were protecting Shechem or would have protected Shechem had they known what he had done.

All of the men of the city did not violate Dinah; only one man had. V. 27 simply offers up their rationale for the murders and plundering that they committed.

**Genesis 34:28** They took their sheep and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field.

These are the sons of Jacob. They took all of the livestock in Shechem. The sons of Jacob are inflicted great harm upon this people. So there is no misunderstanding, this is not justified; it is just stated.

**Genesis 34:29** And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, they took captive, and plundered even all that was in the house.

These sons of Jacob appear to have taken everything. Their wives and children would have been taken as slaves. It is possible that some of the female children may later have become wives to some of Jacob's sons.

**Genesis 34:30** And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You have troubled me, to make me stink among those who live in the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites. And I, being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me, and kill me. And I will be destroyed, my house and I."

Jacob, the father, is rightly upset. These men would have been known, and possibly liked, by the other heathen in the land, and the sons of Jacob have gone in there, killed all of the males, and have taken everything that belonged to them.

However, God cannot allow him to be destroyed because there are promises that should be fulfilled. When Jacob verbally worries that he might be destroyed, he indicates that his faith in the promises of God is fairly weak.

*Leupold: the entire Pentateuch aims to set forth how God's gracious care led on the undeserving people of His choice from grace to grace.<sup>70</sup>*

**Genesis 34:31** And they said, "Should he deal with our sister as with a harlot?"

Their excuse was, "Should we allow our sister to be treated like a whore?"

The problem is, Shechem's treatment of Dinah did not justify their killing all the males of the city of Shechem; nor did it justify the enslaving of their wives and children and the taking of all their stuff.

### Closing Points to Genesis 34

1. The Bible never sugar-coats the faithlessness of Jacob or the violence committed by his sons.
2. None of what Simeon and Levi did is presented as good or as justified.
3. There are times when God will command the destruction of a nation or clan, and that is because their degeneracy reaches a crisis point. That is not what has happened here.
4. Shechem was clearly a primitive who believed that he had special privileges and standing; and that whatever mess he created, his wealthy father would buy the solution to that mess.

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<sup>70</sup> From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxv.html> accessed October 6, 2015.

## Closing Points to Genesis 34

5. Shechem acted out of lust, without thought for the future.
6. Levi and Simeon acted from their mental attitude sins, also without any thought of the future.
7. Despite their sinful behavior, God has made promises to Abraham, and He will fulfill those promises.
8. Despite David's great sins, God will fulfill His promises to the line of David, which would lead to the humanity of Jesus Christ.
9. God's blessing is a thing of grace; it is not earned or deserved.
10. Jacob will remember this incident for the rest of his life, and because of what Simeon and Levi did, would pronounce judgment upon their lines.
11. We needed to know about this incident, in order to understand Jacob's final blessing to the lines of Levi and Simeon.

When we study the life of Joseph, the younger brother to these men, their mental attitude sins will also play a prominent part in his life.

Those who try to treat Judaism and Christianity as equivalent to Islam, often say, "Yes, there is a lot of murder and mayhem in the Koran; the same is true of the Old Testament." There are some major differences here: (1) Not every incident of violence is presented as acceptable in the Old Testament. (2) Justified acts of violence against heathen in the land of Canaan are a result of their iniquity being full (that is, they have reached a point of lawlessness and immorality similar to that found in Genesis 19). (3) God carefully directed the violence against heathen peoples in the Old Testament (heathen groups were never attacked simply because they were heathen). (4) Israel lived side-by-side many heathen nations—this is how Solomon got so many heathen wives. Israel remained at peace with them as long as they did not attack Israel. David was at war with many peoples, but not without provocation. As a result, Solomon had a reign of peace.

Simeon and Levi believed that they were getting the last word, but they did not. Jacob would have the last word.

What happened as a result of this is found in Gen. 49:5–7, where Jacob is saying his last words and essentially telling these two what would happen to them: "Simeon and Levi are brothers; their knives are vicious weapons. May I never enter their council; may I never join their assembly. For in their anger they kill men, and on a whim they hamstring oxen. Their anger is cursed, for it is strong, and their fury, for it is cruel! I will disperse them throughout Jacob and scatter them throughout Israel."

These two are cruel sons. Jacob looks back to this incident, and Simeon and Levi acted in concert to inflict great harm upon this tribe. What would happen to these two tribes? Levi would become the priestly tribe, and they would never actually own land, but they would be scattered throughout Israel, living on lands that are not theirs. Simeon, quite conversely, was given a particular plot of land in the midst of Judah; and they slowly but surely lost their tribal identify. At some point in time, even though Judah remained as a



tribal and land-owning entity; Simeon no longer enjoyed this as a distinctive tribe. They appear to have been scattered throughout Judah, losing all tribal identity as well as losing their land and their distinctiveness as a tribe.

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 34:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

At least four or five of Jacob's sons will contribute to the Scriptures. Two of the contributions—this chapter and Judah's chapter (Genesis 38)—are going to be very odd indeed. What I mean by odd is, the people of the land are quite degenerate and that becomes plain as can be with Hamor and his son Shechem. The sons of Jacob do not exemplify themselves by comparison. I do not believe that God's name in any form occurs in this chapter. In Judah's chapter, God's name does occur, but in a negative way (God as a Judge imposing a sentence).

The big picture of what is to follow is, Satan is looking to corrupt the line of Jacob. He will do this in any way possible. Here, he will see if outside seed will get planted, as it were, into Jacob's family.

Genesis 34:1 [And Dinah, the daughter of Lě'ah, whom she had borne to Ya'aqob \[= Jacob\], went out to see the daughters of the land.](#)

Dinah decided that she would go out and about and chat with the other ladies of this region.

Genesis 34:2 And Shekem, son of Hamor the Hivvite, prince of the land, saw her and took her and lay with her, and humbled her.

Shechem, the son of Hamor, sees her out and about and rapes her. In the ancient world, you are not going to find a single, attractive woman wandering about by herself. When this happened to Shechem, this was more than he could bear (I am saying that he had few constraints on his behavior).

Genesis 34:3 And his being clung to Dinah the daughter of Ya'aqob, and he loved the girl and spoke kindly to the girl.

After raping Dinah, Shechem decided that he was in love with her. He speaks to her kindly and softly.

Genesis 34:4 And Shekem [= Shechem] spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Take this girl for me for a wife."

Shechem apparently takes Dinah to his compound and keeps her there, then he speaks to his father.

Shechem cannot simply go to the family of Jacob and say, "Sorry, I just raped your daughter, but let me make it up to you by marrying her." That won't work. He may not be able to suppress his natural urges, but he is smart enough to know, if he walks into Jacob's camp alone, he will die. Therefore, He gets his father involved.

Genesis 34:5 And Ya'aqob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Ya'aqob kept silent until they came.

Now Jacob is more or less alone with these two men, Hamor and Shechem. They all probably had a number of loyal slaves with them. Jacob was sorting things out in his mind. Also, it appears that his daughter, Dinah, is being kept in Hamor's compound. Let me suggest that Hamor and Shechem traveled with enough slaves and allies to make certain that this meeting was peaceful.

Genesis 34:6 And Hamor, the father of Shekem, went out to Ya'aqob to speak with him.

Hamor, the father of Shechem, speaks with Jacob directly.

Genesis 34:7 And the sons of Ya'aqob came in from the field when they heard it. And the men were grieved and very wroth, because he had done a senseless deed in Yisra'el by lying with Ya'aqob's daughter, which should not be done.

When Jacob's sons come in from the field, they are very upset by what happened.

Genesis 34:8 But H̄amor spoke with them, saying, “My son Shek̄em’s being longs for your daughter. Please give her to him for a wife.

Hamor tells Jacob how much Shechem loves his daughter (or longs for her).

Genesis 34:9–10 “And intermarry with us, give us your daughters and take our daughters for yourselves, and dwell with us, and let the land be before you. Dwell and move about in it, and have possessions in it.”

Hamor promises, “You can marry our women and we can marry yours as a result.”

Hamor also implies that the family of Jacob can move around safely within the land.

Genesis 34:11 And Shek̄em said to her father and her brothers, “Let me find favour in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I give.

Then Shechem speaks, asking to find grace in their eyes. “Whatever you want me to give, I will give it to you,” he promises.

Genesis 34:12 “Ask of me a bride price and gift ever so high, and I give according to what you say to me, but give me the girl for a wife.”

Shechem emphasizes that it does not matter how much money they want, he will provide it.

Let me suggest that most or all of this money will come from the family wealth and not from him. But that is neither here nor there.

Genesis 34:13 But the sons of Ya‘aqob̄ answered Shek̄em and H̄amor his father, and spoke with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister.

The sons of Jacob speak deceitfully with Hamor and Shechem, developing a plan.

Genesis 34:14 And they said to them, “We are not able to do this matter, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a reproach to us.

“First problem,” they explain, “is circumcision. Our sister cannot go to an uncircumcised man.”

Genesis 34:15–16 “Only on this condition would we agree to you: If you become as we are, to have every male of you circumcised, then we shall give our daughters to you, and take your daughters to us. And we shall dwell with you, and shall become one people.

The brothers give a united explanation as to what is necessary. “Everyone there must be circumcised.”

Genesis 34:17 “But if you do not listen to us and be circumcised, we shall take our daughter and go.”

“If you do not agree to this, we will take our *daughter* and go.” So Dinah is called, as the daughter of Jacob.

Genesis 34:18 And their words pleased Ḥamor and Shekem, Ḥamor’s son.

This requirement seems very doable to Hamor and Shechem.

Genesis 34:19 And the young man did not delay to do this because he delighted in Ya’aqob’s daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.

Shechem was the most respected in his family; and he is delighted in Jacob’s daughter.

Genesis 34:20–21 And Ḥamor and Shekem 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, so let them dwell in the land and move about in it. And see, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters for us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

Hamor and Shechem speak to the city, standing at the city gate. We do not know if Hamor is one major family here or *the* major family. I lean toward the latter.

Genesis 34:22 “Only on this condition would the men agree to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they are circumcised.

“Every man needs to be circumcised,” Hamor and Shechem explain.

Genesis 34:23 “Their herds and their possessions, and all their beasts, should they not be ours? Only let us agree with them, and let them dwell with us.”

Genesis 34:24 And all who went out of the gate of his city listened to Ḥamor and Shekem his son; every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.

The people who heard them at the gate saw to it that every male in their family was circumcised.

Genesis 34:25 And it came to be on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Ya’aqob [= *Jacob*], Shim’on [= *Simeon*] and Lěwi [= *Levi*], Dinah’s brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males.

On the third day, when most of the males were still suffering from being circumcised, only two men, Simeon and Levi, go into the city and they kill every male.

Genesis 34:26 And they killed Hamor and Shekem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shekem's house, and went out.

They also kill Hamor and Shechem. They rescue Dinah from Shechem's house (presumably, she has been there all of this time).

Genesis 34:27 The sons of Ya'aqob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because they had defiled their sister.

Because of what took place, Simeon and Levi also plundered the city.

Genesis 34:28–29 They took their flocks and their herds, and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field, and all their wealth. And all their little ones and their wives they took captive, and they plundered all that was in the houses.

Their animals and precious metals were taken from them. They took the women and children as slaves.

Genesis 34:30 And Ya'aqob said to Shim'on and Lēwi, "You have troubled me by making me a stench among the inhabitants of the land, among the Kena'anites and the Perizzites. And I am few in number, they shall gather themselves against me and shall strike me, and I shall be destroyed, my household and I."

Jacob is very upset by this turn of events, thinking that this would make him look bad before the people of Canaan.

Genesis 34:31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a whore?"

The sons respond with, "Should we just let our sister be treated like a whore?"

### Lesson 373: Genesis 35:1–5

### God Directs Jacob to Bethel

In the previous chapter, a man named Shechem had raped Dinah, a daughter of Leah and Jacob. As a result, Levi and Simeon, sons of Jacob, avenged her rape and killed all of the males related to Shechem; and then took all their women, children and stuff as their own.

Even though Jacob tells us a great deal, there is always interesting information about each incident which he leaves out. In this chapter, God will speak to Jacob, but we have no idea how God came to speak to Jacob. Quite often, in the past, God spoke to him through dreams.

Genesis 35:1a And God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there."

It is not clear at first just how close Genesis 34 is to Genesis 35 in time. Did Jacob's sons kill the males of Shechem and take their stuff; and God came to Jacob and said, "Here's

where I want you to move to next”? Or is this simply the next significant set of events in the lives of Jacob and his family, taking place perhaps a few years later? Let’s look at a map:

**Map of Shechem and Bethel;** from [bible-history.com](http://bible-history.com); accessed November 23, 2015 (only a portion of the map is reproduced). Bethel is about 20 miles due south of Shechem.



Logically, because these cities are so close (by our terms), God’s command to Jacob probably occurred right after the events of Genesis 34. We might surmise that Jacob, worried about the jackpot his sons had landed him in, prayed to God, saying, “My sons have killed the men of Shechem and have taken their substance. What can I do? Will the people of the land find out and kill us?” And God says to him, “**Get up and go to Bethel.**” The manner in which God spoke to Jacob is not revealed, but throughout Jacob’s section of Genesis, there always appear to be a number of unanswered questions.

I am only making an educated guess about this—that these events are close together in time and that God is responding to a prayer from Jacob. This does appear to fit together reasonably well, given the proximity of Shechem and Bethel.

So that there is no misunderstanding, the Bible does not justify what Jacob’s sons Levi and Simeon did in the previous chapter. It is possible that all of Shechem (the city) would have gathered around Shechem (the king’s first son), but the sons of Jacob used duplicity and murder instead to deal with what happened.

One thing which ought to be clear: Jacob and his sons are undeserving of God’s grace. There will be various points throughout the history of the Jewish people where it is clear, they do not deserve what God does for them or what God promises to them.

So God speaks to Jacob and tells him to move:

**Genesis 35:1** And God said to Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and live there. And make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother.”

God tells Jacob to move south, to Bethel, which is a reasonable distance away from where they were in Genesis 34. The text reads *up to Bethel* because Jacob will be going up into



the hill country of Judah (not then known as Judah). We often think of *up* as referring to going north; in the time of the Jews, *up* refers to a higher elevation.

In Genesis 34, it is clear that Jacob's sons have veered far away from the faith of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, and this is the fault of Jacob. It is the father's responsibility to take the lead in spiritual things in his family. The mother (in this case, *mothers*) may often have more interest in spiritual matters, but it is the husband who should lead.

This is to remind you of a previous encounter that Jacob had with God.

### **A Blast from Jacob's Past**

Jacob previously, because of his own bad decisions, angered his brother Esau so much, that he (Jacob) had to flee their home, so he went to Bethel. Recall this from that time:

Gen 28:10–12 **Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!**

Jacob had cheated Esau out of his blessing, and Esau was angry enough to kill him because of this. His mother, Rebekah, helped to get Jacob out of the area, saying that Jacob needed to meet a woman who is not a heathen and to marry her. So Jacob will travel to Laban's ranch (Laban is Rebekah's brother). At the same time, Rebekah kept herself from being implicated in her own scheme to defraud her husband and other son.

Jacob has barely been on the trail for a day or two, when he had the vision described above.

Gen 28:13–15 **And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth 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 promised you."**

God speaks to Jacob and makes great promises to him. However, bear in mind, none of this is deserved. Jacob is a picture of God's grace, because he clearly does not deserve what God has given him and promised him.

Gen 28:16–19 **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." So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar**

## A Blast from Jacob's Past

and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.

Jacob would certainly be inspired for short periods of time. Having God speak to him and see the angels ascend and descend certainly got Jacob's attention.

Gen 28:20–22 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house. And of all that you give me I will give a full tenth to you."

Jacob makes a vow to God about giving 10% of his income, which suggests that there were spiritual organizations that he could have given to. You may recall Abraham's meeting with Melchizedek the great priest, where Abraham gave him an offering. This would suggest that such a priesthood existed in the time of Jacob, although I do not recall there being a reference to it.

Jacob makes other vows to God, that the LORD (lit., *Y<sup>e</sup>howah*) would be his God. If you remember much of what we have studied, except when God speaks to Jacob, there is very little spiritual activity in his life.

Notice above that Jacob said, "...and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house." Bethel means *God's house* (or, more literally, *house of God*).

In any case, God wanted to take Jacob back to a place that Jacob clearly associated with God; at a time when Jacob's thinking was better. He may have been fleeing Esau due to a series of bad decisions, but this caused Jacob to focus more intently on God and God's leading.

So God tells Jacob, "Return to Bethel." Many times, we associate where we are with spiritual experiences. If you have attended a doctrinal church and have made friends with a variety of believers, and have experienced spiritual growth at such a place, then returning to that place many years later will evoke memories. In this situation, it is clear that Jacob has *moved far away from God* and has not guided his sons toward spiritual truth. So, perhaps the intention here by God is to cause Jacob to remember what he has seen and what he has said to God.

Do not become confused by this. God is not sending Jacob to Bethel so that Jacob will remember to give his 10%—giving is a privilege in the spiritual life—but so that Jacob might remember his relationship to God and act upon that.

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

There are now a whole new group of people with Jacob and his family. Remember that they have taken the children and the wives of Shechem's family. They are not to have any foreign gods; no statuettes or religious symbols.

There are those in Jacob's own family who may have various heathen religious items (recall that Rachel stole some religious figurines from her father).

Remember that God has already appeared to Jacob and angels have appeared to Jacob; and that Jacob has made great promises to God—promises which he has apparently not kept. When God speaks to him again, Jacob is reminded of his own shortcomings.

We know very little of the religious practices of the family of Abraham. Abraham certainly built more altars than Jacob did; and in more places. Abraham appeared to have a much closer relationship with God, which is confirmed in Scripture. Abraham is called *the friend of God*; Jacob is renamed Israel (on two occasions).

Jacob realizes that he needs to clean up his act here, and anything which is related to heathenistic religious practices must be removed from his family. It seems likely that this change of heart is based upon what his sons did in Shechem. Jacob may recognize, to a limited degree, that he has not properly guided or instructed his sons.

**Genesis 35:3** And 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 was with me in the way which I went."

Jacob tells them about the God Who answered him, in a time of difficulty. I would assume that Jacob went into more detail about this encounter.

God having talked to Jacob along with the idea of going back to Bethel has Jacob speaking to his family about to God to whom they are related. His sons knew something about this relationship—they were all circumcised—but they did not appear to know much more than that.

God has answered Jacob on several occasions when he was in distress. The way Genesis 34 ended is only one example of this.

**Genesis 35:4** And they gave all the strange gods which were in their hands to Jacob, and the earrings in their ears. And Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.

Interestingly enough, their earrings appear to have some religious significance. Their strange gods would have been figurines and the like that they worshiped (not unlike our statuettes of Mary). Jacob hides these things. The mention of Shechem here further confirms that they are living in Shechem now, and God has appeared to Jacob immediately after Genesis 34 in order to give Jacob some guidance.

In our culture, for the most part, earrings are simply jewelry. For that reason, there is no religious significance to them.

Also note the concept of authority here. God speaks to Jacob and then Jacob communicates to his family. We already know that Jacob is no spiritual giant, and yet God continues to work through him. God does not appear to the entire family of Jacob, and give them all instructions—God appears to the one in charge, and then allows Jacob take it from there.

**Genesis 35:5** And they moved. And the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.

The terror of God is on the cities nearby, so no one attacked this family. This fear is apparently of God, done in order to protect the family of Jacob.

What seems to be likely is, the cold-blooded nature of what the sons of Israel did to Hamor and his family made other groups of people decide not to mess with them. The end result would be fear, and no one would be interested in their families intermarrying and thus confusing the God-given identity of the Jews.

People have reputations, and sometimes, these reputations are not based upon a clear understanding of the facts. Here, we are told that the terror of God was upon the cities in Jacob's vicinity. You may think, *well, of course, because Jacob's sons killed Hamor and his family*. But that is not the only response that these cities could have.

King David was very successful militarily. However, his armies continued to fight the cities around Israel almost every single year for the bulk of his kingship. The armies which David faced were not so filled with fear as to back away from David; these people continued to be aggressive, even though they were certainly aware the David's army had just defeated many of their neighbors in battle. My point here is, even though Jacob's sons killed Hamor and his family, the terror of God felt by the people in nearby cities is not the only possible response to this knowledge.

Just as we do not know exactly how God appeared to Jacob; we also do not know much about the terror of God experienced by the cities near to Shechem and Bethel. It seems obvious that these other cities nearby would have heard about the slaughter of Hamor by Jacob and that their response was fear. Exactly how this was of God (as v. 5 tells us) is not completely clear.

## **Lesson 374: Genesis 35:6–7**

## **The City of Bethel**

**Genesis 35:6** And Jacob came to Luz in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people with him.

Bethel means *House of God*, and we find this name affixed to this area as early as Genesis 12:8 13:3. This does not mean that it had this name during the time of Abraham; but that was added or changed perhaps a few hundred years later for clarity (I am

assuming that Abraham himself originally *recorded* Genesis 12–13). Let's take a look at these previous verses:

Gen. 12:8 reads: From there he [Abraham] moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.

Genesis 13:3–4 read: And he journeyed on from the Negeb as far as Bethel to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, to the place where he had made an altar at the first. And there Abram called upon the name of the LORD. (ESV)

So, what appears to be the case is, these verses were first recorded using the name *Luz*, and that someone, after the fact, replaced *Luz* with *Bethel*. Abraham would have known this place by the name *Luz*; Jacob knew it as *Bethel*, as he gave it that name in Genesis 28:19 (He [Jacob] called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.). I see this as the most logical and simple explanation.

It would not make sense for this city to be known as *Bethel* during the time of Abraham, because *Bethel* is made up of two very common and oft-used Hebrew words.

Genesis 35:7 And he built an altar there and called the place El-bethel, because God appeared to him there when he fled from the face of his brother.

I do not fully understand why Jacob calls this place El-Bethel (= *God of the House of God*) as opposed to plain *Bethel*. Perhaps with this new group of people who are with him, Jacob is making emphatic his meeting with God in this place.

Jacob was actually the person who named this (although it is not out of the question that Abraham named this city before<sup>71</sup>—we just do not have a record of that). Here, Jacob is naming this place a second time.

The complete **Doctrine of Bethel** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

### A Summary of the Doctrine of the City of Bethel

1. Bethel is a city located in central Israel, west of the Jordan, on the border of Benjamin and Ephraim. The name, *Bethel*, means *House of God*. Jerusalem is the only city mentioned more often in Scripture than Bethel. One might even see Bethel is being representative of all Israel.
2. Bethel is close associated with the patriarchs and with the appearance of God to them.
3. Bethel, known as Luz around the time of Abraham, began as a city of great spiritual import. This appears to be the first city in the land of Canaan where Abraham stopped after separating from his family in Haran. He moved westward

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<sup>71</sup> I don't believe that Abraham did name it; but I am throwing this out there in the realm of possibility.

## A Summary of the Doctrine of the City of Bethel

with his nephew Lot and wife Sarai; and Jehovah appeared to Abram in this general vicinity. Abram built an altar to Jehovah with Bethel to the west and Ai to the east. Genesis 12:4–8 (Even though it is called Bethel in Genesis 12 and 13, that appears to be a gloss—to be explained in point 6.)

4. After traveling down to Egypt, Abram returned to the land of Canaan and Bethel, where he and Lot separated. Jehovah again appears to Abram and promises him and his descendants all the land that he could see in all directions. Genesis 13
5. Jacob, Abraham's grandson, has a dream about the ladder or staircase which extends from earth to heaven; and God promises Jacob that his descendants would settle lands in all directions and that by his descendants will all the earth be blessed (which is somewhat upping the ante on the similar promise made to Abraham). Jacob builds a pillar here and he calls this place Bethel, although it had been named Luz previously. Jacob says, "[This is the House of Elohim and this is the gate of heaven.](#)" Genesis 28:10–22
6. When the name *Bethel* is found prior to this in Genesis, that is known as a gloss. A gloss is either a short addition to the original text is made (for clarification); or a name is changed (giving a more modern-name when an ancient name would have been expected). So, in passages about Abraham being in Bethel (like Genesis 12:8), we would expect *Luz* (the more ancient name), but it is replaced with the proper noun *Bethel*.
  - a. Remember that it is very possible for much (or all) of Genesis to have been transmitted orally; and that each generation would memorize what the previous generation added.
  - b. It would make sense, when Joseph learned the book of Genesis from Jacob, to say, "Luz?" and for Jacob to say, "That's *Bethel*."
  - c. Therefore, sometimes, we read the name *Bethel* and sometimes we read *Bethel (which was previously named Luz)*.
  - d. Calling this city *Bethel* in Genesis 12–13 was shorthand for, *Luz, a city which would be renamed "Bethel" by Jacob*.
  - e. Note Genesis 48:3 [And Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me,..."](#) Since that is a direct quote, we would expect whatever Jacob said to stand without being changed. This would also suggest that it is Jacob who changed the name of this city, as he called it Luz.
  - f. See also Genesis 35:6 Judges 1:23.

**The Journeys of Jacob** (a map); from [Bible-history.com](http://Bible-history.com); accessed December 22, 2015.



## A Summary of the Doctrine of the City of Bethel

7. Jacob travels to the east, where his relatives are, and marries Rachel and her sister Leah, and works for their father Laban. When God appears to Jacob again in a dream, He says, "I am the God of Bethel." This is because, that is where God first spoke to Jacob. And God tells Jacob to return to the land of Canaan. Genesis 31:13
8. Jacob leaves this area but he returns on at least two occasions. It is God Who tells Jacob to return to Bethel (Genesis 35:1). Jacob moves there and calls the place El-bethel (it is apparently still known as Luz to the locals). God again speaks to Jacob in Bethel and renames him *Israel* and God confirms His promises which He had made to Abraham—and, in fact, makes a greater promise to Jacob. Genesis 35:9–13
9. For the patriarchs Abraham and Jacob, the city of Bethel is most closely associated with their spiritual birth, their spiritual growth and God's promises to them. No other city in the land of Canaan is as closely associated with God and these men.
10. It is unclear whether Joshua conquered Bethel when he went into the land of Canaan, Joshua 8:17 and 12:9 notwithstanding (there are textual problems with those passages). However, Bethel was clearly conquered by Ephraim (and probably the half tribe of Manasseh) at a later time (Judges 1:22–26). As an aside, it is not impossible for a territory to be conquered, taken back, and then re-conquered.
11. For awhile, the spiritual center of Israel appears to be in Bethel. Although the Tabernacle is not specifically named, the Ark of the Covenant and the High Priest Phinehas are both said to be in Bethel. See Judges 20:18, 26–28
12. Even though the House of God is later located in Shiloh (from early on in the



## A Summary of the Doctrine of the City of Bethel

- period of the Judges through to the time of Samuel), Bethel continues to be a city of some spiritual import (Judges 18:31 1Sam. 1:3 10:3).
13. Bethel, like Israel, progressed from being a spiritual center to a city of idolatry.
  14. Bethel is not mentioned during the reigns of David or Solomon. However, the first king of the northern kingdom, Jeroboam, sets up a golden calf in Bethel, in the southern tip of his country, primarily to keep his own people from going to Jerusalem (in the southern kingdom) to worship. 1Kings 12:28–32
  15. Elijah and Elisha both minister to the northern kingdom, and are therefore occasionally associated with Bethel, which continued to be a city of idolatry. 2Kings 2:2–3 23–24
  16. Because Bethel is representative of all that is wrong with the northern kingdom (primarily, their worship of another god), both Amos and Hosea prophesy against Bethel and foretell its ruin. Hosea occasionally refers to Bethel as *Beth-aven*, which means *House of Idols*, *House of Nothing*. Hosea 4:15–16 5:8–9 10:5–6, 15 12:4 Amos 3:14 4:4 5:5–6 7:10, 13
  17. Although King Jehu, a hundred years after Jeroboam, destroyed the prophets and worshipers of Baal, he allowed the calves that Jeroboam set up to remain in Bethel and Dan. 2Kings 10:18–29
  18. After the northern kingdom is defeated in war, and the people of Samaria deported, the king of Assyria sent back some priests to Bethel to teach the people about the god of that land, as lions were killing much of the population that had been moved to there. 2Kings 17:23–29
  19. Jeremiah warned that Bethel would be the shame of Israel (Jer. 48:13).
  20. King Josiah, of the southern kingdom, instituted many reforms. The temple and vessels involved in Baal worship were burned in Jerusalem and their ashes carried up to Bethel (2Kings 23:4). Josiah also destroyed the heathen altar which was in Bethel (2Kings 23:15). Apparently, the golden calf was long gone, which we would have expected, as Samaria (= the Northern Kingdom) had been defeated and deported. No invading army is just going to leave a golden calf behind. There was apparently still a monument by the grave of the prophet who had gone to Bethel, and Josiah said to leave it alone (2Kings 23:17–18). Then Josiah goes throughout Samaria and destroys the idolatrous worship and kills and burns the priests involved in this worship, just as he had done in Bethel (2Kings 23:19–20).
  21. Bethel is not mentioned in the gospels or anywhere else in the New Testament, even though it would seem the Jesus Christ must have been there, as Bethel is so centrally located (it is between Galilee, where Jesus conducted much of His public ministry) and Jerusalem, where Jesus went on numerous occasions.
  22. For centuries, it has been assumed that the modern Beitin marked the spot of the ancient Bethel. However, Dr. David Livingston has presented a great deal of evidence to the contrary, suggesting that el-Bireh is the proper site. See <http://www.ancientdays.net/bethel14.htm> to support this view.
  23. General archeological information spanning several millenniums for the traditional site of Beitin may be found at

## A Summary of the Doctrine of the City of Bethel

<http://www.ourfatherlutheran.net/biblehomelands/palestine/bethel.htm>.

Even though this may appear to be a very long summary, the actual doctrine is in excess of 10 pages.

### Lesson 375: Genesis 35:1–15

### Chronological considerations

We have already studied these first 7 verses, but below is the ESV with the words *and so* inserted whenever there is a wâw consecutive followed by an imperfect verb. A series of wâw consecutives with imperfect verbs usually indicates a series of chronological events.

Gen 35:1 [And so] God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

Logically, these events take place right after Simeon and Levi have killed off Hamor and his descendants. This is because Bethel is not too far from the city of Shechem.

Gen 35:2–3 [And] So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and [so] has been with me wherever I have gone."

Bethel is the city most closely associated with God at this time. In the destruction of Shechem, the sons of Jacob took many slaves from their women and children (and possibly wives). They would have been worshipers of false gods.

Gen 35:4 [And] So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. [And so] Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

The false gods are left behind in Shechem. This is another indication that Genesis 35 follows immediately after Genesis 34.

Gen 35:5–7 And [so] as they journeyed, a terror from God fell upon the cities that were around them, so that they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. And [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 [so] there he built an altar and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed himself to him when he fled from his brother.

People can react in a variety of ways to events which take place. The people of that region reacted with fear to the destruction of Shechem by Jacob's family. Somehow, God is involved in this (because the text tells us this), but it is not clear exactly how.

Jacob often recorded material without giving us a full background of that material.

**Genesis 35:8a** But [= *and so*] Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died,...

Deborah has never been mentioned before. We do know that many of the women from the east had personal servants. However, nothing is said here about Isaac or Rebekah. Isaac appears to still be alive (Genesis 35:27), but all of the context is related to Jacob and his family.

This verse suggests that Deborah has been with Jacob all of this time. A mention of Deborah here in this context in this time frame suggests that she was probably sent by Rebekah 20+ years ago to accompany Jacob. It was the least that she could do, given that Jacob's deception was all Rebekah's idea.

Deborah would have had some memory of their relatives to the east, and what the lay of the land was. She would have made this trip one time with her mistress, Rebekah. Therefore, it would make sense for her to be there with Jacob to help him get to the land of Laban.

Her presence has not been mentioned until now, but that does not mean she has not been with Jacob all of this time.

**Genesis 35:8** But [= *and so*] Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried beneath Bethel, under an oak. And the name of it was called Oak of Weeping.

Deborah could have been very much a second mother to Jacob. Having a personal servant, or even several, was not unusual in the ancient world. You may recall that each of Jacob's wives was given a personal servant (which servants were later impregnated by Jacob at the behest of his wives).

Deborah is the first of 3 deaths in this chapter.

**Genesis 35:9** And [so] God appeared to Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram and blessed him.

There are two possibilities here: (1) this could refer back to the wrestling match between the Lord Jesus Christ and Jacob. Or (2) this is a new appearance of God to Jacob in Bethel. The use of the wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs suggests this continues the chronological order. However, when the subject changes (here, God is the subject of the verb) and a qualifiers is added (*when he came out of Paddan-aram*), that can break up the general chronological order of the passage.

What suggests that the latter understanding is accurate is, this narrative continues, where God continues speaking to Jacob, saying some things which were not recorded before. Then God leaves Jacob and then the chronology continues, very naturally, as if this were a new appearance of God to Jacob *after* returning to Bethel. Therefore, I would

understand this to be a new appearance of God to Jacob upon his return to Bethel, as God had directed him in Genesis 35:1.

**Genesis 35:9** And [so] God appeared to Jacob again when he came out of Padan-aram and blessed him.

Although the translation above (which I believe is the MKJV) is quite accurate, the number of appearances is difficult to ascertain. In this passage, we have the word *ʿôwd* (וּדַע) [pronounced *gohd*], which means *still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to*. Strong's #5750 BDB #728. An appearance of God takes place in v. 7 (referring back to when Jacob was fleeing Esau); so, taking the construction of this verse along with this particular adverb, we may first assume that this is *another* appearance by God to Jacob, different from v. 7. God appeared to Jacob before in Bethel and now God is appearing to Jacob *again* in Bethel.

The number of times that God appears to Jacob is rather remarkable, because Jacob is no spiritual giant. Jacob has a mixed track record as a man born-of-God (for which I am thankful, having a mixed track record myself).

**Genesis 35:10** And [so] God said to him, “Your name is Jacob. Your name will not be called Jacob any more, but Israel will be your name.” And He called his name Israel.

God renames Jacob. *Israel* means *God prevails; contender; soldier of God*. Right now, this name applies strictly to Jacob; 400 or so years from now, this name will become the proper name of the Jewish people and the Jewish nation.

It is interesting. Why isn't *Israel*, the nation, called *Abraham*? Let me suggest that the key to this is grace. God is certainly gracious to Abraham and his life—there is no question about that. But, it would be easy to point to Abraham, who lived a life 1000x better than I have lived my life, and understand why God blessed him and called a nation after him. But, it is much harder to look at Jacob and his life and say, “No wonder God gave the name *Israel* to him. He deserved it!” Instead, you examine Jacob and his life and think, “God made the nation *Israel* from this man? And from these worthless sons?” God is gracious, and Jacob is a prime example of God's graciousness.

**Genesis 35:10** And [so] God said to him, “Your name is Jacob. Your name will not be called Jacob any more, but Israel will be your name.” And He called his name Israel.

Bear in mind that God has renamed Jacob previously, in Genesis 32:28, when He wrestled with Jacob the night before he met up with Esau. However, it did not appear to stick, and Jacob has not really embraced his spiritual leadership position.

**Application:** Not every believer embraces God's plan for his life. God gives us a plan, a destiny, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (these things, R. B. Thieme, Jr. called *the portfolio of invisible assets*), but it is up to us to apprehend what God has given us.



I wonder if there is something to this: Jacob names Bethel twice; and God names Jacob twice. I may have to think about that. Might not mean anything.

**Genesis 35:11** And [so] God said to him, “I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations will be from you, and kings will come out of your loins.

A *company* is the masculine singular construct of qâhâl (קהל) [pronounced *kaw-HAWL*], which means, *an organized assembly, a called convocation*; this is not just a crowd, but people who were assembled for a reason. When it is affixed to *nations*, it is unclear as to the number being implied here. From Jacob would come Israel; then there would be Israel and Judæa; then Judah; and today, the modern Israel. In the future, there will be regathered Israel (regathered by God, not by man).

Unlike Abraham and Isaac, Jacob would not be the father of many groups of Arabs. All of his children would be Jews.

**Genesis 35:12** And the land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and to your seed after you I will give the land.”

God has already described the land that He would give to Abraham; and this land is also promised to Jacob.

**Genesis 35:13** And [so] God went up from him in the place where He talked with him.

God was speaking to Jacob in Bethel; and now He has left.

What appears to be the case, based in part upon the wâw consecutives followed by imperfect verbs, is that God first appears to Jacob in Shechem and tells him to go to Bethel (a city with spiritual implications) and that God appears to Jacob once again in Bethel and again calls Jacob *Israel*.

Quite frankly, I don't know how important this is; but I tend to be a stickler for details, when these details are actually found in the Word of God.

**Genesis 35:14** And [so] Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone. And [so] he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.

We are still in Bethel. Jacob named this Bethel before, and now he will call it Bethel again.

**Genesis 35:15** And [so] Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

Again, Bethel is *House of God*.

Jacob also named this place *House of God* when traveling in the other direction, to leave Canaan for Paddan-aram.



The times which God appeared to Jacob will be given next time.

**Lesson 376: Genesis 28, 31, 32, 35, 46**

**God's 6 Appearances to Jacob**

We have been studying Genesis 35, and God guided Jacob and his family back to Bethel and then God appeared to Jacob once again in Bethel. When studying Genesis, I am not at all surprised at God appearing to Abraham many times. However, it indeed surprises me how many times God appeared to Jacob, who is clearly no spiritual giant. Given what we know about the patriarchs, we might have supposed that God might have avoided meeting Jacob altogether.

This ought to give all of us a great deal of confidence in the grace of God. The faith that Abraham revealed is difficult for me to relate to. The cynicism and self-centeredness of Jacob—well, quite frankly, that is more my speed. Yet God still worked with Jacob and God blessed him; despite the fact that Jacob never seemed to get fully onboard with God's program. He had good days and perhaps even some good weeks and months; but so much of what we have studied (and will study) indicates Jacob was mostly concerned about himself.

Translation is *A Voice in the Wilderness*. Quotation marks added.

As has been noted before, Jacob's biography, although quite extensive, does not fully explain each life experience.

**God's 6 Appearances to Jacob**

<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Text/Commentary</b>
(1) Jacob first meets God in Luz (Bethel), while on his way out of Canaan. He was aware of the spiritual inheritance promised to his father and grandfather, but he clearly did not have a full understanding of it.	
Gen 28:10–11 <i>And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went toward Haran. And 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.</i>	Jacob here is on the run from Esau. His cover story is, he is going to Paddan-aram to find a wife, but the real problem is, Esau wants to kill him because he had cheated Esau.  This first appearance occurs while Jacob is moving to Paddan-aram.
Gen 28:12 <i>And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to the heavens; and behold the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.</i>	The first thing that Jacob sees in his dream are angels traveling between heaven and earth. This angelic travel is a common thread running through Scripture.

## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>Gen 28:13–15 And behold, Jehovah stood above it and said: “I am Jehovah the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you are lying I give to you and your seed. And your seed 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 am not forsaking you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”</p>	<p>God identifies Himself to Jacob and reiterates a promise previously made to Abraham and to Isaac.</p> <p>God adds that Jacob’s seed would be scattered throughout the earth. The implication here appears to be more than Jacob just occupying a great deal of land.</p> <p>God promises to bring Jacob back to the Land of Promise.</p>
<p>There is an interesting parallel here. Abraham was led into the land, and Isaac was kept in the land. However, God allowed Jacob to leave the Land of Promise and then return many years later. This would happen to the people of Israel as well. Now, note the promise that God makes to Jacob above. God tells Jacob that his descendants would be spread abroad into other countries in other places. This would be an appropriate promise for Jacob, as he is leaving the land as well.</p>	
<p>Gen 28:16–17 And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not realize 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!”</p>	<p>Jacob, when he wakes up, is quite amazed at his experience. Because of the angels and the sight of God, Jacob designates this place at the gate of heaven.</p>
<p>Gen 28:18–19 And Jacob arose 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 formerly been Luz.</p>	<p>Jacob names this place <i>Bethel</i>, which means <i>House of God</i>. He will name this place <i>Bethel</i> again 20+ years later.</p>
<p>(2)</p>	<p>Jacob has spent 20 years in Paddan-aram working for his Uncle Laban, and God directs him to return to Canaan.</p>

## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>Gen 31:1–2 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 behold, it was not toward him as before.</p>	<p>This is about year 19 or 20 for Jacob living and working in Paddan-aram. Since Laban began to pay Jacob, Laban and his sons were unhappy with the end results. They believed Jacob was enjoying too much profit.</p>
<p>Gen 31:3 And Jehovah said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."</p>	<p>The means by which God speaks to Jacob is possibly given to us later.</p> <p>Ultimately, it is God Who will determine when Jacob returns to Israel just as it is God who determines when the Jews are to be regathered to Israel.</p>
<p>Gen 31:4–5 So Jacob sent and summoned Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, and said to them, "I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father has been with me.</p>	<p>Jacob confers with his wives regarding his next move. God has told Jacob to return to the Land of Promise; so he now presents this to his wives.</p>
<p>Gen 31:6–9 And you know that with all my strength I have served your father. Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God has not allowed him to do evil to me.</p>	<p>This is a summary of what has been happening over a period of several years. Jacob is providing a rationale for leaving, and his wives are aware of how their father has treated Jacob.</p>
<p>Gen 31:6–9 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.</p>	<p>Jacob complains about the treatment from his father-in-law. He recognizes that God provided him with the increase. This is Jacob speaking in retrospect, and he does not credit his own goofy scheme for producing the kinds of offspring which would belong to him. Jacob understands this because God told him that is what has been happening (vv. 12–13).</p>
<p>Gen 31:10 And it happened, at the time when the flocks were in heat, that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which mounted the flocks were streaked, speckled, and spotted.</p>	<p>This is probably the dream referenced in v. 3. The dream is presented in much more detail in vv. 10–13. The subject matter seems quite different until we get to the final sentence.</p>

## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Gen 31:11 And the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here am I.'	What we read here appears to be a more detailed view of Genesis 31:3.
Gen 31:12–13 And He said, 'Lift up your eyes now and see, all the rams which mount the flocks are streaked, speckled, and 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 vowed a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your kindred.' ”	God tells Jacob that He has overseen the breeding of the sheep on Jacob's behalf. God has not allowed Laban to cheat Jacob. He identifies Himself and tells Jacob to return to the Land of Promise.
(3) Jacob sees the angels and then wrestles with God in Mahanaim. God renames Jacob <i>Israel</i> . This is the night before he meets up with his brother Esau again.	
Gen 32:1–2 So Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, “This is the camp of God. And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.” <i>Mahanaim</i> means <i>two camps</i> .	Jacob here has left Paddan-aram, but he is about to meet Esau, whom he had done wrong to 20 years previous. It is interesting that Jacob encounters angels at least twice. Here, there is no reason to understand this as a reference to God.
Gen 32:22–23 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two maidservants, 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.	This and the next chapter are somewhat confusing because, in one chapter, he appears to be hiding his wives and children on one side of the river; but in the next, he is with his wives when approach Esau.
Gen 32:24–25 And Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the dawn began to rise. And 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.	Jacob is continually at odds with various people (Esau and Laban), as well as with God. Jacob's life has been wrestling against God, and he refused to bend his will to God as his grandfather Abraham had.  Jacob appears to change his mind about where his wives are relative to him after this wrestling match.

## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Gen 32:26 And He said, "Let Me go, for the dawn has risen." But he said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!"	<p>Jacob here holds God to His promises, despite his seemingly constant struggle against God.</p> <p>The wrestling match is real; but it represents what Jacob has been doing all of his life with regards to God.</p>
Gen 32:27–28 And He said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have persevered with God and with men, and have prevailed."	<p>We as believers in Christ, despite our many setbacks, are also encouraged by God to hold God to His promises to us. God can be held to His promises no matter how many times we fail Him.</p>
Gen 32:29–30 And Jacob asked, saying, "Please tell me Your name." 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 Penuel: "For I have seen God face to face, and my soul is delivered."	<p>Perhaps God is saying to Jacob, "You have been wrestling against Me all of your life, and you don't know Who I am?"</p> <p><i>Penuel</i> means <i>the face of God</i>. Jacob knew that he had been wrestling with God.</p>
(4) After Jacob's sons kill the men of Shechem, God directs Jacob to go south to Bethel.	
Gen 35:1 And God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to the Mighty God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."	<p>God associates Jacob fleeing Shechem to his fleeing from his brother Esau.</p>
Gen 35:2–3 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. Let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to the Mighty God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone."	<p>Recall that when Jacob left the Land of Promise, 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 return to my father's house in peace, then Jehovah shall be my God."</p>

## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>Gen 35:4 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.</p>	<p>Two of Jacob's sons killed all the men of a village (due to one of them raping their sister) and they took captive all of their women and children. This means that those women would have various figurines that they would worship.</p> <p>Throughout the Old and New Testaments, the Bible is very specific about the God we worship. He is never presented as generic. <b>Nowhere</b> in the Bible do we find the verse: "You worship your God, I worship my God; it's all good; they are the same God."</p>
<p>Gen 35:5 And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.</p>	<p>The people of the land feared Jacob and his family, which gave Jacob safe passage in the land.</p>
<p>Gen 35:6–7 So Jacob came to Luz (which is Bethel), in the land of Canaan, he and all the people with him. And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from the face of his brother.</p>	<p>Jacob would offer up an animal sacrifice on the altar and he would explain his relationship to God and his grandfather's relationship to God. This was how some people received the gospel in this era.</p> <p><i>El-Bethel means God of the House of God.</i></p>
<p>(5) God again appears to Jacob in Bethel.</p>	
<p>Gen 35:9–10 And God appeared to Jacob again, when he came out of Paddan, 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." And He called his name Israel.</p>	<p>God reiterates His promises to Jacob; promises originally made to Abraham.</p> <p>God again changes Jacob's name to <i>Israel</i>.</p>



## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>Gen 35:11–12 God also 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 forth from your loins. The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your seed after you I give this land.”</p>	<p>God first tells Jacob to go to Bethel and then He speaks to Jacob in Bethel, a separate appearance. This is somewhat tricky and has already been discussed.</p> <p>There would be several nations which came from the Jewish people (Israel, Samaria, Judah, Judæa, Modern Israel and future Israel).</p>
<p>Gen 35:13 And God ascended from him in the place where He had spoken with him.</p>	<p>This verse in particular suggests that this is another appearance made by God to Jacob.</p> <p>Unlike most of the times that God speaks to Jacob in dreams, this appears to be face to face, as God ascends from him.</p>
<p>Gen 35:14–15 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken 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 had spoken with him, Bethel.</p>	<p>Jacob then honors God, memorializing the fact that God spoke with him there.</p>
<p>(6) God appears to Jacob in Beersheba, allowing him to move to Egypt during the famine.</p>	
<p>Gen 46:1–2 So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba. And he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. And God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and called out, “Jacob! Jacob!” And he said, “Here am I.”</p>	<p>This next appearance comes sometime later, with a lot of narrative concerning Joseph coming in between.</p> <p>Beersheba is in the southern desert of Canaan (called the Negev).</p>
<p>Gen 46:3–4 And He said, “I am the Mighty God, the God of your fathers. Do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. I will go down with you into Egypt, and I will arise to bring you back. And Joseph shall put his hand on your eyes.”</p>	<p>Jacob again is being guided by God out of the Land of Promise once again; but with assurances that God would bring him back.</p> <p>Joseph putting his hand on Jacob's eyes suggests that he will close Jacob's eyes after he dies.</p>

## God's 6 Appearances to Jacob

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Gen 46:5–6 And Jacob arose from Beer-sheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. So they took their livestock and their possessions which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his seed with him.	<p>Leaving the land of promise, particularly so late in life, was difficult for Jacob. However, Joseph sent a limousine to pick him up.</p> <p>At God's direction, Jacob responds by going down to Egypt from Beer-sheba.</p>

I believe this to be an accurate recounting of Jacob's meetings with God.

The people of Israel were removed from the land under the 5<sup>th</sup> Stage of National Discipline in 586 B.C.; and they returned 70 years later. Then, the Jews were removed from the Land of Promise in A.D. 70, for a much longer period of time. Although some Jews have gathered in Israel today, this is not the regathering which God has promised them (Isa. 11:10–12 Jer. 30:3–4 Ezek. 36:22–28 37:12 38:8).

Interestingly enough, Jacob's life parallels these exiles. He leaves the land for a period of time (20 years) because of his problems with Esau; and then, he returns to the land. Then again, as the head of a family, he will lead his family out of Israel to Egypt during the famine. The people of Israel will not return for another 400 years, when Moses leads them out of Egypt. We will set up the parallels in a doctrinal table.

**Lesson 377: Genesis 35:16–18**

**Benjamin as a Type of Christ**

**A Map of Jacob's Travels from Paddan-Aram to Bethel (and Beyond);** from [Reading Through the Bible](#); accessed July 14, 2015. The lime green line would be Esau coming up to meet Jacob. The red line is Jacob coming down from Paddan-aram (way off the map to the northeast). Jacob's movement corresponds with the order and chronology of Genesis.



The map shows us where Jacob travels, having left Paddan-aram (he is the red line); and later to Bethel, where God names him *Israel* once again and gave him a very remarkable blessing. The green line is his brother Esau coming up to meet him at the Jabbok River.

Upon Jacob's return to the Land of Promise, God has appeared to him in Mahanaim (as the One Who wrestled with him and renamed him *Israel*); in Shechem (telling him to go down to Bethel); and again in Bethel. All of God appearances to Jacob have already been studied.

At some point, Esau would join up with Jacob, west of the Jordan and they would live in close proximity for a time. This probably took place after Isaac died (Isaac's death will be recorded in this chapter).

**Genesis 35:16** Then [= *and so*] they journeyed from Bethel. When [= *and so*] they were still some distance from Ephrath, [*and so*] Rachel went into labor, and [*so*] she had hard labor. (ESV; *and so's* inserted)

As is found throughout Jacob's writings (or section of Genesis), we have no idea why he is leaving Bethel and moving to Bethlehem-ephrath. There are a lot of details that Jacob tends to leave out.

Here, Rachel is pregnant for the second time, and this is apparently a difficult pregnancy.

Recall that Rachel did not give birth at first; and she even designated her personal maid as her surrogate (Genesis 30:1–8). After her personal maid gave birth, Rachel later became pregnant with Joseph (Genesis 30:22–25). This was the time that Jacob became to talk about leaving Laban's ranch.

If all of this is in roughly chronological order, then fewer than 17 years have passed since Jacob and company left Laban's ranch (Genesis 37:2). Doing the math, Reuben would have been around 26 or 27 in Genesis 37, so the sons of Jacob in the time that we are studying them are in their teens and early 20's.

**Genesis 35:17** And it happened when she was in hard labor in her bearing, the midwife said to her, "Do not fear, you will have this son also."

Rachel is being encouraged in this birth, which further suggests that the birth is difficult.

**Genesis 35:18** And it happened as her soul was departing (for she died) that she called his name Benoni. But his father called him Benjamin.

*Benoni* means *son of my sorrow*. Delivery was quite painful and Rachel died from giving birth.



Jacob changes the name slightly—perhaps not wanting to remember the death of lovely Rachel every time he called his son by name—so he names his son Benjamin, which means *Yah [Jehovah] has built up*.

God made some tremendous promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and now, it appears that He is going to fulfill these promises, as Jacob has a very large family with so many sons—a family which God has built up.

Benjamin is a **type** of Christ. He emphasizes the two natures of Jesus Christ, human and divine.

Benjamin is a Type of Christ	
The Historical Narrative	Jesus Christ and His Death
Rachel suffers hard labor and dies. Genesis 35:16–18	Jesus Christ faces excruciating pain and suffering, and then pays for our sins on the cross, after which He dies physically.
From her death comes life (Benjamin is born). Genesis 35:18	For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (1Thess. 5:9–10; ESV)
Benjamin is born on the way to Bethlehem. Genesis 35:19	Jesus is born in Bethlehem. Matt. 2:1.
Benjamin is born, his mother dies; his birth is associated with death. Genesis 35:17–19	King Herod, upon hearing of the birth of the <i>King of the Jews</i> , made attempts to locate this child to kill him. In this, Jesus' birth was associated with death. Matt. 2:1–8, 12–15
Benjamin is first named <i>Benoni</i> by his mother, which name means a <i>son of my sorrow</i> . Genesis 35:18	Jesus Christ is the Suffering Servant in Isa. 53. <b>He was...a man of sorrows</b> (Isa. 53:3). See also Matt. 26:38.
The mother names Benjamin. The name she gives him emphasizes his weakness. His mother dies, a sign of his mortality. Genesis 35:18	Mary is the mother of Jesus' humanity. Jesus Christ is fully human. In this, He is just like us (but without a sin nature).
Benjamin is renamed <i>Benjamin</i> by his father, which means, <i>the son of my right hand, the son of my strength (power)</i> . Jacob continues to live, a type of God the Father. Benjamin is a type of God the Son. Genesis 35:18	Jesus Christ is the Son on God's right hand ( <b>Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.</b> —Luke 22:69; KJV).

## Benjamin is a Type of Christ

The Historical Narrative	Jesus Christ and His Death
The father names Benjamin; the name emphasizes his strength. Genesis 35:18	Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
From his mother came Benjamin's weakness; from his father came his strength. Genesis 35:17-19	Jesus is fully human, from His mother; and undiminished Deity from His Father.
Rachel says that she will die if she does not bear another son to Jacob. Genesis 30:1	We would be lost (suffer death and separation from God), without Jesus Christ.
Rachel dies, that her son might live. Genesis 35:18	Jesus Christ must die that we will live. Rom. 5:6 <b>For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.</b>
Jacob will erect a pillar over her grave, which pillar is still there at the time this gloss was added, which is perhaps 500 years later (Joshua would have added this fact). Genesis 35:20	A pillar is a memorial to one's death. Our pillar in the Church Age is the Eucharist, where we remember our Lord in the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup.
Obviously, from the human point-of-view, Benjamin must be included in this narrative, as he is the 12 <sup>th</sup> son of Jacob. However, he is included in this chapter by God the Holy Spirit because he is a type of Christ.	
A related topic here is <b>Typology</b> ( <a href="#">HTML</a> ) ( <a href="#">PDF</a> ) ( <a href="#">WPD</a> ). This is one of the truly amazing topics of Scripture.	

Speaking of Typology, Jacob (or *Israel, the man*) is a type of *Israel, the nation*. Don't forget that God renamed *Jacob, Israel*.

## The Parallels Between Jacob the Man and Israel the Nation

Jacob	Nation Israel
Jacob is born with clear advantages. His father is related to the True God and his father is quite wealthy.	The nation Israel begins with clear advantages. They begin as a nation being led by God. Furthermore, Israel will inhabit a land whose houses they did not build and land which they had not cultivated. Deut. 6:11 Joshua 24:13



## The Parallels Between Jacob the Man and Israel the Nation

Jacob	Nation Israel
Jacob, however, chooses to do things his own way. He spends much of his time scheming to attain this or that thing.	The nation Israel chose, on many occasions, to go their own way. Although there are examples of this throughout Scripture, the book of Judges seems to be dedicated to this theme.
He tried to seize the spiritual birthright by deception. Jacob's incorrect approach to his birthright caused him to be sent out of the Land of Promise.	Israel, because of their incorrect approach to their birthright, were sent out of the Land of Promise in 586 B.C.
Jacob remained outside of the land a fairly long time for a man (20 years).	Israel remained outside of the land a fairly long time for a nation (70 years).
Jacob returned to the Land of Promise with high hopes and great promise.	Israel returned to the land with high hopes and great promise.
Jacob never really attained the promise of his birthright; the remainder of his life was mixed with regards to success.	Israel never really attained to her promise as a nation; the rest of her time in the land was mixed with regards to success.
Jacob never attained the grace orientation of Abraham.	Israel never became an independent nation because it was unable to handle that level of success.
Jacob was later sent out of the land, with his family; and they were to remain out of the land for many generations.	Israel was later exiled from the land in A.D. 70; and they remained outside of the land for many centuries.
All in all, Jacob was the heir to such promise, but was never able to attain to that promise.	All in all, Israel was the heir to such promise, but was never able to attain that promise.

This may help to explain why (*nation*) *Israel* is called *Israel* and not *Abraham*.

Insofar as I know, this is a unique observation.

**Lesson 378: Genesis 35:19–20**

**Later Scriptural References to Rachel**

At this point in our study, Jacob is leading his family on a southern route through the land of promise, and Rachel gives birth to Jacob's youngest son, Benjamin. It is a difficult pregnancy and Rachel dies.

Genesis 35:19 And Rachel died and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem.

Rachel did not do well with childbirth in the first place; and traveling while pregnant was probably no help to her. However, after moving from Paddan-aram, Jacob and company appear to have done a fair amount of traveling.

Genesis 35:20 And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave. That is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

That Jacob set up a pillar and the author writes, *that is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day*, is quite fascinating. The idea that someone later takes note of this actually carries with it several implications. Joseph appears to write the remainder of Genesis, beginning with Genesis 37 (although I am not sure about Genesis 38). For him to have added this remark while living in Canaan would not make sense, as it would just be a few years later. Joseph is already born at this time and he is 17 years of age in Genesis 37—so, that the pillar is still there 5–15 years later is not really a remarkable thing. Therefore, Joseph would not have written that.

By the end of Genesis 37, Joseph is on his way to live the rest of his life in Egypt; and his family will all follow a few decades later. The sons of Jacob will continue to live in Egypt for another 400 years until Moses takes them out of Egypt. When Moses returns to the land, he is never near Hebron or Bethlehem (which are west of the Jordan River). Rachel is buried somewhere near Bethlehem, north of Hebron. There is actually a theological disagreement here about *exactly where* she is buried, but there is no dispute that Rachel is buried west of the Jordan River. Moses *never* crosses the Jordan River. Therefore, this statement which we find here, which is very likely a gloss, had to have been inserted *after* Moses, since neither Joseph would not have made these remarks as a 17 year old; and Moses never traveled to here (Joseph will record the final chapters of Genesis and Moses will be the next human author, writing the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy). We do not know when or by whom this was added, but it had to have been added at least 400 years later by Joshua or someone after him.

Joshua did, as a spy; and later, leading an invading army, go by the pillar marking Rachel's grave. This would have caught his attention, knowing the Scriptures as he did. It is over 400 years since Rachel is buried there; the sons of Jacob have not lived in the land for over 400 years; and yet the pillar of Rachel is there. That would have been remarkable to Joshua and he very likely added this gloss.

A gloss, by the way, is a sentence or phrase clearly added after the writing of the original text (and I use *write* in a very loose way, as I believe the text of Genesis was memorized and taught from generation to generation; and that some men actually added more information to this book, to update and specify locations).

Glosses usually tend to help us determine old and new names for a place, which aids us even today in determining the location of this or that place. A gloss never actually affects

the doctrine of the Bible. It is simply a point of clarification, often added for the readers (hearers) of the era during which it is added.

For instance, let me suggest that Jacob taught the book of Genesis (up to chapter 36) to his favorite son Joseph and Joseph memorized it. When Jacob first mentioned the name *Luz*, Joseph may have asked, *where is that?* And Jacob said, that is *Bethel*. Joseph would have been familiar with Bethel, but not with the name *Luz*. His father named that place Bethel twice, the first time being prior to Joseph's birth.

More importantly, when Joseph went to Egypt, he carried the book of Genesis with him, chapters 1–36 (logically, it was in his brain). Joseph was incarcerated for a very long time. Let me suggest to you that he remembered and repeated the words of Genesis 1–36 to himself throughout this time, adding the chapters of his own life to those words.

It would never occur to you or I to add anything to the Word of God. Furthermore, no one would pay much attention to what we added. So, why would Joshua, 400 years later, consider adding a few words to this portion of Genesis? Answering this question, requires some explanation.

Today, we have a very well-defined concept of the Word of God. Most evangelical, orthodox Christians adhere to the verbal-plenary definition of the inspiration of Scripture, which is, *human authors wrote as moved by the Holy Spirit, so that, without waving their human intelligence, their vocabulary, their personal feelings, their literary style, their personality, their environmental influences or their individuality, they recorded God's complete and connected message to man with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture, the very words bearing the authority of divine authorship.*<sup>72</sup> The end result is, the Bible is the Word of God, but written by the hand of man. Just as Jesus is undiminished Deity and true humanity, so the Word of God is that as well as being the words of men.

When Jacob taught Joseph the book of Genesis (up to Genesis 36) and possibly the book of Job, they understood that the book of authoritative and that it was similar to listening to God speak. It is questionable that, when adding over a dozen chapters, that Joseph thought, "I am writing down God's words." It is highly unlikely that they had ever articulated the outstanding definition above of the inspiration of Scripture.

Generally speaking, there would have been nothing particularly mystical when recording the word of God. Joseph would not have been in some kind of a trance. He simply wrote down what had happened to him (and again, by *wrote down*, I don't know if he literally wrote those words down or not, or whether he simply recalled what he had been taught, and passed this along to his two sons, along with appending his own story to the original narrative).

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<sup>72</sup> Quoted and paraphrased from R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Canonicity*; ©1973 by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; p. 5, who in turn took this from Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology*; Abridged Edition; Victor Books, ©1984, Vol. Two, p. 71.

So, Joshua, who may or may not have understood himself to be writing the Word of God (he completed the book of Deuteronomy and wrote the book of Joshua), would have added a gloss as we read here, without giving it too much thought.

Back to the text at hand:

**Genesis 35:20** And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave. That is the pillar of Rachel's grave to this day.

Rachel is the woman that Jacob truly loved and she bore him two sons. Rachel's name will be used regarding her children in Genesis 35:24, 25 46:19, 22, 25. However, she is found in the Bible more times than that.

The ESV capitalized translation is used below.

### Later Scriptural References to Rachel

#### Scripture

#### Text/Commentary

Boaz takes Ruth to wife as her kinsman-redeemer. Circa 1100 B.C.

Ruth 4:9–10 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Boaz, the kinsman redeemer, representing Jesus Christ, has purchased his wife, Ruth, and would perpetuate the name of her late husband.

Unless you think this is a completely male-dominated society, Boaz buys his wife from Naomi, her mother-in-law.

Ruth 4:11–12 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like **Rachel** and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman."

Rachel and Leah are the mothers of the Jews, and through them, Jacob *built up* Israel.

Perez was the son by Judah, and Judah acted as a kinsman-redeemer for his own son (the actual narrative is more complicated than that).

As an aside, it is remarkable for the elders to make this statement; it indicates that they were very familiar with the book of Genesis.

## Later Scriptural References to Rachel

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Ruth 4:13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.	The royal line of Christ is continued here, through Boaz and Ruth.
Ruth 4:14–15 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."	Boaz becomes Ruth's husband and also acts as her kinsman-redeemer (that is, as a type of Christ).
Ruth 4:16–17 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.	There is only one genealogical line in the books of Old Testament Scripture which is consistently followed; and it goes from Adam all the way to Jesus. A quick mental calculation suggests to me that at least 10 different writers knew that it was important to follow this line out, even though they did not all know its significance.
The priest/prophet Samuel anoints Saul king over Israel and prophecies about what would happen to Saul. Circa 1040 B.C.	
1Sam. 10:1–2 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said, "Has not the LORD anointed you to be prince over his people Israel? And you shall reign over the people of the LORD and you will save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies. And this shall be the sign to you that the LORD has anointed you to be prince over his heritage. When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by <b>Rachel's</b> tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to you, 'The donkeys that you went to seek are found, and now your father has ceased to care about the donkeys and is anxious about you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?"'	Samuel here is anointing Saul as king over Israel, and there is a mention of Rachel's tomb, indicating that its whereabouts was known at this time.  That she is named and known about suggests rudimentary knowledge at the very least of the book of Genesis.  Samuel is telling Saul what would transpire in his life in the very near future. He established his own credentials as a prophet of God by this.

## Later Scriptural References to Rachel

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>1Sam. 10:3–5 Then you shall go on from there farther and come to the oak of Tabor. Three men going up to God at Bethel will meet you there, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. And they will greet you and give you two loaves of bread, which you shall accept from their hand. After that you shall come to Gibeath-elohim, where there is a garrison of the Philistines. And there, as soon as you come to the city, you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying.</p>	<p>Samuel, as a prophet, makes prophetic pronouncements about what Saul would do and who he would meet.</p> <p>This indicates that Samuel is a prophet, that God allowed him to see into the future, and therefore, has authority over Saul the king. Saul, even though king over all Israel, was to never forget that God gave him that position (ideally speaking).</p>
<p>1Sam. 10:6–8 Then the Spirit of the LORD will rush upon you, and you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. Now when these signs meet you, do what your hand finds to do, for God is with you. Then go down before me to Gilgal. And behold, I am coming to you to offer burnt offerings and to sacrifice peace offerings. Seven days you shall wait, until I come to you and show you what you shall do."</p>	<p>Saul himself, when meeting up with these prophets, would speak prophecies as well.</p> <p>Saul would observe each of these prophecies to come to pass, which should have given him great comfort as the king chosen by God and anointed by Samuel.</p>
<p>1Sam. 10:9 When he turned his back to leave Samuel, God gave him another heart. And all these signs came to pass that day.</p>	<p>The new heart means that Saul was back in fellowship with God and he recognized Samuel's prophecies as valid and accurate.</p>
<p>Jeremiah's prophecies of the near and far future of Israel. Circa 600 B.C.</p>	
<p>Jer. 31:11–12 For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.</p>	<p>The name <i>Jacob</i> often refers to degenerate nation Israel. Here, they need to be redeemed by God.</p> <p>God has made great promises to the people of Israel. These are millennial promises as to the environment of Israel during the Millennium.</p>



## Later Scriptural References to Rachel

Scripture	Text/Commentary
<p>Jer. 31:13–14 Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy; I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will feast the soul of the priests with abundance, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, declares the LORD."</p>	<p>In the future, there will be great joy and abundance in the Land of Promise and with the people of God who will live in that land.</p>
<p>Jer. 31:15 Thus says the LORD: "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. <b>Rachel</b> is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more."</p>	<p>However, most of what Jeremiah taught was about the near future. Rachel is weeping for her children, that is, her descendants, who are killed by invaders or removed from the land of promise by these same invaders. These words of Jeremiah prophesy of the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline soon to come upon Israel.</p>
<p>Biographer Matthew writes of the early life of Jesus, and recalls Jeremiah's prophecy from above. These events take place circa 3 B.C. (Matthew would have written these words perhaps 40–60 years later)</p>	
<p>Matt. 2:16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.</p>	<p>King Herod, in his old age, had become filled with disease and fairly irrational. He feared this infant who would be born King of Israel, despite the fact that he should have realized that he would die long before the infant became an adult. Perhaps he believed that he was saving power for his children.</p>
<p>Matt. 2:17–18 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, <b>Rachel</b> weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."</p>	<p>Rachel is representative of the women of Israel, just as Jacob or Abraham might be used to represent the men of Israel.</p>
<p>This is an application of the words of Jeremiah, but not necessarily the fulfillment of Jer. 31:15. They are actually fulfilled prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline and then in the Tribulation. Some may view this as a thrice-fulfilled prophecy (fulfilled in 596 B.C., circa 3 B.C., and A.D. 70).</p>	

## Later Scriptural References to Rachel

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Matt. 2:19–21 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.	Joseph and Mary lived in Egypt with young Jesus and returned after Herod died.
Matt. 2:22–23 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."	Joseph decided to care for his family in Galilee, which was north of Judæa. So Jesus is called a Nazarene, because that is where He was brought up.

Dates are taken from *The Narrated Bible In Chronological Order*; narrated by F. LaGard Smith; ©1984 by Harvest House Publishers; Eugene, Oregon; (NIV ©1984 by the International Bible Society); pp. 365, 396, 941, 1356.

### Lesson 379: Genesis 35:1–22

### The Sons of Israel

We have studied a great many side doctrines in Genesis 35, and therefore, may have lost the flow of this narrative. So far in Genesis 35, these are the events which have taken place:

#### A Review of Genesis 35:1–20

1. God tells Jacob to go to Bethel, which is not too far south of Shechem. This is because Simeon and Levi murdered all of the males of Shechem and Jacob was worried for the safety of his family. V. 1
2. Jacob oversees the removal of the false idols from his people. Recall that after two of Jacob's sons killed the males of Shechem, they took their women and children as captives; so they would have certainly had many idols. Vv. 2–4
3. They arrive to Bethel and Jacob builds an altar there. Vv. 5–7
4. Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, dies. Rebekah is Jacob's mother; and this suggests that her nurse has been with Jacob since he left Canaan many years previous. We have no indication that Jacob has even seen his father or mother since returning to the land. Furthermore, Rebekah's nurse would have been a second mother to Jacob and she came from Paddan-aram; so it is logical for her to have been with Jacob from the very beginning of his trip to Paddan-aram. V. 8

## A Review of Genesis 35:1–20

5. God appears again to Jacob in Bethel and Jacob builds an altar there where God appears to him. Vv. 9–15
6. They all travel from Bethel to Bethlehem, while Rachel is pregnant. Rachel dies when giving birth on the way to Bethlehem-Ephrath. Her death is the second of 3 significant deaths recorded in this chapter. Jacob puts up a pillar where Rachel is buried and we deduced that this pillar and grave were still there at least 500 years later. Vv. 16–20

This prepares us for the remainder of the narrative.

**Genesis 35:21** And Israel moved, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.

*Israel* is the name that God gave to Jacob. We are speaking of an individual man here and not of a nation. There is no nation *Israel* at this time; that is another 500 years or so in the future. Israel will not be a nation until they exodus from Egypt and then conquer and settle Canaan as a people.

Migdal Edar is the transliteration of this place; and it means *tower of the flock* (as we find it translated in Micah 4:8). Since Rachel dies and is buried in Bethlehem (vv. 19–20) and Jacob later goes to his father in Mamre (v. 27), then, logically, Edar (also spelled *Eder*) is in between these two places.

These places we are talking about (Shechem, Bethlehem, Bethel) are all on a north-south line between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea.

**Genesis 35:22a** And it happened when Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard it.

This is one of those things in a narrative which makes you think it is going somewhere. Reuben has sex with the mother of his half-brothers; with his father's wife (or, more accurately, mistress). Then Jacob finds out about it. Yet, we do not seem to take this any further. The incident itself is given fully only in this verse.

Robert Dean has this take, which seems logical: *This is not seduction and is not done because of lust, as was the rape of Dinah in the previous chapter. This is a sign of rebellion against his father. He is indicating that he wants to take control of everything that his father has. This is the same kind of thing that is described in 1Kings 2:13-25, the episode with Adonijah who wanted to have sexual relations with Abisgag the Shunamite in order to assert his authority as king and to assault the authority of his father, king David. This was a custom in the ancient world. This is what was behind [this verse].*<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> From [Genesis lesson 137](#); accessed February 1, 2016.

Setting aside Reuben’s motivation, again and again, Reuben revealed that he was not of the character to be the firstborn, with its privileges and responsibilities. He has an affair with one of his step-mothers (who is also his aunt), Bilhah, who was Rachel’s maid.

V. 22a provides a very subtle clue about the change of authorship. Here, Bilhah is called Jacob’s concubine (or, *mistress*). This is how Jacob and his first sons would have understood her position in the family. As the children are being born and growing, there would have been a clear distinction made between Jacob’s wives, his mistresses and his children.

On the other hand, when Joseph is born, everything is already in place. He would have seen these 4 women (Jacob’s two wives and two mistresses) as Jacob’s wives, which is how they are referred to in Genesis 37:2. The *youngest* child is not as likely to make these distinctions.

**Genesis 35:22b** And the sons of Jacob were twelve:

Interestingly enough, the sons of Jacob are named again. At this point, all or most of them are adults.

11 of the sons were born outside of Canaan in Paddan-aram over a fairly short period of time (less than 12 years). After 7 years, Jacob was given Leah in marriage (by deceit) and apparently he was given Rachel soon thereafter for the promise of another 7 years of work. Jacob would work for Laban for 14 years for his daughters, and then an additional 6 years on a commission basis. Allowing for 9 months after Jacob’s marriage to Leah, Reuben would have been born at the end of year 8.

Joseph appears to be born before the commission dispute between Laban and Jacob, which take place in Genesis 30:25–43. Jealousy and anger swell upon among Laban’s sons (who are now on the scene as adults—Genesis 31:1–2).

Here is the timeline:

<b>Legend</b>	
Birth, death or marriage	God speaks with a patriarch
Historical incidents (most of which are related to one of Israel’s patriarchs)	
Most parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next year. However, in the first column, all parenthetical dates come from the New Berkeley Bible.	

The **Abrahamic Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) covers the line of Abraham in much more detail. The entire **Patriarch Timeline** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

**The Abbreviated Abrahamic Timeline**

The order below is taken from The Reese Chronological Bible.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2234 B.C.	2097 B.C.			Genesis 11:24	Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
	1969 B.C.		Noah is 950	Genesis 9:28–29	Death of Noah
2164 B.C.	1967 B.C.			Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 <sup>rd</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
2078 B.C.	1881 B.C.	2080 B.C.	Abraham is 86	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
2064 B.C. (2066 B.C.)		2066 B.C.	Abraham is 100	Genesis 21:1–7 1Chron. 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 <sup>th</sup> generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
(2026 B.C.)		2026 B.C.	Isaac is 40	Genesis 24:1–67 Genesis 25:20	Isaac (Abraham's son) and Rebecca are married. Genesis 25:20 Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramæan. At this time, Isaac is living in the Negev. It is likely that Abraham lived there as well; or near to there.
	1826 B.C.			Genesis 25:1	Abraham marries Keturah. Smith puts the date at 1860 B.C.; and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1853 B.C.
				Genesis 25:2–4 1Chron. 1:32–33	Abraham's fathers children by Keturah.
	1817 B.C.		Shem is 600	Genesis 11:11	Death of Shem (Noah's son; his line led to Abraham and Isaac).
2004 B.C.	1807 B.C.	2006 B.C.	Abraham is 160; Isaac is 60	Genesis 25:19, 21–26	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac. Gen 25:26 After this, his brother came out grasping Esau's heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born. Therefore, Abraham would be 160 years old.
1989 B.C.	1792 B.C.	1991 B.C.	Abraham is 175	Genesis 25:7–10	Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years. He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah).
	1782 B.C.	1978 B.C.		Genesis 25:27–34	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1767 B.C.			Genesis 26:34–35	Esau marries two Canaanite women.
	1757–1739 B.C. 1733 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:23–25	Isaac makes an altar in Beer-sheba.
(1943 B.C.)	1744 B.C.		Ishmael is 137	Genesis 25:17–18	The death of Ishmael.
	1738 B.C. c 1732 B.C. (Klassen)	1977 B.C.		Genesis 26:26–33	Isaac's alliance with Abimelech at Beersheba.
(1929 B.C.)	1737 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1929 B.C.		Genesis 27:1–46	Jacob by deception receives a final blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau.
				Genesis 28:1–5	Jacob goes to his Uncle Laban's home in Paddan-aram for a wife.
		1928 B.C.		Genesis 28:10–22	Jacob's dream; God speaks to Jacob.
				Genesis 28:6–9	Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.
		1906 B.C. (For descendants)		Genesis 36:1–42	Esau's marriages and descendants.
	1736 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1928 B.C.		Genesis 29:1–14	Jacob in Haran (Charan).
	1736–1729 B.C. 1730–1723 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 29:15–20	Jacob works 7 years to marry Rachel, but is deceived by Laban, his uncle, and Jacob finds himself instead married to Leah, her older sister.
	1729 B.C. 1724 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C.		Genesis 29:21–31	Jacob marries Rachel
(1915 B.C.)	1729–1716 B.C. 1723–1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C. 1916 B.C. (Rachel bears Joseph)		Genesis 29:32–34 Genesis 30:1–6 Genesis 29:35 Genesis 30:9, 7–8, 10–24	Jacob has 12 children by his wives, Rachel and Leah; and by their personal servants as well. Reese breaks the timeline down in smaller increments in his book.
(1909 B.C.)	1716 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 30:25–43 Genesis 31:1–16	Jacob's final years working for Laban.
				Genesis 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Genesis 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.



MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 32:24–32 Genesis 35:10	Jacob wrestles with the angel.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:1–16	Jacob meets Esau face to face.
	1715 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:17–20	The resumption of Jacob's journey.
	1700 B.C. 1687 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 34:1–31	Dinah, daughter of Judah, is defiled. Simeon and Levi slaughter the men of Shechem.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 35:1–15	Jacob returns to Bethel.
	1700 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1903 B.C.		Genesis 35:16–19 48:7 35:20–22	Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin.

### Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011 and August 12, 2014. Included in MacDonald's timeline is a timeline for Egypt interspersed.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

From: [http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible\\_study\\_guides/abram\\_to\\_the\\_exodus.pdf](http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf) (Christian shepherd). This source believes that the Jews live only a short time in Egypt (210 years).

*The Reese Chronological Bible*; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

*The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version)*, Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 10–54.

Joseph would have been the last son born in Paddan-aram probably in the last few years of Jacob's time there (Genesis 30:22–24). He will be 17 years of age in Genesis 37:2 (with the end of this chapter and all of Genesis 36 being the two genealogies, of Jacob and of Esau). Assuming chronological order, 17 years transpire between Genesis 30 and 37.

## Lesson 380: Genesis 35:23–29

## The Sons of Israel (Jacob)

This will be our final study in Genesis 35.

The division of the Bible into chapters and verses was done long after the words were written and recorded. Most of the time, these divisions are intelligently done. However,

in the case of Genesis 35:22, the first half belongs with the previous section; and the second half belongs with the final section of Genesis 35.

Genesis 35:21–22a [Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder. While Israel lived in that land, Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Israel heard of it.](#)

As we studied, this very short piece of information simply tells us that Reuben was ill-suited to assume the responsibilities of the firstborn; and that this action may even represent an unsuccessful power grab on his part.

Then v. 22b goes onto a different topic.

[Genesis 35:22b](#) [And the sons of Jacob were twelve:...](#)

V. 22b should be a separate verse, or affixed to v. 23.

There is no little confusion regarding the *12 tribes of Israel*.

### The 12 Tribes of Israel

1. At this point, there are 12 sons of Jacob, who make up (more or less) the 12 tribes of Israel. These 12 sons will all be named in this chapter.
2. This 12 tribe thing is actually not that straightforward. For example, Joseph will have two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, and they will be treated as separate tribes (this is the blessing of the double-portion for Joseph). So, that really make 13 tribes for Israel.
3. However, the tribe of Levi will not be given land which belongs to them as a tribe, so 12 sons of Jacob will make up 12 regions of the Land of Promise (Ephraim and Manasseh have their own sections; and Levi does not).
4. To add to the confusion, 10 of these tribes seem to disappear with the first dispersion, circa 721 B.C. This was the first application of the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline to nation Israel.
  - 1) Nevertheless, some Jews today lay claim to being from the tribe of Levi, or Gad or Manasseh.
  - 2) There are references in the New Testament to people being from the tribe of Levi. The term Levite is used in Luke 10:32 Acts 4:36. However, the Levites lived throughout the land, in all the various tribal regions.
  - 3) Paul was descended from the tribe of Benjamin. Rom. 11:1
  - 4) So tribal distinctions continued; but they may have become more blurred with time, as the northern tribes no longer occupied their tribal territory.
5. To add more confusion, the tribe of Simeon appears to lose its national identity, living among the tribe of Judah. It is hard to say exactly when this takes place; but perhaps not long before the 2<sup>nd</sup> dispersion, or at the return of the Jews to the land.
6. We loosely throw around the terms *Hebrew* and *Jew*, but the original term used

## The 12 Tribes of Israel

was Hebrew, and it was applied to Abraham when he came to the Land of Promise; and later on, it was applied to Jacob and his sons living in Egypt (particularly in the book of Exodus). Hebrew comes from the verb that means *to pass over*; and it means, *one who has passed over, sojourner, the one passing through*.

7. *Jew*, on the other hand, is closely related to the Hebrew word *Judah*, and it means, more or less, *someone from the tribe of Judah*. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> dispersion and their return to the land, the children of Israel lived in the territory of Judah and were called *Jews*.
8. It appears that their tribal identities were either lost or became less distinguishable at this time. Certain names appear in the New Testament—particularly *Levi* and *Simeon*—but these refer to individuals and not to tribes.
9. All of the 12 tribes will be reprised in the book of Revelation, which looks forward into the future. The tribe of Joseph will be named rather than the tribe of Ephraim; and the tribe of Dan is omitted from this final list. In any case, this suggests to us that, whether the 10 tribes are lost or not, God knows where their descendants are.

That the number of tribes, from time to time, had some fluidity, has no bearing on any of the prophecies or history recorded in Scripture.

So there is no misunderstanding, the 10 lost tribes did *not* become English (known as, [\*British-Israelism\*](#)—which is a false doctrine).

**Genesis 35:23** The sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun.

Leah had 6 sons by Jacob. You will recall that she first had 4 and then, after some time passed, she had 2 more.

Because Reuben is the firstborn, he should have been seen as Jacob's natural heir. However, we find in his life, Reuben does not act as a leader with integrity. Time and time again, he fails. He slept with his father's mistress and there will be other incidents that will occur in future chapters.

**Genesis 35:24** The sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.

These two sons will be consequential in the early days. Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin, the only one of Jacob's sons born in Canaan. The final third of Genesis will be written by Joseph.

Joseph's writing is far more organized than previous authors, having many chiasmi throughout. Furthermore, his narratives will be far more developed and less choppy than those of the previous authors of Genesis.

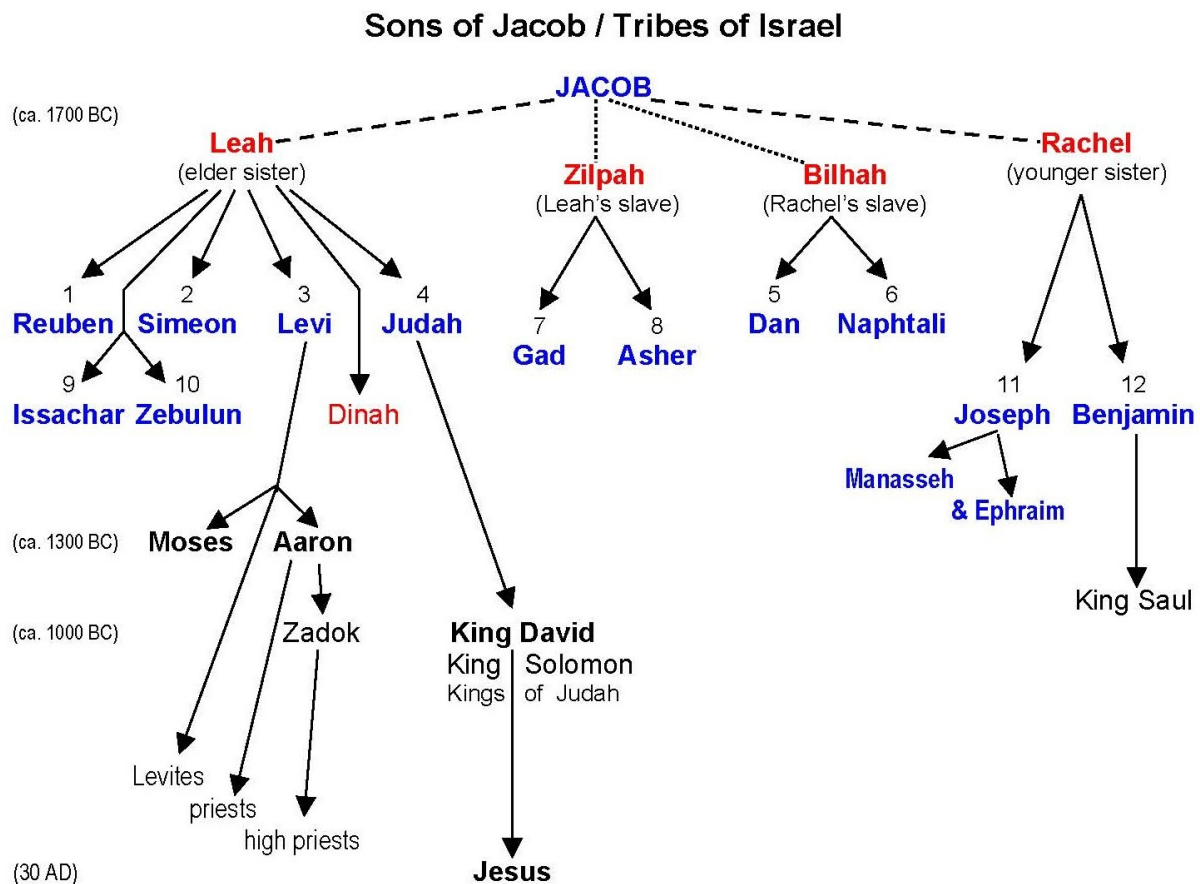
Genesis 35:25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's slave woman: Dan and Naphtali.

Rachel did not have any children at first, so her personal slave has two children on her behalf.

Genesis 35:26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's slave woman: Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob born to him in Padan-aram.

When Leah stopped having children, she got her personal slave to bear children on her behalf.

The Sons Of Jacob/Tribes of Israel (graphic) from [Catholic Resources](#)<sup>74</sup> accessed January 13, 2016.



So, the entire family of Jacob is listed above (daughters are not included).

<sup>74</sup> This is not a Catholic study; they just had the best genealogical line.

**Genesis 35:27** And Jacob came to his father Isaac, to Mamre, to the city of Arba, which is Hebron, where Abraham had lived, and Isaac.

It is unclear if Jacob is coming to his father after he died or just prior to. It is fascinating that Jacob waited such a long time to see his father. It is reasonable to assume that Jacob felt great personal shame for deceiving his father so many years ago.

In many ways, this short section (the end of Genesis 35) is somewhat a testament to Isaac, as he seemed to concern himself primarily with births and deaths. So this chapter which includes his death, is also a chapter primarily concerned with births and deaths.

**Genesis 35:28** And the days of Isaac were a hundred and eighty years.

Isaac lived the longest of all the patriarchs, although his life seemed to be overshadowed by both his father Abraham and son, Jacob (which could simply be the result of the history which he himself recorded). He spent a great deal of his life in old age, as many years previously he was spoken of as old and blind.

**Genesis 35:29** And Isaac expired and died, and was gathered to his people, old and satisfied of days. And his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

Interestingly enough, Isaac appears to be an old man for a very long period of time. Remember, back when Jacob left Canaan, Isaac was blind and could not distinguish the two fraternal twin brothers apart. Then Jacob spent 20 years in Paddan-aram and then some time moving from place to place in Canaan.

It is often stated and implied in Scripture that a relationship with God results in a longer, fuller life (quite obviously, this is not true of martyrs). Isaac is said to have had a long life and a good life as well. That is what it means to be *old and satisfied of days*.

Jacob and Esau both participate in the burial of their father. It is possible that Esau moves back into the Land of Promise for a time after the death of Isaac.

The ESV; capitalized is used below.

### **A Summary of Genesis 35**

1. In previous chapters, it is clear that Jacob and his sons have failed on many occasions.
2. In Genesis 34, when Levi and Simeon slaughtered the men of Shechem, God is not mentioned, except as a ruse to get the sons of Hamor to agree to circumcision (in fact, God is not mentioned even there; but the ritual of circumcision is insisted upon by the sons of Jacob).
3. Despite how unfocused the sons of Jacob are, God gives guidance to Jacob, telling him to go to Bethel. Robert Dean: *[E]ven though Jacob had become complaisant about God and not completed his mission, God continued to exercise*

## A Summary of Genesis 35

*the initiative towards Jacob. That is an important principle. No matter how we fail God, God is never going to fail us. He is continually going to exercise the initiative of divine grace in our behalf.* Genesis 35:1

4. At that point, Jacob *purifies* his household by purging it of all traces of false gods. Fellowship (interaction) with God requires cleansing. 1John 1:9 Genesis 35:2–4
  - 1) As an aside, the God of the Old and New Testament is Unique and Specific.
  - 2) The Bible *never* teaches that if you worship one god and I another, that this is the same God. The God of the Bible is worthy of our worship. There is no other God. There is only the Revealed God of Scripture.
  - 3) So, whatever household gods were being kept by the people of Jacob had to be removed.
5. Then Jacob says, “**Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, so that I may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.**” This is gratitude. Jacob recognized God’s function and protection in his life. There is little indication that Jacob turns his spiritual life around here. However, from time to time, he recognizes what God has done in his life.
6. God provides the family of Jacob protection, allowing the fear of his family to spread throughout the area where they traveled. God has continually set up protections for them. Despite the many failings of this family, God is always faithful to them.
7. Jacob, recognizing God’s care and grace, worships Him in Bethel. This is where God first appeared to Jacob when he was running from his brother Esau. God reappeared to Jacob in Bethel as well. Genesis 35:7, 9–10
8. God renames Jacob a second time. Genesis 32:28 35:10
9. Now that Jacob was back in the Land of Promise, God promises Jacob directly about his future and the future of his descendants (just as God had done for Abraham and Isaac). **And God said to him, “I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come from your own body. The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”** (Genesis 35:11–12)
10. Jacob honors God after He spoke to him. He set up a pillar, then poured out a drink offering and oil upon it. Genesis 35:13–14
11. In honor of God, Jacob calls this place *Bethel* (this is the second time that he names it *Bethel*). Genesis 35:15
12. Jacob’s 12<sup>th</sup> and final son are born to him—Benjamin—the only son of Jacob to actually be born in the land of promise. You may recall the wonderful foreshadowing of Jesus Christ which was found in the birth of Benjamin. Genesis 35:16–18
13. Jacob and his family will be called *Hebrews*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew word ‘Ib<sup>e</sup>rîy (עִבְרִי) [pronounced *ġih<sup>b</sup>-VREE*], which means *one from beyond*. Abraham came into the Land of Promise from the east; and all of Jacob’s sons, save one, are born in the east. Therefore, they have come to



## A Summary of Genesis 35

Canaan as *those from beyond [the Jordan River]*. Strong's #5680 BDB #720. For the rest of the history of the Jews, this will be their name. *Hebrew* is a rough transliteration of 'Ib<sup>o</sup>rîy (יִרְבֵּעַ).

14. When Jacob set up a pillar as a memorial to Rachel, there is a gloss in this chapter telling us that the pillar is still there *to this day*. We saw through simple deduction that such an observation would have been made 500 years later. This gave us an opportunity to discuss the concept of glosses, several of which are found in the book of Genesis. Genesis 35:20
15. Reuben provides evidence that, even though he is the firstborn of Jacob, that he lacks the integrity and common sense to carry on as the first heir to Jacob. Reuben has sex with one of his step mothers. Genesis 35:22a
16. The final portion of this chapter appears to be a salute to Isaac, who concerned himself with births and deaths, for the most part, in the portions of Genesis that he wrote. All of the sons of Jacob are named, and then the death of Isaac is recorded. Genesis 35:22b–29
17. There are three deaths recorded in this chapter:
  - 1) Deborah, who was the personal servant of Rebekah, and apparently given to Jacob for his trip to Paddan-aram. Genesis 35:8
  - 2) Rebekah, when giving birth to her second son. Genesis 35:16–19
  - 3) Isaac, of old age, while Jacob was still in the land. Genesis 35:28–29
18. Genesis 35:29 (where Jacob and Esau bury Isaac) and Genesis 36:6–7 (where Esau takes everything and moves away from the land of Canaan) suggests that there was a time when these brothers lived side-by-side. Reasonably, this would have taken place after the death of Isaac. Interestingly enough, both houses are said to be so blessed as to be overrun with cattle that they could not support them (Genesis 36:7).

Most of these chapters can be read through in 2 or 3 minutes. However, even if a person is able to retain much of what he has read, it is of little benefit to the spiritual life if the spiritual lessons are not understood.

Just as Genesis 35 summed up the sons of Jacob, Genesis 36 will list Esau's descendants.

Robert Dean's quotes are from [Genesis lesson 137](#); accessed February 1, 2016.

Throughout the life of Jacob, there is one clear principle, despite Jacob's many failures: God is always faithful. Clearly, this is a flawed family, and yet, God is always there. God is ready to guide Jacob and his family; and God will protect them all. These are God's chosen people who have been given many unconditional promises from God—so these promises will be fulfilled, no matter how many times they fail. One thing which ought to be clear: Jacob does not deserve the blessing he has received. His sons do not deserve the blessings that they receive. That is what grace is. Grace is what God chooses to do, despite our own inconsistencies and foibles.<sup>75</sup>

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Tying together some random incidents.

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### **The Royal Line of Israel Goes Through Judah**

1. There are some incidents recorded in the Word of God which may seem to be quite random to you.
2. Reuben sleeps with his father's wife. That seems to be thrown into the narrative and almost for no reason.
3. Reuben is the firstborn, and he has responsibilities and privileges. As the oldest son of Jacob, we would assume that the royal line will go through him. The double-portion would go to him. However, he violates the wife of his father (that is called adultery) and in a future chapter, he will not take a leadership position regarding the Joseph, the second to the youngest son. He should have protected Joseph, and Reuben wanted to do this, but he wanted to do it on the sly (indicating that he was not cut out to take a leadership position). He should have stopped the scheming of his brothers—as the firstborn—and explained why they could not sell Joseph into slavery. Reuben should have put his foot down, as a leader, and said, "You will kill our little brother; you will not sell our little brother into slavery. That is the end of the discussion on this matter." This is what a leader would do; Reuben was not cut out to be a leader.
4. In the previous chapter, Simeon and Levi killed all of the sons of Hamor because one of them had raped their sister. This is murder and this eliminates son #2 and #3 from the firstborn position.
5. This leaves son #4, Judah, and it is through him that the royal line to David will be established. His line will be established in a fascinating way in Genesis 38.

Quite obviously, the human authors of these two sections, Jacob and Joseph, do not know that Judah will become the royal line. They simply record incidents in their lives which stand out to them. However, God the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of Scripture, includes these incidents because He knows the end from the beginning.

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Do you see how these seemingly random events actually have a purpose for being recorded?

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<sup>75</sup> Inspired from Robert Dean, [Genesis lesson #138](#); accessed February 10, 2016.

This is a chiasm of what we have been studying for the past year. It is one of the amazing things about Scripture.

### Tyler Williams' Chiasm of Genesis 25:19–35:29

- A. Beginnings, birth, predictions; Jacob steals Esau's birthright. Genesis 25:19–34
- B. Isaac and the Philistines. Genesis 26:1–22
- C. Jacob cheats Esau of his blessing. "He took (*laqah*) my blessing (*beraka*)." Genesis 27:1–40
- D. Jacob's flight from Esau. Genesis 27:41–28:5
- E. Encounter with God at Bethel. Genesis 28:10–22
- F. Jacob in Haran; Rachel and Laban. Genesis 29:1–30
- G. Children born and wealth is acquired. Genesis 30:1–43
- F' Departure from Haran; Rachel and Laban. Genesis 31:1–55
- E' Encounter with God at Mahanaim. Genesis 32:1–2
- D' Jacob's approach to Esau. Genesis 32:3–32
- C' Jacob returns Esau's blessing. "Accept (*laqah*) my blessing (*beraka*)." Genesis 33:1–20
- B' Dinah and the Hivites. Genesis 34:1–31
- A' Endings, death, fulfillment, Jacob and Esau together again. Genesis 35:1–29

These came from notes prepared by Tyler Williams, 2003. Quite frankly, I don't know where I got them from. Tyler Williams taught in a small, doctrinal church in the San Jose, CA area back in the early 2000's.

### Lesson 380 addendum: Genesis 35:1–29

### A Brief Summary of Genesis 35

#### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 35:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and

that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

### The Subsections of Genesis 35

vv. 1–7	<a href="#">The Family of Jacob is Cleansed Before Traveling to Bethel</a>
v. 8	<a href="#">The Death of Deborah</a>
vv. 9–15	<a href="#">God Renames Jacob <i>Israel</i></a>
vv. 16–20	<a href="#">Rachel Gives Birth to Benjamin, and then Dies</a>
vv. 21–22a	<a href="#">Reuben Violates Bilhah</a>
vv. 22b–26	<a href="#">Jacob's Twelve Sons</a>
vv. 27–29	<a href="#">Isaac Dies at Age 180</a>

### The Family of Jacob is Cleansed Before Traveling to Bethel

Genesis 35 is a chapter of big moments for Jacob and his family—not all of which will be seen as good moments.

Genesis 35:1 [And Elohim \[= \*God\*\] said to Ya'aqob \[= \*Jacob\*\], “Arise, go up to Běyth Ĕl \[= \*Bethel\*\] and dwell there. And make a slaughter-place there to Ĕl \[= a name for God\] who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Ĕsaw \[= \*Esau\*\] your brother.”](#)

God tells Jacob to take his family to Beth–El and live there. On the one hand, God liked taking the patriarchs through the land which He would give their descendants; and, on the other hand, there were probably times when such movements protected the patriarchs and their families.

Genesis 35:2 [And Ya'aqob said to his household and to all who were with him, “Put away the foreign mighty ones that are among you, and cleanse yourselves, and change your garments.](#)

The people of Jacob's household still had some idols, and these needed to be gotten rid of.

They were to cleanse themselves prior to some offerings being made.

Genesis 35:3 [“And let us arise and go up to Běyth Ĕl, and let me make there a slaughter-place \[or \*an altar\*\] to Ĕl, who answered me in the day of my distress, and has been with me in the way which I have gone.”](#)

Jacob seems to be better aware of his relationship to God at this point. He understands that God has been with him all of this time, protecting him.

Genesis 35:4 So they gave Ya'aqob all the foreign mighty ones [the figurines representing various gods] which were in their hands, and all their earrings which were in their ears. And Ya'aqob hid them under the terebinth tree which was near Shekem.

The people with Jacob willingly gave up the idols and their earrings. The earrings apparently represented some form of idolatry as well.

Genesis 35:5 And they departed, and the fear of Elohim was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Ya'aqob.

Jacob and his family pick up and leave from there. They travel by various cities who hear about this family and they choose not to harm them, do to fear of their God.

Genesis 35:6 And Ya'aqob came to Luz, that is Běyth Ěl, which is in the land of Kena'an [= Canaan], he and all the people who were with him.

Jacob and everyone else arrives at Bethel (formerly Luz).

Genesis 35:7 And he built there a slaughter-place and called the place El Běyth Ěl, because there Elohim appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

Jacob builds an altar there to their God.

It appears that Jacob named that place.

### **The Death of Deborah**

Genesis 35:8 And Deborah, Ribqah's [= Rebekah] nurse, died, and she was buried below Běyth Ěl under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Baquth.

It is not clear to me if Isaac and Rebekah are moving along with Jacob. That would seem likely, as the death of Rebekah's nurse is referenced here. However, Jacob is said to travel to his father in Mamre (v. 27). Therefore, the implication is, Rebekah has died and Jacob has inherited her personal servant. This would make sense as, Rebekah's plot to help Jacob steal Esau's blessing probably involved Deborah to some degree. Therefore, at some point, she sent Deborah to Jacob or willed Deborah to Jacob.

### **God Renames Jacob *Israel***

Genesis 35:9 And Elohim appeared to Ya'aqob again, when he came from Paddan Aram, and blessed him.

God appears to Jacob once again.

Genesis 35:10 And Elohim said to him, “Your name is Ya’aqob, your name is no longer called Ya’aqob, but Yisra’el is your name.” So He called his name Yisra’el.

Just as God renamed Abraham, He also renames Jacob.

Throughout the Bible, a reference to *Israel* often indicates that there is positive volition among the people. But a reference to the sons of *Jacob* sometimes implies that the people are hard-headed or reversionistic.

Genesis 35:11 And Elohim said to him, “I am Ĕl Shaddai. Be fruitful and increase, a nation and a company of nations shall be from you, and sovereigns come from your body.

God calls Himself Ĕl Shaddai and tells Jacob and his family to be fruitful and have many children. At this point, Jacob is pretty much done having children; but his sons are encouraged to reproduce.

The nation Israel would first come from Jacob. Then the divided nations of Judah and Ephraim would also have come from Jacob (every Hebrew has the blood of Jacob in him). We would likely consider the Jewish nation which was in existence during the time of Jesus to be the fourth nation to come from Jacob.

Genesis 35:12 “And the land which I gave Abraham and Yitsḥaq [= Isaac] I give to you. And to your seed after you I give this land.”

God has given this land to the descendants of Abraham and Isaac; and now to Jacob (and to all of his descendants).

Genesis 35:13 And Elohim went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him.

We do not know what form God has taken here, if any.

Genesis 35:14 And Ya’aqob set up a standing column in the place where He had spoken with him, a monument of stone. And he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.

Jacob sets up a standing column, meaning he has set up an oblong stone on its end. He pours a drink offering on it and then oil.

Genesis 35:15 And Ya’aqob called the name of the place where Elohim spoke with him, Běyth Ĕl.

Jacob calls the name of this place Bethel.

## **Rachel Gives Birth to Benjamin, and then Dies**



Genesis 35:16 Then they set out from Běyth Ěl. And it came to be, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, that Raḥěl began to give birth, and had great difficulty giving birth.

The family goes from Bethel to Ephrath. Rachel is having difficulties when it comes to giving birth.

Genesis 35:17 And it came to be, as she was having great difficulty giving birth, that the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for it is another son for you.”

Rachel is still alive when the midwife delivers a son from her.

Genesis 35:18 And it came to be, as her life was going out – for she died – that she called his name Ben-Oni. But his father called him Binyamin.

Before she dies, Rachel names her son *Ben-oni*. Jacob names him *Benjamin*.

Genesis 35:19 So Raḥěl died and was buried on the way to Ephrath, that is Běyth Leḥem [= *Bethlehem*].

Rachel does not actually give birth and then die in Ephrath, but in a place before they get there.

Genesis 35:20 And Ya'aqob set a standing column on her burial-place, which is the monument of Raḥěl's burial-place to this day.

Jacob puts up another standing column where Rachel is buried.

### **Reuben Violates Bilhah**

Genesis 35:21 And Yisra'ěl set out and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Ěder.

Jacob is called Israel here, and he pitches his tent beyond the tower of Eder.

Genesis 35:22a And it came to be, when Yisra'ěl dwelt in that land, that Re'uběn went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine. And Yisra'ěl heard about it.

Jacob's family was far from perfect. Reuben had sex with his father's mistress, Bilhah.

### **Jacob's Twelve Sons**

Genesis 35:22b–26 Now the sons of Ya'aqob [= *Jacob*] were twelve: the sons of Lě'ah were Re'uběn, Ya'aqob's first-born, and Shim'on [= *Simeon*], and Lěwi [= *Levi*], and Yehudah [= *Judah*], and Yissaskar [= *Issachar*], and Zebulun; the sons of Raḥěl [= *Rachel*] were Yosěph [= *Joseph*] and Binyamin [= *Benjamin*]; the sons of Bilhah, Raḥěl's female

servant, were Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Lě'ah's female servant, were Gad and Ashěř. These were the sons of Ya'aqob who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

The twelve sons of Jacob are named here. Eleven were born to him in Paddan Aram; and Benjamin was born as they were moving toward Bethlehem.

### **Isaac Dies at Age 180**

Genesis 35:27 *And Ya'aqob came to his father Yitsḥaq at Mamřě, or Qiryath Arba [= Kiriath-arba = Hebron], that is Hebron, where Abraham and Yitsḥaq [= Isaac] had dwelt.*

Jacob has been, apparently, traveling to see his father.

Genesis 35:28 *And the days of Yitsḥaq were one hundred and eighty years.*

Isaac dies at the age of 180.

Genesis 35:29 *So Yitsḥaq breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, aged and satisfied of days. And his sons Ėsaw and Ya'aqob buried him.*

After Isaac breathes his last, Esau and Jacob bury him.

## **Lesson 381: Genesis 36:1–8**

## **Esau in Canaan; Esau's Wives**

Genesis 36 is a self-contained chapter, all about the line of Esau. Isaac had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. The line of promise would go through Jacob; and the other line is Esau's.

Sometimes, I am quite surprised at all that can be found in a chapter filled with names of men, most of whom we will not hear of again.

In most cases, the line that goes nowhere is named first; and then the line of promise. However, all of Jacob's children were named at the end of the previous chapter, along with Isaac's death.

In this chapter, the leaders/chiefs of Esau's line will be named.

### **Why is there a chapter about Esau and his descendants?**

There are three things which need to be explained: (1) why did God say, "Before they were born and before either man could do good or evil, Esau I hated, but Jacob I loved"? (2) What is the true difference between the lines of Jacob and the lines of Esau? (3) Why is there an entire chapter of Genesis devoted to the line of Esau? If this is the very Esau whom God hated, why is there a Genesis 36?

These questions reveal something which appears to be quite incongruous in the Bible. If God hates Esau, if Esau's line is a gentile and not a Jewish line, then why does God give us one entire chapter to the line of Esau? Did God the Holy Spirit mess up when overseeing the writing of Genesis? Did someone slip in the Esau chapter, and did God the Holy Spirit just say, "Ah, what the hell, I'll just leave it in there."

This topic of Esau is something which I have thought about for a very long time. R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s short and easy explanation for Esau's side of the family is, these are unbelievers; while the line of Abraham to Isaac to Jacob are all believers. Let me suggest that is an oversimplification from a man who is not known for oversimplifying anything. This point of view is true generally, but not specifically.

There is no question that there was a great deal of animosity between Jacob and Esau (but not for their entire lives). Furthermore, throughout much of Genesis, Esau seems to be a nicer guy than Jacob. Nevertheless, God said, "From out of the womb, before either man had done anything good or bad, I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau!" (a paraphrase from Malachi 2:2-3). So, what is this all about? Isn't God going to at least wait this one out and then make a sovereign call? The fact that God does not is key to why Jacob is a Jew and Esau remains a gentile. Esau and all of his descendants are Semites, meaning that they are descended from Shem. They are not Hebrew Semites; they are gentile Semites (as are all Arabs).

First thing is, God does not hate nor does He love either man. Those words are anthropopathisms, terms designed to briefly note God's approbation or disapprobation using words that we readily understand. Even though we are told that God loves Jacob, He loves Jacob's line which leads to Jesus. God does not hate Esau, but He disapproves of Esau because his line does not lead to the Savior.

When God looks at Jacob, God is able to see his entire line of descendants. God can see all of the people in Jacob's line, and how this line goes to Jesus the Messiah. God can also see the entirety of Esau's line. Even though God can see some men who are believers (all of whom are named here in this chapter of Genesis), the line of Esau is going nowhere. It is not going to culminate in the Savior of mankind. It is not even going to end up as a client nation at some point. So, even though there are believers and unbelievers in both lines, one line is going to continue all the way to the birth of Jesus; and then it will continue after that. The other line goes nowhere. There is nothing spiritually significant about Esau's genealogical line.

Now, when it comes to imputed righteousness, God had given that to both Jacob and Esau. Therefore, from the standpoint of His righteousness, God loves both men, because He loves His righteousness, which righteousness has been imputed to both men. We will meet both Jacob and Esau in heaven; along with all of the people named in Genesis 36. I believe that they will be in heaven as well.

Over and over again, Esau is going to reject the most important birthright. A portion of this birthright takes us to the Savior of mankind. Esau did not value that or the land grant or anything else that God had promised to Abraham and Isaac (his father and grandfather). So, even though Esau is a believer in the Revealed God, he did not value his legal birthright nor did his descendants.

Even though Esau and Jacob eventually go their separate ways, they do so as believers. Jacob's sons are believers; but Esau's sons are believers as well. But the descendants of Esau are only going to be faithful to God for so long. Eventually, nearly all of Esau's descendants will reject the Revealed God; and they will also reject God's people, the sons of Jacob. Very early on, when Israel is traveling through the desert, going toward the land of promise, Edom (the nation from Esau) stops them and prevents them from going forward. Even though these two nations are brothers, Edom stops Israel. "Find some other way to get there; you are not traveling through our land." (the essence of Numbers 20:18–21). When God looked at Esau, God also saw this.

Nevertheless, God the Holy Spirit through Moses tells the Israelites, right before they enter into the land: "You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a sojourner in his land." (Deuteronomy 23:7)

So, it is not that Jacob is a believer and Esau is not. It is that many of Jacob's descendants will believe in the Revealed God; and in the perfect timing of God, many will believe in God's Son (Who will be born to the line of Israel). Esau's line, on the other hand, is going to become less and less interested in God and more and more interested in attacking the line of Jacob (1Samuel 14:47 2Samuel 8:11–14 2Kings 8:20–22).

God, when He looks at both men, does not just see them, but He sees all of their descendants as well. God sees His Own people in the line of Jacob but He counts among their enemies the line of Esau.

Nevertheless, God provides for our edification this chapter in Genesis. God dedicates a full chapter of Genesis to Esau because he believes in the Revealed God. All of his sons believe in the Revealed God; and many of the next generation believe as well. But, at some point, that faith disappears. In this chapter, we hear the names of those who believe in the True God. However, for the most part, we only hear their names. The line of Edom continues, but rarely do hear the specific name of an Edomite after this.

Jacob and his sons and their descendants lead us to Jesus the Christ. The line of Esau leads us nowhere. So, even before Jacob and Esau did anything wrong, God, in His omniscience, looked down the corridors of time. God could see and evaluate both lines and make that determination, "Jacob I love, but Esau I have hated."

[Genesis 36:1](#) And these are the generations of Esau, that is Edom.

As we have studied before, this is the *tôwl<sup>e</sup>dôth* (תְּדִלּוֹת) [pronounced *toh<sup>l</sup>-DOTH*], the plural construct which means *generations, results, proceedings, genealogies, history, course of history; origin; families; races*. Although many times, this introduces a genealogy, that is not always the case. Strong's #8435 BDB #410.

We have studied cluster and linear genealogies. A cluster genealogy is one which looks at 2 or 3 or 4 generations, where several sons in each line are named. A cluster genealogy is rarely followed out in Scripture. What we find most often is, the cluster genealogy is never picked up and continued somewhere else. However, the people from this genealogy might be mentioned elsewhere.

A linear genealogy is the genealogy of the line of the Messiah, and every generation from Adam to Mary is carefully preserved, over centuries of recorded history. A linear genealogy is always picked up somewhere and always leads to the humanity of Jesus Christ (or to His legal father, Joseph). Many different authors in the Old Testament were inspired to record portions of the genealogy of our Lord, while not necessarily realizing where this genealogy would lead.

Occasionally, a cluster genealogy fits quite nicely between two linear genealogies. This is true of the genealogy at the end of Genesis 35.

The only exception to this classification of linear and cluster genealogies, is found in the first 9 or 10 chapters of 1Chronicles, where several lines are followed out, including the line of the Messiah. Most of these lines are the sons of Jacob.

There has been loose talk in theology over the *lost ten tribes of Israel* (those tribes from the northern kingdom who were dispersed in the 5<sup>th</sup> stage of national discipline). Those early chapters of 1Chronicles are God saying, "I know where everyone is."

There is some limited overlap in these two types of genealogies. In the previous chapter, we had, more or less a cluster genealogy (Jacob and his sons); and one of those lines (Judah's) will lead to the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this chapter, we will study the line of Esau, the other son of Isaac. The sons of Esau are known as the Edomites and they lived south of the Dead Sea. Even though there might be descendants of Esau even today, they do not carry with them the same identity as the Jewish people do. Unless a person is a Jew as the result of a conversion, every Jew that you meet has the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in them (and his descendants therefore carry the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob). Many times, marriages remain within the Jewish community. Because of this, many non-racial converts have children who are racially Jewish (because they marry someone who is racially Jewish).

As an aside, before we delve into Esau's line, know that there are genetic (racial) Jews and there are religious Jews. Almost all religious Jews are racial Jews (recent converts excepted), but many modern Jews are not tied to their heritage by religion—only by genes. Most have some knowledge of their spiritual heritage, but not with any sort of full

understanding of what that means. Interestingly enough, this suggests that many *non-religious Modern Jews* have more in common with Esau than with Abraham.

Esau did not value his spiritual heritage as much as Jacob did (even though Esau was probably a nicer person than Jacob was).

### **Ron Snider on, *Why study the line of a man on negative volition?***

1. To demonstrate the veracity of God's Word. Gen. 17:6 25:23
2. To demonstrate historical knowledge and accuracy which lends credibility to Moses writings. (Snider and many other fine Bible teachers believe incorrectly that Genesis was written by Moses.)
3. To introduce certain characters or groups which play a role in the later history of Israel. Eliphaz or a close descendant is mentioned in Job 2:11; Teman is used in the prophets; Amalek is quite important as well.

Point 2 ought to be: *To demonstrate the historical knowledge and accuracy that lends credibility to the Genesis record.*

As I have mentioned in my exegesis of the book of Job, the Eliphaz named here may or may not be related to the Eliphaz in the book of Job.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed December 9, 2015.

**Genesis 36:2** Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan, Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite,

It is easy for your eyes to glaze over when you begin hearing the names of these various peoples of this era.

### **Hittites, Hivites and Horites**

1. A Hittite is a descendant of Heth, who is the son of Canaan (Genesis 10:15) (Canaan is a son of Ham), so that Hittite and Canaanite are often umbrella terms which take in many of the inhabitants of Canaan (see Genesis 10:15–19).
  - 1) Many times, one group of people will settle a land, and that land will take their name.
  - 2) However, as other groups of people move into that land, they assimilate become known by the name of the land. We saw this with Laban, who is called an Aramæan (Genesis 31:24).
  - 3) When someone moves for a foreign country to the United States and assimilates, they become *Americans*. In the 2016 primary, at least 3 Republican candidates were sons of immigrants.
2. The Hivites are a smaller, more specific clan who are descendants of Canaan (and possibly of Heth). Hamor and Shechem, from Genesis 34, were both Hivites. Anah, the father (mother?) of Oholibamah, was a Hivite. Genesis 10:15–17 34:2 36:2



## Hittites, Hivites and Horites

3. The Horites were the original inhabitants of Seir (also called Edom). This is not necessarily a family name, but could simply be a reference to them a cave-dwellers (*hor* means *mountain, hill*). Horites were known as cave dwellers. It appears that the Horites and the people of Esau may have formed a marriage alliance. Genesis 14:6 36:20
4. It is possible that the name *Horite* is used elsewhere as a generic term, not referring specifically to the people of Seir, but to mountain people of any group.

Sometimes, it is just nice to have a scorecard.

[Genesis 36:3](#) And Basemath the daughter of Ishmael, sister of Nebajoth.

You may recall that Esau married two Hittite women, who became the bane of their mother-in-law's existence (Genesis 26:34–35). They lived in Canaan and Heth was a son of Canaan's. So they can be called Canaanites or Hittites.

[Genesis 26:34–35](#) When Esau was forty years old, he took Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite to be his wife, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and they made life bitter for Isaac and Rebekah.

After marrying these Hittite women, Esau married an Ishmaelite woman, because his parents were displeased with his Hittite wives. Ishmaelites are related to Esau. Esau is the son of Isaac, grandson of Abraham. Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Hagar, the Egyptian servant girl.

[Genesis 28:8–9](#) So when Esau saw that the Canaanite women did not please Isaac his father, Esau went to Ishmael and took as his wife, besides the wives he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.

Going to Ishmael, simply meant that Esau went to the people of Ishmael and found a wife among them. *Abraham's son* simply refers back to Abraham; *the sister of Nebaioth* refers back to Mahalath, Esau's wife of the family of Ishmael.

There are some problems with exactly who were the wives of Esau.

### Comparing the Wives of Esau

Genesis 26:34 28:9	Genesis 36:1–3
Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite	
Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite	Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite
	Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite

## Comparing the Wives of Esau

### Genesis 26:34 28:9

Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth

### Genesis 36:1–3

Basemath the daughter of Ishmael, sister of Nebajoth.

We have a few things which appear to match up—Basemath, the second Hittite woman named, is the daughter of Elon the Hittite, as is Adah. It has been asserted by most that these are the same woman, where *Basemath* is a nickname that means *fragrance*.

It is unlikely that Judith is the same as Oholibamah. However, this is not an impossibility if her father is named in Genesis 26 and mother in Genesis 36. There is a reason that *Anah* may have the nickname *Beeri*, which will be discussed in v. 24.

We do not know if Mahalath and Basemath are the same women or if they are sisters as well.

Ron Snider suggests<sup>76</sup> that some husbands renamed their wives.

Here is what we know about Esau's wives.

### Esau's Wives

1. Judith is only mentioned once and never in connection with any children.
2. Basemath1 is never named again after Genesis 26 and never in connection with children.
3. Mahalath is never mentioned again; and never with children.
4. The women in this chapter are all associated with children. Their names will be repeated within this chapter. *Oholibamah* is given to a chief for a name (v. 41), which is unusual, as this is a feminine name.
5. Most agree that Judith is *not* Oholibamah (although they could be, as Judith's father is named in Genesis 26:34; and Oholibamah's mother is named Genesis 36:2). However, that in itself would suggest that these are different women.
6. Basemath1 and Adah are both said to have the same father. For this reason, they are often seen as the same person. It is not unusual for people to be known by two different names.
7. However, bear in mind that these could be sisters. Marrying sisters was not as unusual as you might think. Jacob married two sisters.
8. If Esau later married a woman with the name Basemath (Basemath 2), then it would make sense for them to come up with another name by which to call one of these women by a different name (a nickname, a middle name, whatever).
9. Only the women on the right-hand side of the chart are said to have children.
10. There are a variety of possibilities:
  - 1) All 6 women are different. Therefore, Esau married two pairs of sisters.

<sup>76</sup> From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed December 9, 2015.

## Esau's Wives

You may recall that there was a custom in that time of, when a husband died without raising up children, his brother sometimes would take his place in the marriage, and the first child would be seen as the deceased brother's child. Could a similar thing be a part of the culture for women who have died childless?

- 2) If all 6 women are different, we have no idea what happened to the 3 women on the left-hand side of the list. Did they remain married to Esau but without children? Did they die early on? Did he divorce them? If Basemath1 is different from Adah, then it is less likely that he would divorce one sister and then marry another.
  - 3) Basemath1 could be the same as Adah.
  - 4) Mahalath could be the same as Basemath2.
  - 5) Any of the wives from the left-side of the list could have died or been divorced.
  - 6) The father of the women would be much more actively involved in their marriages than in today's culture. A father could see to it that his daughter did not marry Charley Brown, if that is the father's intention.
11. Esau's line will be given again in 1Chron. 1:35–54, but Esau's wives will not be named.
  12. One of the few things that we can say for certain is, Basemath1 cannot be the same as Basemath2. The first was the daughter of a Hittite, and therefore was trouble for Isaac and Rebekah. Basemath2 was an Ishmaelite—part of the family of Abraham.
  13. To sum up, there are no contradictions here; just no simple answers or clear-cut explanations.

Joe Pranevich writes: *Genesis is simply unclear about exactly how many wives Esau had, what their names were, and who their parents were.*<sup>77</sup> Clicking on this [link](#) actually gives you 3 possible charts on whether Esau had 3, 4 or 6 wives total.

Keep in mind that the women named in this chapter are all associated with bearing children. In the Hebrew, names that end in *-ah* or *-ath* generally refer to women.

**Genesis 36:4** And Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau. And Basemath bore Reuel.

Chronicles looks back centuries later at various genealogies; but Genesis seems to have been written close to the time of these people being born, and we see them being born probably in the order that they were born. The first 9 or 10 chapters of Chronicles probably came from genealogical records which were being kept.

**Genesis 36:5** And Oholibamah bore Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. These were the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

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<sup>77</sup> From [Coat of Many Colors](#); accessed August 3, 2015.

So far: 3 wives and 6 sons. When Esau and Jacob live near one another in Canaan, Esau sired these 6 sons.

**Genesis 36:6** And Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters, and all the souls of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had gotten in the land of Canaan, and went into the country away from the face of his brother Jacob.

It appears that Esau and Jacob, for a time, after their father's death, tried living near one another. They both have 12 sons, they both have multiple wives, they both are very rich in livestock, and they had just lost their father (Genesis 35:29); so it would make sense for them to spend time together. It would even make sense for Esau to relocate near Jacob, as they are family.

What seems to be the case is, Esau, after Jacob moved east, Esau went south and settled in Seir. Then he returned to Canaan, after the death of their father (or a little before the death of their father), and Esau and Jacob lived side-by-side. Then Esau took his people and returned to Seir.

All the wives and children named so far would have been known personally by Jacob.

**Genesis 36:7** For their riches were more than that they might dwell together. And the land of their travels could not bear them because of their cattle.

However, obviously they came to a point where they had so many individual possessions that they needed to separate. They could not keep their livestock separate when living in such close proximity. God had blessed both men greatly.

**Genesis 36:8** And Esau lived in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom.

Esau originally moved to this area; and he apparently moved back to this area.

## **Lesson 382: Genesis 36:9–30**

## **The Genealogical Lines of Esau and Seir**

**Genesis 36:9–14** And these are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites, in Mount Seir. These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau; Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz: Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz, Esau's son. And she bore to Eliphaz Amalek. These were the sons of Adah, Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Reuel: Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah; these were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife. And she bore to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

We first follow out the lines of Eliphaz (Esau's son by Adah) and Reuel (Esau's son by Basemath).

This is the first mention of Amalek the man. The mention of the Amalekites back in Genesis 14:7 was probably a gloss.

### Amalek, by Ron Snider

1. This section gives us the account of Esau after he relocated from Canaan to the mountains of Seir.
2. The significant person for our future purposes will be Amalek in vs 12.
3. He was the illegitimate son of a concubine and was the ancestor of the Amalekites, or shepherd kings.
4. They are known in history by the more familiar term, Hyksos.
5. They were hostile to Israel at the time of the Exodus and moved into Egypt and took over the devastated country.
6. Most historians cannot explain their appearance in Egypt, how they came to power, etc. since they do not identify them in the correct time frame or dynasties.

Snider is making some very strong historical statements here.

From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed December 9, 2015.

Fortunately, someone has already done the work for me putting together this table.

Genesis 36:1–14	Meanings
1 Now these [are] the generations of Esau, who [is] Edom.	<u>Esau</u> = "hairy" <u>Edom</u> = "red"
2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite;	<u>Esau</u> = "hairy" <u>Canaan</u> = "lowland" <u>Adah</u> = "ornament" <u>Elon</u> = "terebinth, mighty" <u>Hittite</u> = "descendant of Heth" <u>Aholibamah</u> = "tent of the high place" <u>Anah</u> = "answer" <u>Zibeon</u> = "coloured" <u>Hivite</u> = "villagers"
3 And Bashemath <b>Ishmael's</b> daughter, sister of Nebajoth.	<u>Bashemath or Basmath</u> = "spice" <u>Ishmael</u> = "God will hear" <u>Nebaioth</u> or Nebajoth = "heights"
4 And Adah bare to Esau <b>Eliphaz</b> ; and Bashemath bare <b>Reuel</b> ;	<u>Adah</u> = "ornament" <u>Esau</u> = "hairy" <u>Eliphaz</u> = "my God is (fine) gold" <u>Bashemath or Basmath</u> = "spice" <u>Reuel</u> or Raguel = "friend of God"

**Genesis 36:1–14****Meanings**

- |    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 5  | And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these [are] the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.  | <u>Aholibamah</u> = "tent of the high place"<br><u>Jeush</u> = "assembler"<br><u>Esau</u> = "hairy"<br><u>Jaalam</u> = "concealed"<br><u>Korah</u> = "bald"  |
| 6  | And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. | <u>Esau</u> = "hairy"<br><u>Jacob</u> = "heel holder" or "supplanter"  |
| 7  | For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle.  |  |
| 8  | Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau [is] Edom.   | <u>Esau</u> = "hairy"<br><u>Edom</u> = "red"<br><u>Seir</u> = "hairy" or "shaggy"  |
| 9  | And these [are] the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir:  | <u>Esau</u> = "hairy"<br><u>Edom</u> = "red"<br><u>Seir</u> = "hairy" or "shaggy"  |
| 10 | These [are] the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, <b>Reuel</b> the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.  | <u>Esau</u> = "hairy"<br><u>Eliphaz</u> = "my God is (fine) gold"<br><u>Adah</u> = "ornament"<br><u>Bashemath or Basmath</u> = "spice"<br><u>Reuel</u> or Raguel = "friend of God"                                 |
| 11 | And the sons of <b>Eliphaz</b> were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.  | <u>Eliphaz</u> = "my God is (fine) gold"<br><u>Teman</u> = "south"<br><u>Omar</u> = "speaker" or "eloquent"<br><u>Zepho</u> or Zephi = "watch-tower"<br><u>Gatam</u> = "a burnt valley"<br><u>Kenaz</u> = "hunter" |



Genesis 36:1–14		Meanings
12	And Timna was concubine to <b>Eliphaz</b> Esau's son; and she bare to <b>Eliphaz</b> Amalek: these [were] the sons of Adah Esau's wife.	<u>Timna</u> or Timnah = "restrained" <u>Eliphaz</u> = "my God is (fine) gold" <u>Amalek</u> = "dweller in a valley" <u>Esau</u> = "hairy" <u>Adah</u> = "ornament"
13	And these [are] the sons of <b>Reuel</b> ; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.	<u>Esau</u> = "hairy" <u>Bashemath or Basmath</u> = "spice" <u>Reuel</u> or Raguel = "friend of God" <u>Nahath</u> = "rest" <u>Zerah</u> or Zarah = "rising"
14	And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.	<u>Aholibamah</u> = "tent of the high place" <u>Esau</u> = "hairy" <u>Jeush</u> = "assembler" <u>Jaalam</u> = "concealed" <u>Zibeon</u> = "coloured" <u>Korah</u> = "bald"

The reason I included this chart was, it reveals that most of the parents were not thinking about God when these children were born (there are notable exceptions, of course). Two sons of Esau (both bolded) who have a reference to God in their names. One of them, Eliphaz, seems to have a name which is opposed to God, as it means *my god [is] fine gold*.

Chart from [Bible Wheel.com](http://BibleWheel.com); accessed February 2, 2016.

**Genesis 36:15–16** These were the chiefs of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the first-born of Esau: Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, Chief Amalek. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these the sons of Adah.

Esau and Adah bear Eliphaz—7 chiefs are descended from him. *Chief* is the Hebrew word 'allûph (אֱלִיּוּף) [pronounced *ahl-LOOF*], and it means *leader, ruler, prince, chief; clans*. Strong's #441 BDB #48. Obviously, such a person was a leader; and he was probably and warrior as well.

**Genesis 36:17** And these were the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, and Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

Esau and Basemath bear Reuel—4 chiefs are descended from him.

**Genesis 36:18** And these were the sons of Oholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, Chief Korah. These were the chiefs of Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.

Esau and Oholibamah bear 3 sons, all of them chiefs.

Altogether, there will be 14 chiefs (or, *dukes*, *chiliarchs*) descended from Esau: 7 from Adah, 4 from Basemath and 3 from Aholibamah.

Legend:

1. **Charley Brown** (who is designated a chief)
  - 1) **Lucy** (who is in the line of Seir, but a wife of someone in the line of Esau)
  - 2) **Pigpen** (some old, dead dude)

Since we do not know how to match the wives up, they are listed as 6 different women below. As discussed earlier, we do not know what sort of overlap there has been on these women of Esau.

### The Descendants of Esau

Esau is the son of Isaac and Rebecca and the brother of Jacob

- I. Esau married Judith, the daughter of Beerli the Hittite. No children are named (Genesis 26:34)
- II. He also married Basemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite (Genesis 26:34)
- III. Esau married Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth (Genesis 28:9)
- IV. By wife Adah, also a daughter of Elon the Hittite (Genesis 36:2, 4, 10–12, 15–16 1Chron. 1:35–36): Eliphaz
  - A. Eliphaz's children: **Teman**, **Omar**, **Zepho**, **Gatam**, **Kenaz** (Korah is listed as a chief twice but as a son once)
  - B. Eliphaz's child by Timna, his mistress: **Amalek** (Genesis 36:12)
  - C. **Korah** is found in v. 16 as a chief descended from Eliphaz; but he is not named as a son in vv. 11–12. It is certainly possible to have two chiefs with the same name (they would have been descended from different mothers); and it is possible that the author who recorded this information did not know exactly how Korah<sup>1</sup> was in the Eliphaz line.
- V. By **Oholibamah**, daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite (Genesis 36:14):
  - A. **Jeush**
  - B. **Jalam**
  - C. **Korah**
- VI. By Basemath (Ishmael's daughter and sister of Nebaioth, and also called Mahalath in Genesis 28:9 (Genesis 36:3–4, 10, 17): Reuel
  - A. Reuel's children: **Nahath**, **Zerah**, **Shammah**, **Mizzah** (Genesis 36:13 1Chron. 1:37)

Perhaps you see a vague similarity between Jacob, his wives and children; and Esau with his wives and children.

This is an example of a cluster genealogy. A cluster genealogy follows out one person's line for 2, 3 or 4 generations, where several lines from that one person are followed. A cluster is never picked up again in Scripture unless it is a part of the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

The Edomites are those who are descended from Esau.

### David Guzak on the Edomites

1. When the Israelites came through the wilderness to the Promised Land in the time of Moses, the Edomites refused them passage through their land (Numbers 20:21). This was a source of great discouragement for the nation (Numbers 21:4).
2. Even so, God commanded special regard for the Edomites among Israel: You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother (Deuteronomy 23:7).
3. In the days of Saul, Edom was made subject to Israel (1Samuel 14:47), and David established garrisons there (2Samuel 8:14). But later, in the days of Joram, the son of Ahab, the Edomites became independent of Israel (2 Kings 8:16-22).
4. Several of the prophets spoke about and against Edom, including Jeremiah (Jeremiah 49:17-18) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 25:12-14).
5. Herod the Great—the one who tried to kill the young child Jesus—was an Edomite. From the time Islam conquered the Middle East, the region has been virtually unoccupied, except for a few Bedouins and military outposts. It has been brought to nothing, as Obadiah had prophesied (the entire book of Obadiah records an extended prophecy against Edom).

From [Enduring Word](#); accessed February 2, 2016.

**Genesis 36:19** These were the sons of Esau, and these their chiefs. He is Edom.

It appears that Esau formed an alliance with Seir the Horite; and that these two families intermarried.

You may recall that in Genesis 34, that Hamor and his son Shechem proposed that their family intermarry with Jacob's family, which would have destroyed their unique origins. Events made such an alliance impossible to accept. However, we seem to have a melding of Esau and Seir, as Esau saw no reason to keep himself as a separate family from Seir. Esau was from the seed of Abraham and Isaac, but he did not see his unique heritage as being very important.

*Horite* means *cave-dweller*, which is apropos considering the mountain that they occupied.

It is interesting that the sons of Seir are recorded here. The only explanation I can offer is, many (or all) of those listed below also believed in the God of Abraham (I think that most people named in these genealogies represent the saved of that line).

Genesis 36:15–19	Meanings
<p><b>15</b> These [were] dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of <b>Eliphaz</b> the firstborn [son] of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz,</p>	<p><b>Esau</b> = "hairy"  <b>Eliphaz</b> = "my God is (fine) gold"  <b>Teman</b> = "south"  <b>Omar</b> = "speaker" or "eloquent"  <b>Zepho</b> or Zephi = "watch-tower"  <b>Kenaz</b> = "hunter"</p>
<p><b>16</b> Duke Korah, duke Gatam, [and] duke Amalek: these [are] the dukes [that came] of <b>Eliphaz</b> in the land of Edom; these [were] the sons of Adah.</p>	<p><b>Adah</b> = "ornament"  <b>Edom</b> = "red"  <b>Eliphaz</b> = "my God is (fine) gold"  <b>Korah</b> = "bald"  <b>Gatam</b> = "a burnt valley"  <b>Amalek</b> = "dweller in a valley"</p>
<p><b>17</b> And these [are] the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these [are] the dukes [that came] of <b>Reuel</b> in the land of Edom; these [are] the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.</p>	<p><b>Esau</b> = "hairy"  <b>Edom</b> = "red"  <b>Bashemath or Basmath</b> = "spice"  <b>Reuel</b> or Raguel = "friend of God"  <b>Zerah</b> or Zarah = "rising"  <b>Nahath</b> = "rest"</p>
<p><b>18</b> And these [are] the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these [were] the dukes [that came] of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife.</p>	<p><b>Aholibamah</b> = "tent of the high place"  <b>Esau</b> = "hairy"  <b>Jeush</b> = "assembler"  <b>Jaalam</b> = "concealed"  <b>Korah</b> = "bald"</p>
<p><b>19</b> These [are] the sons of Esau, who [is] Edom, and these [are] their dukes.</p>	<p><b>Esau</b> = "hairy"  <b>Edom</b> = "red"</p>

Chart from [Bible Wheel.com](http://Bible Wheel.com); accessed February 2, 2016.

**Genesis 36:20–21** These were the sons of Seir the Horite living in the land: Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.

There was a lot of intermarriage between the family of Esau and the family of Seir. However, their sons formed distinct family lines. This is what we would expect. It is quite

common in that era for the husband's name in lineage to be foremost. So, a woman of Edom might marry a man of Seir; and their children would be considered children of Seir.

Ron Snider suggests<sup>78</sup> that these are the people of Seir and their lines prior to Esau going to Edom.

**Genesis 36:22** And the sons of Lotan: Hori and Heman; and Lotan's sister was Timna.

Timna is probably the mistress of Eliphaz (v. 12), given that she is named here specifically.

**Genesis 36:23** And these were the sons of Shobal: Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

Shobal is the second son of Seir.

**Genesis 36:24** And these were the sons of Zibeon: both Aiah and Anah (he is Anah that found the hot springs in the desert as he fed the asses of Zibeon, his father).

Zibeon is the third son of Seir.

Anah is one of the few men to have anything actually said about him. He discovered the hot springs out in the desert.

Now, Anah may have gotten the nickname *Beeri* (which means *his well*) because of this. If that is true, then Judith would be equivalent to Oholibamah. This was suggested by Ron Snider.<sup>79</sup>

**Genesis 36:25** And the sons of Anah were these: Dishon. And Oholibamah was the daughter of Anah.

Oholibamah is a wife of Esau's.

**Genesis 36:26** And these were sons of Dishon: Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

Dishon is the 5<sup>th</sup> son of Seir.

**Genesis 36:27** The sons of Ezer were these: Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan.

Ezer is the 6<sup>th</sup> son of Seir.

**Genesis 36:28** The sons of Dishan were these: Uz and Aran.

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<sup>78</sup> From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed December 9, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed December 9, 2015.

Dishan is the 7<sup>th</sup> son of Seir.

**Genesis 36:29–30** These were the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

Legend:

1. **Charley Brown** (who is designated a chief)
  - 1) **Lucy** (who is in the line of Seir, but a wife of someone in the line of Esau)
  - 2) **Pigpen** (some old, dead dude)

### The Descendants of Seir

We do not know anything about Seir's family background

1. **Lotan**, who is said to be a chief in Genesis 36:29, and called of the Horites in Genesis 36:29 (1Chron. 1:38)
  - 1) Hori and Hemam (called Homam in 1Chron. 1:39)
2. **Shobal** (Genesis 36:20, 23 1Chron. 1:40 and called a chief in Genesis 36:29)
  - 1) Alvan (or, Alian), Manahath, Ebal, Shepho (or Shephi), Onam
3. **Zibeon** (Genesis 36:24; a chief in Genesis 36:29)
  - 1) Alah
  - 2) **Anah** (called a son of Seir, but probably a grandson—cp Genesis 36:20–21, 24; called a chief in Genesis 36:29)
    - (1) **Dishon** (called a son of Seir, but probably a great grandson—cp Genesis 36:20–21, 25; called a chief in Genesis 36:30)
      - a. Hemdan (or, Hamran), Eshban, Ithran, Cheran (1Chron. 1:41)
    - (2) **Oholibamah** (daughter)
4. **Ezer** (Genesis 36:21, 27, 30 1Chron. 1:42)
  - 1) Bilhan, Zaavan, Akan
5. **Dishan** (Genesis 36:21, 28, 30 1Chron. 1:42)
  - 1) Uz and Aran
6. **Timna**, who is called the sister of Lotan; but not called the daughter of Seir; she becomes the mistress of Eliphaz, the son of Esau (Genesis 36:12, 22 1Chron. 1:39)

### Genesis 36:20–28

### Meanings

20 These [are] the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah,

**Seir** = "hairy" or "shaggy"  
**Horite** = "cave dweller"  
**Lotan** = "covering"  
**Shobal** = "flowing"  
**Zibeon** = "coloured"



**Genesis 36:20–28****Meanings**

<b>21</b>	And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these [are] the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.	<u>Dishon</u> = "thresher" <u>Horite</u> = "cave dweller" <u>Ezer</u> = "treasure" <u>Seir</u> = "hairy" or "shaggy" <u>Edom</u> = "red"
<b>22</b>	And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister [was] Timna.	<u>Timna</u> or Timnah = "restrained" <u>Lotan</u> = "covering"
<b>23</b>	And the children of Shobal [were] these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.	<u>Shobal</u> = "flowing"
<b>24</b>	And these [are] the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this [was that] Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.	<u>Zibeon</u> = "coloured" <u>Anah</u> = "answer"
<b>25</b>	And the children of Anah [were] these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.	<u>Dishon</u> = "thresher" <u>Aholibamah</u> = "tent of the high" <u>Anah</u> = "answer"place"
<b>26</b>	And these [are] the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.	<u>Dishon</u> = "thresher"
<b>27</b>	The children of Ezer [are] these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan.	<u>Ezer</u> = "treasure"
<b>28</b>	The children of Dishan [are] these; Uz, and Aran.	<u>Dishon</u> = "thresher" Uz = "wooded" Aran = "joyous"

The reason I included this chart was, it reveals that none of the parents in the line of Seir were thinking about God when these children were born.

This chart was developed in order to explore any possible *symbolic meaning* in this passage. Most of the time, I struggle with the clear meaning of the passage (however, there was a list of names that we studied early on in Genesis wherein was found the gospel message).

As a general rule, when the people of the Old Testament are in line with the plan of God, then we often see foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus Christ (also known as, *typology*). And, as a general rule, when we study people who are outside of the plan of God, then little or no foreshadowing is taking place.

Because of their association with Esau (who did believe in the God of his father), many (if not all those named above) probably exercised faith in the Revealed God.

Chart from [Bible Wheel.com](http://BibleWheel.com); accessed February 2, 2016.

## Lesson 383: Genesis 36:31–43

## The Edomites/Lessons from Edom

The land of Edom was quite civilized and had a variety of kings reigning over their people, long before Israel existed as a nation.

**Genesis 36:31–39** And these were the kings that reigned in the land of Edom before the reigning of a king over the sons of Israel. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom. And the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah, from Bozrah, reigned in his place. And Jobab died, and Husham from the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad died, and Samlah from Masrekah reigned in his place. And Samlah died, and Shaul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his place. And Shaul died, and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Pau. And his wife's name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

Today, one of the terms bandied about is *white privilege*. These are the people who appear to have a head-start on everyone else, who first made the wealth, and then preserved it for themselves and their descendants. Essentially, this is what we have in Esau. Esau's clan was established long before Jacob's clan was established. A well-organized kingdom developed in the land of Edom long before Israel was a nation. Therefore, by human viewpoint, Edom should have been the superior nation. They possessed the wealth because they got the head start. However, it does not matter who first lays claim to a piece of land or which nation comes first—the key is always relationship to God.

This is why the British Empire, for a time, was unprecedented in its greatness and in its control outside its own borders. They brought law and order as well as the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the world. However, as their spiritual vigor waned, so did their empire.

We are experiencing the same thing in the United States. In the 1950's and early 1960's, Billy Graham could be seen coast-to-coast on prime time television, telling people about the Lord Jesus Christ. During that same era, one of the greatest teaching ministries emerged in Houston, Texas. The national relationship to Jesus Christ coincided both with American's greatest modern president and with the influence of the United States

throughout the world. In the past decade or so, it is clear that our interest in things spiritual is declining, and so is our influence for good throughout the world.

And, for the first time since Reagan, we have had sustained periods of time where our economic growth has been equal to or below our population growth. Throughout the presidencies of Reagan, Bush, Clinton and G. W. Bush, an average of 3% growth was common, which outpaces our population growth. The key to our decline in growth is our reduced interest, as a nation, in God.

**Genesis 36:40–43** And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alvah, Chief Jetheth, Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, Chief Magdiel, Chief Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwellings in the land of their possession; he is Esau the father of the Edomites.

Interestingly enough, at least two of the chiefs named above are women; and not all of the chiefs named before are found here. These would have been people who achieved a position of prominence in Seir/Edom. Notice how you do not know anyone with those names nor do you know anyone descended from these people. In their time, they were people of prominence, but over time, their glory fades as the flower of the grass. Psalm 103:15–16 *As for man, his days are like grass; As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more, And its place acknowledges it no longer.* (NASB) Isa. 40:6b–8 *All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, When the breath of the LORD blows upon it; Surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.* (NASB) These great men of renown are now just a list of names, and they have left nothing else behind.

*Ron Snider: For the unbelievers among the Edomites, this is their piece of history. They have nothing permanent in time, and certainly no inheritance in eternity. The believer has a future inheritance which is beyond comprehension, and should not get bogged down in the details of time and life in the cosmos.<sup>80</sup>*

Let me suggest to you that Esau believed in the Revealed God; and it is reasonable to think that many of his sons and even some grandsons also believed in the God of Abraham. However, their interest in God was superficial, and it eventually dissipated. You will recall that we looked at the meanings of the names, and most parents gave no thought to God as they welcomed new life into the world.

In any case, the sons of Esau were a very organized group of people, who apparently became a very large and powerful people. However, their negative volition toward the Jews revealed their negative volition toward the God of the Jews, and that proved to be their eventual undoing.

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<sup>80</sup> From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed December 9, 2015.

After 39 years in the desert, God tells Moses to bring his people to the east side of the Jordan, in order to enter into the Land of Promise from the east. This would require them to travel through the land of Esau and Seir. The Edomites refused to allow the Jews entry into their land, which indicates negative volition on the part of the Edomites. Generally speaking, negative volition toward the Jews indicates negative volition toward their God.

At this point in time, in Scripture, the sons of Edom are building a great kingdom. However, this kingdom will end, and fade like all the glory of man fades.

This doctrine takes us essentially from their inception to the exodus.

### **Doctrine of the Edomites—Part I**

1. Esau was Jacob's fraternal twin. He was a nicer guy than Jacob, but he would not be the one to further the worship of Y<sup>e</sup>howah, the Revealed God. He never fully appreciated the God of Abraham (although he was certainly a believer in the Revealed God). Esau is the father of the Edomites.
2. Esau was also called Edom (i.e., *red*) in Genesis 25:30 because he exchanged his birthright for a bowl of red vegetable soup (which would be not unlike, in terms of desirability, chili or red beans and rice). This may have been a reference to his color at birth. Also see Genesis 36:1, 8, 19.
3. Edom was also used as the name of the land where his descendants dwelt (Genesis 32:3 36:20, 21, 30) and as the designation of his descendants (Genesis 36:1–17 Num. 20:18, 20, 21).
4. There came to be great animosity between Jacob and his twin brother Esau when Jacob tricked his father and received what was supposed to have been a blessing upon Esau (Genesis 27 records the deception; the animosity is found in Genesis 27:41).
5. This animosity was the seed which grew into the great enmity between Israel and Edom (e.g., Num. 20:18–21 1Kings 11:14).
  - a) Edom refused to allow Israel to travel along the King's Highway during the exodus from Egypt (Num. 20:14–21 21:4 Judges 11:17–18)
  - b) When Judah eventually fell, the Edomites rejoiced (Psalm 137:7)
  - c) Edom was under divine judgement due to her bitter hatred of Israel (Jer. 49:7–22 Lam. 4:21–22 Ezek. 25:12–14 35:15 Joel 3:19 Amos 9:12 Obad. 10).
6. However, there appears to be a time when Esau and Jacob mended their differences and they even lived in close proximity with one another. Genesis 36:6–8
7. The Israelites were forbidden to allow mental attitude sins fester against the Edomites as God made provision for any Edomite to become a part of Israel (Deut. 23:7–8). Joshua allowed the extension of Judah up to the border of Edom, but he did not take any land from them (Josh. 15:1, 21)\* even though Balaam had already predicted that Edom would lose its independence (Num. 24:18).
8. The portion of real estate that they occupied was previously called the land of Seir (Genesis 32:3 36:20, 21, 30 Num. 24:18). The boundaries of Edom began

## Doctrine of the Edomites—Part I

at the Wadi Zered and went to the Gulf of Aqabah for approximately 100 miles and extended to both sides of Arabah (the desert of Edom) (2Kings 3:8, 20). This included the valley between the Dead sea and the Red Sea (Genesis 14:6 Deut. 2:1, 12 Josh. 15:1 Judges 11:17, 18 1Kings 9:26). The famous King's Highway passed along its eastern plateau (Num. 20:14–18).

**Map of Edom;** from [Jesuswalk.com](http://Jesuswalk.com); accessed February 16, 2016.

9. This area that they occupied was rugged, mountainous area with 3500 ft. peaks, and few cultivatable areas (Num. 20:17, 19 Jer. 49:16).<sup>\*</sup> This was, originally, given specifically to them (Deut. 3:2), referred to as a rich and fertile piece of real estate by Zodhiates and one which could not be easily cultivated (as per ZPEB). Zodhiates mentions that the land was transversed by many roads.
10. We have no direct records from the Edomites themselves; none of their written records or inscriptions survived over the past few millenniums. Our information concerning them has come through the Scriptures and from the historical records of the Egyptians and the Assyrians. They are found in the records of Merneptah (circa 1225–1215 B.C.) and Rameses III (circa 1198–1167 B.C.), both Pharaohs of Egypt. They speak of Edom and Seir as being their taxed subjects. Since the records of various kings tend to over exaggerate their strength, conquests and the extent of their authority, these claims may not be entirely accurate.

## Doctrine of the Edomites—Part I

11. Archeology has shown us that this land was occupied prior to the influx of the Edomites, indicating that after Esau migrated there, he and his progeny assimilated the original Horites (Genesis 14:6 26:34 36:2, 5–8, 20–30) along with the other inhabitants until the Edomites became the dominant population. The original form of leadership of the Horites, wherein the rulers were known as tribal chiefs, was incorporated into the Edomite rulership (Genesis 36:15–19, 40–43 Deut. 2:12, 22). It is not completely clear to me whether Seir is equivalent to the Horites or if these are different groups.
12. According to the finds of archeology, it seems as though there was some sort of break in the culture of Edom in this area between circa 1850 B.C. and 1300 B.C., during which the land was essentially uninhabited and occasionally transversed by roving bands of nomads.
13. Esau had moved to this area early on, even prior to Jacob's return from Harran (Genesis 32:3 36:6–8 Deut. 2:4, 5 Joshua 24:4). *Kings* (which were at first called tribal chiefs) ruled over this land much earlier than the advent of kings in the lives of the Israelites (Genesis 36:15–19, 31–39, 40–43 1Chron. 1:43–54).\*



Much of this doctrine was put together before I was careful about listing my sources. More than likely, many of these points came from ISBE or ZPEB (check under *Edom* and/or *Edomite*).

Possibly check <http://biblehub.com/topical/e/edomites.htm> for more information.

The attitude of the Edomites toward God is why you do not know anyone who is an Edomite. Because the Jews are God's chosen people, you probably know some Jews.

It is never who is there firstest with the mostest; it is, who has an enduring relationship with the God of Abraham. It is, who has received the promises of God. Learn from that fact.



Now, to close out this chapter:

### Lessons from Genesis 36

1. Twice in the Bible, we read, *Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated*. This chapter informs us that *God is not emotional* and *God did not give Esau the short end of the stick*.
2. The country of Edom was established long before Israel.
3. There was great organization and authority established in Edom.
4. All during this time, Israel was just a wandering clan; a family of not-so-nice people, for the most part. However, these people had a relationship with the Living God.
5. The people of Abraham (through Isaac and Jacob) are God's chosen people; the people of Edom are not the chosen line. This is why we all know people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but none of us knows a single Edomite.
6. Among men, in their era, the Edomites may have seemed to be a well-organized and powerful nation; and the clan of Jacob as some moderately-successful wandering shepherds.
7. As we have seen, God has preserved the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as unique and unmixed (they married a variety of women; but everyone in this family was *Jewish* and everyone in the line identified as coming from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and not as the result of two families).
8. We see in this chapter that the line of Esau intermingled with the line of Seir. Esau saw no reason to preserve the purity of his line. He did not view his line specifically as unique or related to God.
9. Both tribes were renown and well-organized at this time; but they depended upon themselves and not upon God's grace.
10. Because of their relationship to God, the Jews are still with us today; the Edomites are not.
11. The key to all things in life is, relationship with God.

You may not remember more than 3 or 4 names from this chapter; but you should remember the overriding principle: relationship with God is everything.

What we have studied so far and what we will study in the future will suggest that some of the patriarchs were not very nice. How do we know that the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is really the correct line, but the line of Esau is a divergent line?

### Why we know that the true line of promise goes through Jacob

1. Islamic doctrine claims that they are the line of God's promise. Why do we know that they are wrong and to the true line of promise goes through the Jews?
2. One way we know this is, there is only one complete genealogical line which takes us from the Old Testament into the New Testament, and that is the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and it includes Judah and King David. That line leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior and our God.

## Why we know that the true line of promise goes through Jacob

3. Jesus Christ is a natural culmination point, Whose line is followed in the Bible all the way from Adam to Mary and Joseph. Other genealogical lines might have personal significance to us; but there is no spiritual significance to them.
4. We will never pick it up and study the line of Esau ever again.
5. The most famous Edomite in human history is Herod the Great, who killed hundreds of Jewish babies, hoping to kill the Messiah by this act.
6. The names of the patriarchs are key. The patriarchs were not all spiritual giants, and yet the line of promise goes through all of them. They make up the 12 tribes of Israel. One reason that we know this is their names. The sons of Joseph were given names which associated most of them with the God of Abraham. This is not the case with the sons of Esau. You may recall that, when the sons of Jacob are named, there is a reason given for having this or that name—and many times, that name was somehow related to the God of Abraham.
7. In the Edomite line that we have just studied, there is almost no reference to God. God's name is conspicuously absent from this chapter. Both Leah and Rachel were occupied with the Revealed God, and both spoke of Him when naming their children (Genesis 29:32–30:13). You may recall Leah's greatest moment was changing her focus from her husband to God.
8. The line that leads to Jesus, our Savior, is the true Line of Promise. The line that leads eventually to Mohammed is unimportant. He was a murderer and a pedophile (actions which have become integrated into the faith of Islam). Furthermore, at the time of Mohammed, we already had the full and complete Word of God. No additional revelation was required.
9. The line of promise leads to Jesus, Who is God in the flesh (John 1:1–3, 14).
10. There is no clear line leading to Mohammed.
11. The key to the line of promise is relationship with God.

One of the popular movements today is those who are against *white privilege*, who complain that their lives suck because their ancestors did not have an equal start in life. White people started with everything; Blacks began as slaves with nothing. However, this complaint is shown to be nonsense by this historical example from the Bible. Also, this complaint is shown to be false by multiple examples of people who come to America with virtually nothing, and yet they raise children who are doctors, lawyers and business owners<sup>81</sup> (regardless of their skin pigmentation or national origin). As R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s grandmother used to tell him, "Every tub must stand on its own bottom."

We have examples in the United States of the children of great businessmen become great on their own (the Donald Trump family comes to mind). There have also been successful businessmen whose children essentially wasted away their heritage and inheritance. Again, the saying, "Every tub must stand on its own bottom."

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<sup>81</sup> In fact, at least 3 of the original candidates for president in the 2016 primary are sons of immigrants.

Because some people waste away their inheritance is never a reason for the government to step in and take the inheritance of a family. So-called white privilege is not a reason for the government to seize a family's assets, simply because they have been successful over a long period of time. The government itself does nothing but waste away an enormous amount of money that it takes in.

With this, we leave Genesis 36 and we will begin Genesis 37 next time.

## Lesson 383 addendum: Genesis 36:1–43

## A brief review of Genesis 36

### An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 36:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y<sup>e</sup>howah) is represented with the actual Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masorettes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

### Subunits of Genesis 36

		<a href="#">Introduction to Genesis 36</a>
vv.	1–14	<a href="#">Esau's Wives and Sons</a>
vv.	15–19	<a href="#">Tribal Leaders from Esau</a>
vv.	20–30	<a href="#">Seir and His Descendants</a>
vv.	31–39	<a href="#">The Kings in Edom</a>
vv.	37–43	<a href="#">The Chiefs of Esau</a>

### Introduction to Genesis 36

Quite frankly, I am not sure how I want to handle the summary of this chapter, so I went to the English Standard Version of this chapter and did a word cloud from it. My summary will be based, in part, from this graphic.

## Word Cloud of Genesis 36 (from the ESV)

The big name in this chapter is Esau.

The relationships most important here are *sons*, *daughters* and *wives*, in that order.

Also important, *Edom* which is the *land* where Esau and his extended family lived. The word *place* is prominent (another word for where they lived).



Just as prominent are the words *chiefs* and *reigned*. God did not simply kick Esau to the curb. God did not reject Esau.

Most people, when they read, *Jacob I loved but Esau I hated*, they don't get it. Most people make one of two sets of assumptions. First false assumption: Jacob is a pretty good and righteous guy, but Esau is not. God knew how they would turn out, and therefore, He loved Jacob. Second incorrect assumption: Jacob was saved (he believed in the Revealed God) but Esau was not. Therefore, both men fall under the categories of ultimate love and ultimate hatred. Neither of these things are true. If Edom was not a believer, then explain this chapter to me and explain the great blessing that Esau enjoyed.

Based on our study of the live of Jacob and Esau, so far, Esau seems to be a slightly better person. Maybe you would argue that, but it is not really clearcut. And when it comes to faith in the Revealed God, remember that, even though he did not fully understand or appreciate the blessings promised by God, he was still greatly blessed and so was his extended family. Esau and family will occupy and control a region and have law and order in that region (as there will be kings and princes who are in charge).

When God looks at Jacob, He sees Jacob's line and He sees that the line of Jacob will continue and produce the God-man, Jesus the Christ. During the Lord's earthly ministry, Jewish people turned to Jesus (not enough of them, but some); and Jewish people even today continue to believe in Jesus. But Esau, based upon the text of this chapter, continues for three or four generations of people who believe in the Revealed God. But,

at some point, we just don't know anything about them. We know about dozens of descendants in Jacob's line, men who have believed in the Lord and men whose genealogy goes all the way to Jesus. None of that exists in Esau's line. At some point, no more information is recorded. Why? His descendants stopped believing in his God.

Back to the graphic:

The important names in this list are Adah, Basemath and Oholibamah—Esau's three wives. Also important names from this list: Anah Reuel, Zibeon, and Eliphaz.

We almost have here a mirror image of the sons and descendants of Jacob. Now, the problem was not that Esau did not believe in the Revealed God or that his sons didn't. I would suggest that everyone named in this chapter believed in the Revealed God (and hence, his name is found in the Word of God). But this is not every descendant of Esau—just the ones God wants us to know.

The difference between the line of Esau and the line of Jacob is, the latter line will lead us eventually to Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is Jacob's line that is the chosen line; Jacob's sons are the seed of promise.

These preceding paragraphs may tell you all that you need to know about this chapter.

### **Esau's Wives and Sons**

Genesis 36:1 [And this is the genealogy of Ęsaw, who is Edom.](#)

Esau established his family in Edom. Edom is apparently somehow formed on the name Esau or derived from Esau, as the two names are considered the same.

Genesis 36:2–3 [Ęsaw took his wives from the daughters of Kena'an: Adah the daughter of Ęlon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Tsiḃ'on the Hiwwite; and Basemath, Yishma'ěl's daughter, sister of Nebayoth.](#)

Esau's three wives are Adah, Oholibamah and Basemath. Adah and Oholibamah were his Hittite wives and Basemath came from the family of Ishmael (she was his daughter). You may recall that we had some difficulties matching up the names with the wives previously named (although it appears that Esau only had the three wives).

Genesis 36:4 [And Adah bore Eliphaz to Ęsaw, and Basemath bore Re'u'ěl.](#)

Adah is one of Esau's Hittite wives and her first son (as far as we know) is Eliphaz. Basemath is Ishmael's daughter and her son born to Esau is Reuel.

Genesis 36:5 [And Oholibamah bore Ye'ush, and Ya'lam, and Qoraḥ. These were the sons of Ęsaw who were born to him in the land of Kena'an.](#)

This genealogical line appears to name the children in more or less the order that they were born to Esau.

Genesis 36:6 And Ěsaw took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the beings of his household, and his herds and all his beasts, and all his possessions which he had gained in the land of Kena'an, and went to a land away from the presence of his brother Ya'aqob.

At this point, Esau left Canaan and moved away from the presence of Jacob. Given that Esau stewed for quite awhile after Jacob received Esau's blessing from Isaac; and given that Esau was living in Seir when Jacob returned, this would indicate that Jacob was not actually present in Canaan at this time. However, because Canaan was Jacob's specific inheritance, Esau moved away from Jacob's presence (even though Jacob was not physically present at the time).

Genesis 36:7 For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and the land of their sojournings could not support them because of their herds.

The common way to understand this is, Jacob and Esau are living near one another in Canaan, but Esau moved away because their livestock kept getting mixed together.

Recall that Jacob did return to Canaan, and that their father actually remained alive for a considerable period of time. So there would be two possible ways for v. 7 to be true: (1) Esau did return to Canaan for a period of time, because both his brother and father were living in Canaan. However, he and Jacob had so much by way of livestock, that Esau and Jacob could not keep them separate. Therefore, Esau returned to Seir. (2) Esau moving to Seir was actually related to Jacob's inheritance (to come from Isaac) and his own cattle. While Jacob was gone, Esau decided to move to Seir and simply separate himself from Isaac's cattle, which were promised to Jacob.

It is possible that Esau returned to Canaan when Jacob returned; but then left again for Seir, which he had already conquered.

Genesis 36:8 So Ěsaw dwelt in Mount Sě'ir. Ěsaw is Edom.

In any case, Esau moved permanently to Seir.

Genesis 36:9 And this is the genealogy of Ěsaw the father of the Edomites in Mount Sě'ir.

What follows are the names of Esau's sons.

Genesis 36:10 These were the names of Ěsaw's sons: Eliphaz son of Adah, wife of Ěsaw, and Re'u'ěl son of Basemath, wife of Ěsaw.

Eliphaz, the first son of Esau named has five sons.



Genesis 36:11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Těman, Omar, Tsepho, and Gatam, and Qenaz.

The five sons of Eliphaz.

Genesis 36:12 And Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Ěsaw's son, and she bore Amalěq to Eliphaz. These were the sons of Adah, Ěsaw's wife.

Eliphaz has a mistress. Interestingly enough, the mistress is named but Esau's his wife is not. This suggests to me that Timna is a believer and Eliphaz's wife is not. The mistress has one son.

Genesis 36:13 These were the sons of Re'u'ěl: Naḥath and Zeraḥ, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Ěsaw's wife.

Reuel is the second son of Esau who is named, and he has four named sons.

Genesis 36:14 These were the sons of Oholibamah, Ěsaw's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Tsid'on. And she bore to Ěsaw: Ye'ush, and Ya'lam, and Qoraḥ.

Esau's wife, Oholibamah, gives Esau three sons.

### **Tribal Leaders from Esau**

Genesis 36:15–16 These were the chiefs of the sons of Ěsaw. The sons of Eliphaz, the first-born son of Ěsaw, were Chief Těman, Chief Omar, Chief Tsepho, Chief Qenaz, Chief Qoraḥ, Chief Gatam, Chief Amalěq. These were the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They were the sons of Adah.

These sons of Eliphaz, the first named son of Esau, are all chiefs. These men would be leaders, princes or rulers, which suggests that each one of them may have carved out a piece of Edom for himself.

It reads that they are sons of Adah. This means that they are descendants of Esau through Adah his wife.

Genesis 36:17 And these were the sons of Re'u'ěl, Ěsaw's son: Chief Naḥath, Chief Zeraḥ, Chief Shammah, and Chief Mizzah. These were the chiefs of Re'u'ěl in the land of Edom. These were the sons of Basemath, Ěsaw's wife.

Reuel, another son of Esau, had four sons who were also called chiefs. These men are also descendants of Basemath, another of Esau's wives.

Genesis 36:18 And these were the sons of Oholibamah, Ěsaw's wife: Chief Ye'ush, Chief Ya'lam, and Chief Qoraḥ. These were the chiefs descending from Oholibamah, Ěsaw's wife, the daughter of Anah.

Oholibamah had three sons who were also chiefs or leaders.

Genesis 36:19 These were the sons of Ĕsaw, who is Edom, and these were their chiefs.

Some of the sons and grandsons of Esau became leaders.

### **Seir and His Descendants**

Genesis 36:20–21 These were the sons of Sě'ir the Ḥorite who inhabited the land: Lotan, and Shoḃal, and Tsib'on, and Anah, and Dishon, and Ĕtser, and Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Ḥorites, the sons of Sě'ir, in the land of Edom.

Edom appears to be a portion of land carved out of Seir. Up to this point in the Genesis record, Seir is spoken of as a geographical region. However, this region had have someone who began there and/or someone after whom the region is named.

What appears to be the case is, the people of Esau and the people of Seir formed a coalition and intermarried and controlled this portion of the Middle east together.

The Horites are not mentioned much in the book of Genesis. That they exist and are found in Seir is told to us in Genesis 14:6. The next mention of the Horites is right here, in the passage that we are studying.

Genesis 36:22 And the sons of Lotan were Ḥori and Hěmam. Lotan's sister was Timna.

Because Seir and because some of his sons and grandsons are named, I would postulate that these named ones all have believed in the Revealed God. So, Esau essentially functioned as an evangelist for the Revealed God.

Timna, the daughter of Seir, twin sister of Lotan, appears to have married Eliphaz, a son of Esau. In this chapter, she is also named as a chief (Genesis 36:40 1Chronicles 1:51). No one apart from this woman is given this name in this chapter, so my assumption would be, she is a chief or leader in the land of Seir.

Genesis 36:23 And these were the sons of Shoḃal: Alwan, and Manaḥath, and Ĕyḃal, Shepho, and Onam.

Shobal is a son of Seir; and five grandsons are named here.

Genesis 36:24 And these were the sons of Tsib'on [= Zibeon]: both Ayah and Anah. This was the Anah who found the water in the wilderness as he fed the donkeys of his father Tsib'on.

There appear to be two Zibeons in this chapter—the older one, the grandfather of Oholibamah (Genesis 36:2, 14); and the younger one, a son of Seir (Genesis 36:20, 24)

Genesis 36:25 *And these were the children of Anah: Dishon and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah.*

Anah, the son of Zibeon, grandson of Seir, has a son and daughter named.

Genesis 36:26 *And these were the sons of Dishon: Hemdan, and Eshban, and Yithran, and Keran.*

Notice how specific lines are followed out, while other lines are not mentioned. Again, I postulate that these are men and women who have believed in the Revealed God, and logically, this would have been a result of their contact with Esau.

Genesis 36:27 *These were the sons of Ėtser: Bilhan, and Za'awan, and Aqan.*

Dishon, Ezer and Dishan all appear to be sons of Seir. They are called sons of him in Genesis 36:20–21.

Genesis 36:28 *These were the sons of Dishan: Uts and Aran.*

Vv. 26–28 give us the names of Seir's grandsons.

Genesis 36:29 *These were the chiefs of the Ĥorites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Tsib'on, Chief Anah,*

There are leaders in Seir, both from Seir and from Esau.

Genesis 36:30 *Chief Dishon, Chief Ėtser, and Chief Dishan. These were the chiefs of the Ĥorites, according to their chiefs in the land of Sě'ir.*

At some point, the people of Esau would force the sons of Seir out of this region (Deuteronomy 2:12, 22).

### **The Kings in Edom**

Genesis 36:31 *And these were the sovereigns who reigned in the land of Edom before any sovereign reigned over the children of Yisra'ěl.*

An organized state existed in Seir before Israel was in the land under any leader.

Genesis 36:32 *And Bela the son of Be'or reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah.*

Some of these leaders had cities which they apparently named.

Genesis 36:33 And Bela died, and Yobab son of Zerah of Botsrah reigned in his place.

For this region, we see how the power was passed down from father to son.

Genesis 36:34 And Yobab died, and Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place.

When the son died, the grandson took over.

Genesis 36:35 And Husham died, and Hadad son of Bedad, who struck Midyan in the field of Mo'ab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Awith.

Midian is named back in Genesis 25:1–4 as a son of Abraham through Keturah (so he would be an Arab).

Essentially, these are cousins at war with one another.

Genesis 36:36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masraqah reigned in his place.

We continue to follow the line of rulership. Because these men are named, I would suggest that they have believed in the Revealed God.

### **The Chiefs of Esau**

Genesis 36:37 And Samlah died, and Sha'ul of Rehoboth by the River reigned in his place.

We seem to be following out one particular line pretty closely.

Genesis 36:38 And Sha'ul died, and Ba'al-Hanan son of Akbor reigned in his place.

There are some places where there is a break in the line, and another line is picked up as ruling.

Genesis 36:39 And Ba'al-Hanan son of Akbor died, and Hadar reigned in his place. And the name of his city was Pa'u. And his wife's name was Meheta'el, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Meyzahab.

Again, even though these are just names to us, these are likely believers that we will spend eternity with.

Genesis 36:40–43 And these were the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their clans and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief Alwah, Chief Yetheth, Chief Oholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, Chief Qenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mitsar, Chief Magdi'el, 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.

As mentioned earlier, even though the Edomites and the Horites appeared to intermarry to some limited degree, the Edomites will push them out of this region.

Now, to close out this chapter:

### Lessons from Genesis 36

1. Twice in the Bible, we read, *Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated*. This chapter informs us that *God is not emotional* and *God did not give Esau the short end of the stick*.
2. The country of Edom was established long before Israel.
3. There was great organization and authority established in Edom.
4. All during this time, Israel was just a wandering clan; a family of not-so-nice people, for the most part. However, these people had a relationship with the Living God.
5. The people of Abraham (through Isaac and Jacob) are God's chosen people; the people of Edom are not the chosen line. This is why we all know people descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but none of us knows a single Edomite.
6. Among men, in their era, the Edomites may have seemed to be a well-organized and powerful nation; and the clan of Jacob as some moderately-successful wandering shepherds.
7. As we have seen, God has preserved the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as unique and unmixed (they married a variety of women; but everyone in this family was *Jewish* and everyone in the line identified as coming from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and not as the result of two families).
8. We see in this chapter that the line of Esau intermingled with the line of Seir. Esau saw no reason to preserve the purity of his line. He did not view his line specifically as unique or related to God.
9. Both tribes were renown and well-organized at this time; but they depended upon themselves and not upon God's grace.
10. Because of their relationship to God, the Jews are still with us today; the Edomites are not.
11. The key to all things in life is, relationship with God.

You may not remember more than 3 or 4 names from this chapter; but you should remember the overriding principle: relationship with God is everything.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

**Lesson 384: Genesis 37:1–2**

**The Final Section of Genesis**

Genesis 37 begins a whole new section in the book of Genesis. From around Genesis 12–36, it is reasonably easy to attribute various groups of chapters to one of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. However, nearly everything that is recorded from Genesis

37–50 is from the perspective of Joseph, Jacob's first son by Rachel. Joseph is the second to the youngest of all his half-brothers; only Benjamin is younger.

Genesis 38 is the exception to this, which is possibly written by Judah (although it will be a very unusual chapter, there are very specific reasons for this chapter). There may be a few glosses throughout the chapters written by Joseph as well.

*Dr. Robert Dean: This is one of the most significant and pivotal times in all of history because this chapter begins with Joseph in the land with his brothers, with his father, in his home, and enjoying the blessings of this land that God has promised to give to Abraham and his descendants, but at the end of the chapter he is a slave in Egypt. So the chapter itself is almost a picture of what is going to happen to Israel starting in the land and ending up as slaves in Egypt, and that God is preparing them for the future. We can say in short that the chapter provides a transition for the family of Abraham from the land of promise to the land of protection.<sup>82</sup>*

It may be worth asking, *what is God's big plan here and why Egypt?* The sons of Jacob have been influenced by the decreasing levels of morality in Canaan. A few chapters ago, they killed all the male relatives of Shechem because of Shechem's actions. In this chapter, they will discuss killing Joseph just because he is Jacob's favorite son. In Genesis 38, we will see a great failure on the part of Judah. So, despite the great blessing that Jacob's family has received from God, their actions in the Land of Promise are deplorable. The morality of the people of Canaan will continue to degenerate; and God will separate His people from the Canaanites in order to protect them.<sup>83</sup>

*Dean: In going to Egypt they are going to a place of adversity and hostility, a place where they are enslaved for several hundred years, a place where there are many abuses that are going to take place. So why is that a place of protection? That is the whole point of their being taken there. God recognizes what has happened to them where they are in the land of Canaan-they have begun to have deteriorated so much and begin to be influenced so much by the thinking of the cosmic system around them at that time, the Canaanite culture, the fertility religions, etc.-and that in order to bring about His planned purposes for the descendants of Israel He has to take them out of the land and put them down into an incubator, as it were, so that the nation can grow to a size where He can then take it back to the land. So Egypt, then, becomes a place of protection to protect them from themselves. Sometimes God has to do that with each one of us, He has to protect us from our own negative volition and our own sin nature, and so we see a picture in this passage of how that happens. God in His infinite*

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<sup>82</sup> From Dean's Notes; [Lesson Genesis 141b](#); accessed March 15, 2016.

<sup>83</sup> Paraphrased or inspired from Dean's Notes; [Lesson Genesis 141b](#); accessed March 15, 2016.



*knowledge knows exactly what He is doing and He is always working things out to bring about His desired goal.*<sup>84</sup>

The idea is, sometimes the things that we face in life seem horrible, but they often occur for our protection and/or benefit. Remaining in the land could have resulted in all of their children taking Canaanite wives, which would have been to the ruin of this new people.

The family of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will enter into Egypt as a small clan; and they will exit Egypt a nation under God.

As with all previous sections of Genesis, we have no idea at what point the patriarch sat down to write any of this. My belief is, this was a fairly organic process. *The History of God and Man* was spoken from father to son; and most fathers added some additional information to what his father told him—particularly Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and Joseph. What was modified, appended, edited out, etc. was an organic process which continued with each generation, guided by God the Holy Spirit. With Joseph, this process appeared to end, until Exodus 1:1, some 400 or so years later, when the narrative is picked up again. When we come to the time of Moses, it is clear that writing exists, and it is likely that Moses actually wrote all of the words of Genesis down, having heard them from his own mother (or, possibly, from his brother or sister).

In any case, as we will see in Ex. 1, the Jews of Egypt, even when enslaved, knew some of the details of the book of Genesis. The genealogical records found in the first chapters of Chronicles suggests that they kept such records, even while enslaved. Keeping the genealogical records combined with their knowledge of their relationship to God suggests that the people knew all or portions of the book of Genesis; and that some set of genealogical records existed as well.<sup>85</sup>

So that there is no misunderstanding, most of these statements come from logical deductions. Nowhere in Scripture is Moses said to have written out the book of Genesis; nowhere in Scripture is he called the author of Genesis. Nowhere that I can recall is the method of the transmission of the book of Genesis given. Nowhere are the patriarchs called the authors of Genesis. We will return to this topic.

Back to the narrative at hand: whereas, Jacob's spiritual growth was questionable, his son Joseph became a great man of grace. This will not become apparent at first; but as we delve into his life, this will become clear.

[Genesis 37:1](#) And Jacob lived in the land of the travels of his father, in the land of Canaan.

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<sup>84</sup> From Dean's Notes; [Lesson Genesis 141b](#); accessed March 15, 2016.

<sup>85</sup> Whereas Kings and Samuel appear to have been composed not long after the events of these books take place, Chronicles appears to have been written perhaps centuries later, incorporating a variety of books and records.

Jacob went outside of the land of Canaan to find a wife, and he has returned with two wives and two mistresses and 13+ children. He remained in the land for many decades after. Both his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham wandered throughout the southern portion of Israel and that is where he lived now.

I have found the chiasmi in the writings of Joseph to be remarkable (there are many). This is the first one, but all of the remainder of Genesis appears to be very carefully organized. There are two chiasmi in this chapter.

It is often a good idea to come back to a chiasm after the passage has been studied.

### **William Ramey's Chiasm of Genesis 37:2b–11**

Introduction: Joseph's background within the family in Canaan (2b)

- A Israel's outward manifestation of his love for Joseph (3)
- B Brothers' hatred of Joseph (4a)
- C Brothers' silence toward Joseph (4b)
- D Brothers' reaction to Joseph's 1<sup>st</sup> dream (5)
- E Joseph's 1<sup>st</sup> dream report (6-7)
- X Brothers' embittered hatred of Joseph because of his dreams (8)  
("dreams" is plural in Hebrew, and not singular!)
- E' Joseph's 2<sup>nd</sup> dream report (9-10a)
- D' Jacob's reaction to 2<sup>nd</sup> dream (10b)
- C' Jacob's speech to Joseph (10c)
- B' Brothers' envy of Joseph (11a)
- A' Jacob's inward mediation of the things concerning Joseph (11b)

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

**Genesis 37:2** These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, a son of seventeen years, came tending the flock with his brothers. And he was a youth with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought to his father an evil report of them.

At this point, we leave the narrative of Jacob and begin the narrative of Joseph, Jacob's son by Rachel.

The writing style changes in this way: (1) the material is better organized; the author (Joseph) seems to be very aware of using chiasmi to record his own history); and (2) there is more detail to be found. There are minor points of detail that, if left out, would give us a slightly different understanding of the passage (such as, vv. 15–17, 23, 25, 28). I have indicated that, in previous chapters, there are a bevy of details which are unaccounted for, and leave some narratives wanting (for instance, who informed Jacob and his sons of the rape of Dinah?). The narratives of Joseph are much more carefully recorded and more detail-oriented. There are fewer gaps. Joseph seems to be better at preserving the unity,

flow and detail of a narrative. He gives us a much more complete picture of what is going on. Also, when there is an interlude of time, Joseph often takes note of that in the text.

Many good commentators have believed that Moses is the author of Genesis, but that opens up a whole set of questions. Does he change his writing style from time to time? What was his source material? Did Moses just make this stuff up? Did God dictate these things to Moses? What sense does it make for Moses to, with each generation, completely change up his writing style? The history of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and of Joseph are all recorded using different writing styles. And we have God speaking to Moses throughout Exodus, and that is a very different style from these writing styles found in Genesis. My point being, Moses did not just sit down and write Genesis; nor was it dictated to him. At most, he committed the oral traditions of Genesis *to paper*.

The people of Israel, in Egypt prior to the exodus, seem to clearly have a sense of history and understanding, to some degree, of their history and their relationship with God, before Moses wrote anything at all. Now, how did they know anything, if Moses is to be credited with writing the book of Genesis and Moses is not yet on the scene as an authoritative figure from God? There are several things found in the first chapters of Exodus which suggest some general understanding among the children of Abraham (and even among the people of Egypt) of the history presented in Genesis. The people of Egypt did not know all of Genesis—that is clear—but they did seem to know some historical things about the Jews who lived among them.

Let me submit to you that the Israelites in Egypt had preserved the book of Genesis and possibly the book of Job. This does not mean that they wrote it down, but that it had been passed along from generation to generation, probably orally. Each new generation of patriarchs would add some additional information to the narrative and pass it along to the next generation. This would account for the different writing styles.

At some point, this was all written down. Moses clearly writes things down, as we find in Exodus; and God orders Moses to write some things down. Therefore, the Jews had to have a written language which Moses used (it is even possible that Moses developed the written language for Jewish people).

This is all speculation. We simply do not know at what point Jews began to write things down; we do not know at what point they had a written language. There are passages in Genesis and Exodus which clearly suggest that the Egyptians had a written language at this time and that they wrote a lot of stuff down. And, we know at the time of Moses, the Jews had a written language as well.

There is also evidence that some contracts in the era of Genesis were oral contracts (such as, the purchase of the grave site property by Abraham). A great many witnesses to this contract were required, which suggests that a written deed of trust was not filed with the community records department, but that the terms of the contract were worked out and agreed to before a number of witnesses.

Now, did Moses write the final copy of the book of Genesis? Possibly. Was it already in existence during the time of Moses (either in written or oral form)? Almost certainly. At best, Moses is the final editor, but I personally doubt even that, given the various writing styles found throughout Genesis and preserved in the book that we are now studying. The history recorded by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and by Joseph, all present 4 distinct writing styles. Isaac is mostly concerned with major events: births and deaths and marriages. Jacob writes a flowing narrative, but leaves many important informational points out (for instance, how did the family of Jacob find out that Dinah had been raped? Why did only two brothers kill the family of Hamor, when all of them seemed to be in on the plot?). Abraham wrote episodically.

On the other hand, Joseph's writing is very detail-oriented and very organized, using chiasmi organization throughout. We will have very few questions as to why did this or that happen, when reading Joseph. He does not leave great narrative gaps, as his father Jacob did.

Abraham and Isaac focus in on specific events, while leaving wide gaps of time out of the narrative (most of Abraham's writings appear to center around his interaction with God). None of the patriarchs appear to be writing just a personal biography, although Joseph comes quite close in that regard.

Jacob was as sneaky in the early part of his life, as Joseph is honorable throughout most of his life.

The writing of Genesis 1–11 also has a possible set of styles (the flood narrative, for instance, is extremely well-organized and chiasmic).

**Genesis 37:2** These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, a son of seventeen years, came tending the flock with his brothers. And he was a youth with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought to his father an evil report of them.

This is the final time in Genesis that we have the word *tôwl<sup>o</sup>dôth* (תּוֹלְדוֹת), because Joseph will be the final author of the book of Genesis.

*Tôwl<sup>o</sup>dôth* (תּוֹלְדוֹת) [pronounced *toh<sup>l</sup>-DOTH*] means, *generations, results, proceedings, genealogies, history, course of history; origin; families; races*. Strong's #8435 BDB #410. *Tôwl<sup>o</sup>dôth* often suggests a new author, a new focus and often a genealogical reference. If the book of Genesis was written or even edited by the same person, we might expect there always to be, for instance, a genealogy, every time that this word is use—but there isn't. This lack of consistency would suggest different authors. The lack of consistency would suggest that there were variant stories and traditions pulled together by the repetition of these words from generation to generation. The way that this word is used throughout Genesis suggests that one author stopped writing and another author "picked up the pen" and continued recording his own history.

What was repeated verbally may have been known as, "The History of God and Man."

The very wording of v. 2 suggests a different perspective. We have been introduced to Bilhah and Zilpah in previous chapters as the personal maids of Leah and Rachel. Although we know how these maids were used by their mistresses to produce offspring that the mistresses would lay claim to, Joseph would not know them in that way. At best, this is ancient history to him (as their involvement with his father predates his birth). From his vantage point, Joseph would have seen these maids as Jacob's (his father's) wives. Rachel's personal maid would have probably raised Joseph. Joseph may know about his history; but, at the same time, he has personal history, which is how he grew up. His personal history would certainly affect his perspective.

We know that there are problems with the sons of Leah. It is not a great leap to imagine that there are problems with the other sons of Jacob as well. As has been discussed in a previous chapter, the Bible never presents polygamy as just another kind of marriage, or as a relationship just as valid as monogamy. Even though the people of that era would have accepted polygamy (remember, Laban allowed Jacob to marry both of his daughters); there are always serious problems associated with the children of a polygamous marriage. This provides us a wonderful illustration of human viewpoint versus divine viewpoint.

From human viewpoint, we might think that, the more adults involved in raising children, the better off the children would be. Jacob has 13+ children. Would not the average person think, because he has 4 wives/mistresses, that these children can be better attended to? But that is human viewpoint. The key to raising children is the relationship between the husband and wife. As a child, I could never play one parent against the other, because they presented a united front. I had no clue that things between them went on behind the scenes with regards to raising us boys. So, we boys received what I believed to be a very consistent upbringing, which was the result of two adults discussing how to deal with us.

With Jacob and company, this is quite different. Rachel, Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are all different women, and they each will have their own ideas about raising their children; and they would each have their own ideas about which values to stress. It is much more difficult for Jacob to formulate 4 game plans for 4 sets of children, based upon his interaction with each of the mothers. As a result, there can be no consistency in the way that these children are raised. Every parent has heard the words, "But Tommy's mother lets him do that!" How much more difficult when that refrain concerns someone from your own family? Also, we have no idea how the personal maids dealt with the children. Were they the primary caretakers of all the children?

Let me give you a specific example: Reuben is the oldest son, and therefore, should have more responsibility and more leadership skills taught to him. If it were up to Jacob and Leah, this would have been agreed to and this is how Reuben would have been raised. But, the other 3 women do not want their first sons in any way second to Reuben. As a result, Reuben was aware of his leadership position, but he never fully embraced this position, because he would have had women over him (the other 3 mothers) who would

have undercut his youthful authority). Therefore, there will be situations with Reuben and his younger brothers where Reuben needed to lead and to be decisive, but he was not. I offer this as a possible explanation; we do not know much about the interaction of the different mothers with the different children.

Divine viewpoint would be, one husband and one wife would better raise 13+ children than one husband + 4 wives. A chain of command and a consistency of training would be better than 3 additional women, all of whom had vested interests in the way their own sons were being raised.

This is even more of an issue in King David's family, who sired a number of sons by his first set of wives (David had about 10 wives and 10 mistresses). None of his first sons had David's character or his love of God. When David focused in on one wife (Bathsheba) and their 4 sons, they turned out better.

### Lessons 385–386: Genesis 37:1–11

### Joseph's Dreams/Dreams in Genesis

*Dr. Robert Dean: What we see in the beginning introduction in chapter 37 is the origin of tension in Jacob's family, the tension among the brothers—the conflict, the competition and the downright hatred and jealousy that Joseph's brothers have for him and how that is ultimately resolved. It is the resolution of that tension between the brothers that ultimately provides for the safety and security for Jacob and his family in preparation for their future in the land. They have to be taken out of the land to Egypt for a time of protection and growth. The focal point is on chapters 44 and 45. Everything leads to that and what follows in chapters 46-50 flows out of that.<sup>86</sup>*

God will not be mentioned in Genesis 37; but it will become clear that God is working behind the scenes in this chapter, in order to provide for the family of Joseph in the future.<sup>87</sup>

**Genesis 37:1** And Jacob lived in the land of the travels of his father, in the land of Canaan.

This appears to be a transitional verse, taking us from the bloodline of Esau and Seir back to Jacob and the line of promise. The people of Esau and Seir lived in the mountainous area of Seir and Jacob lived in Canaan.

**Genesis 37:2** These are the generations of Jacob: Joseph, a son of seventeen years, came tending the flock with his brothers. And he was a youth with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought to his father an evil report of them.

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<sup>86</sup> Dean's Notes [Lesson Genesis 140b](#); accessed March 15, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Paraphrased from Dean's Notes [Lesson Genesis 140b](#); accessed March 15, 2016.



On the one hand, you have a well-organized and structured nation—the clans of Esau and Seir; and on the other hand, there are the 12 sons of Jacob, 10 of whom are upset over their younger brother, Joseph.

It was not without reason that the older brothers of Joseph were angry with him. He was his father's favorite, and if they did anything wrong, he reported back to his father. However, when he has these dreams, this will be the last straw for his older brothers.

The key to Joseph's life is Romans 8:28 **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose.** (ESV; capitalized) Although this will not be necessarily clear at first, we might see this as Joseph's life verse (not that anyone has such a thing). Joseph's life will illustrate Rom. 8:28.

**Genesis 37:3** And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age. And he made him a tunic reaching to the soles of his feet.

*The Cambridge Bible: [Joseph's robe] is literally "a tunic of palms," i.e. reaching to the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet, differing from an ordinary tunic by having sleeves, and by reaching to the feet. The same word is used in 2Sam. 13:18 of a dress worn by a princess.<sup>88</sup>*

R. B. Thieme, Jr. has suggested that this is a robe denoting Joseph's authority. Let me suggest that a tunic without long sleeves was clothing that a person worked in; but a tunic with long sleeves would be someone who was in authority, who did not do the actual manual labor. The second passage where this word is used describes the clothing worn by the king's virginal daughter.

Jacob (Israel) favored his son Joseph, and he treated him differently as well. It is likely that Jacob spent more time raising Joseph, and, as a result, Joseph was a better person for it. Jacob cared more for Rachel, the wife he loved; so it is reasonable to supposed that he interacted with her and Joseph more often while Rachel was still alive.

Having been tricked into marrying Leah, Jacob obviously enjoyed marital pleasures with her, but he probably spend much less time interacting with their sons (who seem to be fairly aimless and cruel throughout much of Genesis).

**Genesis 37:4** And when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

Playing favorites is clearly a problem. Jacob's sons observed this and it certainly rubbed them the wrong way. On top of this, there was certainly sibling rivalry among Jacob's sons, because each mother would be promoting her own sons over the others. However, what

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<sup>88</sup> *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 37:3.

appears to be the case at this point in time is, this sibling rivalry was focused primarily upon young Joseph.

**Genesis 37:5** And Joseph dreamed a dream and told it to his brothers. And they hated him still more.

Whether Joseph intentionally brought on some of the animosity from his own brothers is not clear. Given his young age, he may simply be oblivious to the thoughts and feelings of his older brothers. However, brothers certainly do know how to needle one another.

**Genesis 37:6** And he said to them, “I pray you, Hear this dream which I have dreamed.

So, Joseph goes to his older brothers and tells them what he has dreamt.

**Genesis 37:7** For behold! We were binding sheaves in the middle of the field, and lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright. And behold, your sheaves stood around and bowed down to my sheaf.”

A sheaf is a bundle of recently harvested wheat stalks (or, rye, barley, or whatever). This makes them easier to lift up and transport.

**Sheaves of Wheat** (a photo) from [God is in the Compost Pile](#); accessed December 1, 2015. I am assuming that these are wheat sheaves.



When bundled together, these sheaves can be stood upright; but they are certainly subject to falling over. Seeing sheaves laying down or standing up would be a common sight to these young farmers.

Joseph has a dream—he dreams of work (which is not unusual)—and after harvesting the wheat (or whatever), his sheaf is standing, and the sheaves of his brothers have fallen over before his sheaf. So he has gathered and bundled wheat together into sheaves; and his brothers have gathered and bundled wheat together. His are standing; theirs have fallen over.

Did he understand the significance of this dream, and still share it with his brothers? Or was the dream so vivid, that he had to share it with them? We have no idea. His older brothers and father clearly understood the meaning of this dream immediately.

**Genesis 37:8** And his brothers said to him, “Will you indeed reign over us? Or will you indeed have the rule over us?” And they hated him still more for his dreams and for his words.

With 4 different mothers, each one promoting her own sons over the others, sibling rivalry would have been more pronounced. With 4 mothers, there are 4 firstborn sons (with respect to each mother).

Joseph's brothers understood the meaning of this dream. This tells us that Joseph would rule over his older brothers, which is quite a thing for this young kid to say to them.

For Jacob, his true love was Rachel. He had been bamboozled into marrying Leah and he had sons by her; but Joseph is his firstborn son to Rachel, who has died. Based up this narrative, Jacob is treating young Joseph as the firstborn son.

As a result of Jacob's favoritism—and his sons should have reason to be upset with their father—and Joseph would be hated. This first dream angers the brothers more. All of this is a part of God's plan, which allows for the actions of the brothers, good and bad.

**Genesis 37:9** And he dreamed still another dream, and told it to his brothers. And he said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. And behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

Joseph has another dream. We do not know if this happened the next night, the next week or the next year.

This next dream is even more significant. The sun represents his father, the moon his mother (who has passed—perhaps the moon represents his mother's personal servant); and the stars are his 11 brothers.

This second dream is also significant insofar as it is a second testimony as to the future of Joseph. By the testimony of 2 or 3 is a thing made certain (Num. 35:30 Deut. 17:8 19:15 John 8:17 2Cor. 13:1). So, the first dream was not a fluke; this will certainly happen.

**Genesis 37:10** And he told it to his father and to his brothers. And his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Will I, and your mother, and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the earth before you?"

Jacob clearly understands the meaning of Jacob's dream, and he rebukes Jacob for it. "Do you think we are going to come and bow before you?" Jacob asks him. Even Jacob takes this personally now.

Joseph's dreams are clearly prophetic, their meaning is unequivocal, and the repetition of the similar dream makes it certain.

**Genesis 37:11** And his brothers were jealous of him. But his father remembered [lit., *preserved*] the saying.

The other sons of Jacob disliked Joseph anyway. They did not like that their father favored him; and almost everything that he did, they took issue with. A dream where Joseph is apparently their ruler—that was the ultimate insult to them.

Jacob, however, remembered this dream.

Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, God would communicate to some people in dreams. Since we now have the complete Word of God, He no longer needs to communicate with us directly.

We will only look at passages which we have previously studied. The ESV; capitalized is used below.

<b>Dreams in Genesis</b>	
<b>Scripture</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>God Warns Abimelech in a Dream</b>	
<p>Gen 20:1–2 From there Abraham journeyed toward the territory of the Negeb and lived between Kadesh and Shur; and he sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.</p>	<p>Although God clearly communicated with Abraham on several occasions, we are rarely told the exact methods which God used.</p> <p>Interestingly enough, the first dream specifically recorded in Scripture will be had by Abimelech, the king of Gerar.</p>
<p>Gen 20:3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife."</p>	<p>Abimelech has taken Sarah, Abraham's wife, as his own wife, thinking her to be Abraham's sister. God comes to Abimelech in a dream and tells him that he will die for taking another man's wife.</p>
<p>Gen 20:4–5 Now Abimelech had not approached her. So he said, "Lord, will you kill an innocent people? Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this."</p>	<p>Abimelech tells God that Abraham told him that she was his sister. He claims innocence in this matter (and Abimelech had not yet consummated this marriage).</p>

## Dreams in Genesis

### Scripture

### Commentary

Gen 20:6–7 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that you have done this in the integrity of your heart, and it was I who kept you from sinning against Me. Therefore I did not let you touch her. Now then, return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, so that he will pray for you, and you shall live. But if you do not return her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours."

God's people would come from Abraham and Sarah; and there could not be a contamination of this line.

God tells Abimelech to return Abraham's wife and to ask Abraham to pray on his behalf so that God will not kill him.

Abraham will act as an intermediary between God and Abimelech.

Gen 20:8 So Abimelech rose early in the morning and called all his servants and told them all these things. And the men were very much afraid.

This greatly frightened Abimelech, and he woke up early and called in all of his court officials and he told them about his dream. All of them were afraid of the God of Abraham (which means, all of them were saved, as they believed in the Revealed God and in the consequences of disobeying Him). Immediately, they took care of business.

### God Makes Promises to Jacob as He is About to Leave Canaan

Gen 28:11–12 And he came to a certain place and stayed there that night, because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold, there was a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven. And behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it!

Jacob, because he had angered his brother Esau to the point where his own life was in danger, left the land of Canaan, traveling east. Part of the reason would be to take a wife from his relatives in the east.

At this point, Jacob has made the decision to leave and this appears to be his first stop.

He observes angels ascending and descending on some kind of a ramp or elevator to heaven.

## Dreams in Genesis

Scripture	Commentary
Gen 28:13–14 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed.	God is standing above it all, and He speaks to Jacob. He identifies Himself (this is the first time that God speaks to Jacob), and God makes a promise to Jacob which He had made to Abraham—that his descendants would be like the dust of the earth, spreading all across the earth.
Gen 28:15 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 promised you."	God promised Jacob to stay with him wherever he went.  Both promises indicate that God's authority goes far beyond the land that He had promised Abraham.
Gen 28:16–17 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."	Jacob wakes up and is amazed that God was in that place, and he had no idea. He called it the <i>house of God</i> and <i>the gate of heaven</i> . Jacob is amazed by all of this because he has heard God before.
Gen 28:18–19 So early in the morning Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up for a pillar and poured oil on the top of it. He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.	Jacob names this place accordingly. In this same passage, Jacob will make a vow to God.
Jacob's Dream (s) in Paddan-aram	
Gen 31:3 Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your kindred, and I will be with you."	This appears to be God speaking to Jacob in a dream. However, that is not entirely clear; and this may be separate from the dream which Jacob will describe to his wives in this narrative.



## Dreams in Genesis

Scripture	Commentary
Gen 31:4–5 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me.	<p>Jacob, although anything but a perfect man, realizes that it is time for him to leave. He must convince his wives (and children) to leave with him.</p> <p>It is apparent to all that Laban, their father, does not warmly regard Jacob, his son-in-law, as he did originally.</p>
Gen 31:6–7 You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me.	<p>Jacob testifies that he worked honorably for their father Laban, and that Laban cheated Jacob on several occasions. However, God did not allow Laban to win by cheating.</p>
Gen 31:8–9 If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.	<p>Laban gave certain types of the flock to Jacob; and every time he thought that Jacob was getting too much, Laban changed the terms of their agreement. God saw to it that Jacob did not lose out in this agreement.</p> <p>You may recall that God overruled both what Laban did to Jacob and Jacob's human viewpoint breeding schemes.</p>
Gen 31:10 In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.	<p>Jacob dreams of the goats and of their different colors.</p>
Gen 31:11 Then the Angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!'	<p>The Angel of God speaks to Jacob in this dream.</p>
Gen 31:12–13 And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to Me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'"	<p>God tells Jacob that He has been overseeing his flock and the results of their breeding.</p> <p>He tells Jacob to return to Canaan. Jacob is recounting all of this to his wives.</p>

## Dreams in Genesis

Scripture	Commentary
<p>Gen 31:14–16 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house? Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has indeed devoured our money. All the wealth that God has taken away from our father belongs to us and to our children. Now then, whatever God has said to you, do."</p>	<p>Rachel and Leah make it clear that they agree with Jacob, their husband, and will go with him to Canaan. They have observed that their father shows no regard for them and, therefore, they have no reason to remain there.</p> <p>What they say also indicates that they believe in Jacob's God (this family appears to have believed in the Revealed God).</p>
<p>Gen 31:17–18 So Jacob arose and set his sons and his wives on camels. He drove away all his livestock, all his property that he had gained, the livestock in his possession that he had acquired in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac.</p>	<p>The entire family leaves for the land of Canaan, as directed by God in Jacob's dream.</p>
<p>It is unclear whether this is one or two dreams here. God appeared to Jacob to assure him about the livestock and Laban's cheating; and then to tell him to leave Paddan-aram. That appears to be two dreams at two different times for two different purposes.</p>	
God Warns Laban in a Dream	
<p>Gen 31:22–23 When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him for seven days and followed close after him into the hill country of Gilead.</p>	<p>Jacob took his wives, children and sheep and left Laban's employ, suddenly and secretly. They planned this out carefully to get a 3 day head start. Laban and his people pursued Jacob and his family.</p>
<p>Gen 31:24 But God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream by night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."</p>	<p>Laban was a believer and God came to him at night in a dream and warned him about harming Jacob. All that is recorded is the sentence that is recorded here.</p>
<p>Gen 31:25 And Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen pitched tents in the hill country of Gilead.</p>	<p>Laban was traveling with adults; Jacob was traveling with his wives and children. Therefore, Laban would be able to catch up to him.</p>

## Dreams in Genesis

Scripture	Commentary
<p>Gen 31:26–28 And Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done, that you have tricked me and driven away my daughters like captives of the sword? Why did you flee secretly and trick me, and did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with mirth and songs, with tambourine and lyre? And why did you not permit me to kiss my sons and my daughters farewell? Now you have done foolishly.</p>	<p>Laban is quite upset over all that has happened. He asks Jacob why he left without notice, not allowing a proper farewell between Laban and his daughters.</p> <p>The problem was, Laban had become increasingly hostile to Jacob. Whether Laban understood his own biases is unknown.</p>
<p>Gen 31:29–30 It is in my power to do you harm. But the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' And now you have gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"</p>	<p>Laban says that he has the power in harm Jacob, but that he was warned by God not to say anything about Jacob, good or bad. For this reason, he would not harm Jacob, but he does ask about his missing household gods.</p>
<p>Gen 31:31–32a Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force. Anyone with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our kinsmen point out what I have that is yours, and take it."</p>	<p>Jacob explains that he was worried that his wives would be taken from him; and agrees to the death penalty for whomever has stolen the household gods.</p>
<h3>Joseph's Two Dreams</h3>	
<p>Gen 37:5–7 Now Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers they hated him even more. He said to them, "Hear this dream that I have dreamed: Behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and behold, my sheaf arose and stood upright. And behold, your sheaves gathered around it and bowed down to my sheaf."</p>	<p>This brings us to the dreams that we have been studying. Joseph dreams that he has a sheaf, and that the brothers all had sheaves, and their sheaves fell over before his.</p>
<p>Gen 37:8 His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Or are you indeed to rule over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.</p>	<p>His brothers understood immediately that this meant that Joseph would reign over them. This upset them greatly.</p>

## Dreams in Genesis

Scripture	Commentary
Gen 37:9 Then he dreamed another dream and told it to his brothers and said, "Behold, I have dreamed another dream. Behold, the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me."	Joseph then dreamed another dream, about the sun, moon and stars bowing down to him.
Gen 37:10–11 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the ground before you?" And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.	His father Jacob understands the dream, which says that his entire family would bow down before him; and he rebukes Joseph for this dream. However, he remembers this dream.

Later, in Joseph's life, there are four dreams which will essentially define Joseph's life—the dreams of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker; and the two inscrutable dreams of Pharaoh. It is because of these 4 dreams that Joseph will become the sheaf which remains standing.

### Lesson 387: Genesis 37:12–17

### The Wandering Brothers

I will include a great many of these chiasmi throughout the rest of Genesis, because I find them to be quite remarkable. This one is quite good.

#### William Ramey's Chasmos of Genesis 37:12–36

- A **Israel's** commission to **Joseph** (13a-b)
- B The **father sends Joseph**, the **faithful son** (13c-14)
- C Joseph **seeks** his brothers and **finds** them (15-17)
- D **The brothers' 1<sup>st</sup> plan to eradicate Joseph** (18-22)
- X The violation of Joseph (23-24)
- D' **The brothers' 2<sup>nd</sup> plan to eradicate Joseph** (25-28)
- C' Reuben **seeks** Joseph and **does not find** him (29-30)
- B' The **faithless sons send Joseph's** tunic to their **father** (31-33)
- A' **Jacob's** lament over **Joseph** (34-35)

Epilogue: Joseph is sold and brought to Egypt (36)

Notice how the middle of this chasmos matches the epilogue. Furthermore, much of the narrative of Joseph is about injustice and how God is able to over come injustice.

From <https://www.inthebeginning.org/chiasmus/examples.html> accessed September 19, 2015.

Throughout the rest of Genesis, there are unmistakable chiasmi. A chiasm organizes a section of Scripture and makes it much easier to memorize.

So far, in this chapter, we have seen animosity develop in the sons of Jacob against Joseph, in part because of their father's favoritism. Joseph has also had two dreams which indicate that he would have authority over his brothers, father and mothers; and that did not make his brothers very happy either.

Now, Jacob has sent his son Joseph to check on his older brothers.

There are some chapters in Genesis which are quite unusual. You may recall the chapter when Shechem raped Dinah, a daughter of Jacob; and then two of Jacob's sons went into Shechem's village and killed all of the males. One purpose of this is to establish the kind of men that Jacob's sons were. They were not easy-going, live-and-let-live guys; they were tough, they were mean, and if they did not like something, then they did something about it. This helps us to understand their behavior in this chapter. In nearly every family with 2 or more kids, there is some sibling rivalry; because of the sort of men that Jacob's sons were, they will take their sibling rivalry to new lows.

Good parents reduce the sibling rivalry; and children are raised so that they soon understand that they are not the center of the universe. That is because they have a younger or older brother who is in the exact same boat that they are in.

The problem with Jacob's children is that the different mothers would have fostered some of the inordinate competition between them.

**Genesis 37:12** And his brothers went to feed his father's flock in Shechem.

Recall that this family did not live too far from Shechem. They are only 20 or so miles away to the south. Essentially, Jacob's sons destroyed the Shechem line, but preserved their women and children as wives and/or servants (we actually do not know if any of the women became their wives).

**Genesis 37:13** And Israel said to Joseph, "Do not your brothers feed the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them." And he said to him, "Here I am."

Jacob (Israel) either liked to keep tabs on his sons; or he had not heard from them in awhile. He knew that he could depend upon Joseph to give him an accurate report on what was going on—the good and the bad.

The response, *here I am*, indicates a willingness and a readiness to be of service. Joseph is 17 years old or older and is certainly ready for any kind of adventure, even if it is just tracking down his older brothers and checking up on them.

**Genesis 37:14** And he said to him, “Please go see whether it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks. And bring me word again.” And he sent him out of the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

Remember that Joseph is 17 or so, and he is not yet out with his other brothers watching the extensive livestock that Jacob possessed. He was kept closer to home. He seems to have been under his father’s authority, but over his brothers. He was not out working with them; but he would find them, and then make a report to his father.

This introduces a very short and strange narrative, which only Joseph would have known about.

**Genesis 37:15** And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, “What are you looking for?”

Joseph is looking for his brothers. He had an idea where they might be, but he cannot find them there. Someone sees Joseph and asks him what he is looking for.

**Genesis 37:16** And he said, “I am seeking for my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding.”

This is apparently a true detail; that Joseph goes searching for his brothers and runs into this man who tells him where they are. However, it is such an odd detail to include. This detail is something only Joseph would know (which may be why it is recorded).

Note how this little detail ties the narrative together. In v. 14, Joseph is being sent to Shechem; but in v. 17, he finds his brothers in Dothan. The intervening 2 verses simply explain how Joseph knew to go to Dothan—a detail that Jacob (for instance) would have left out. This is one of the reasons that we know that Joseph has recorded<sup>89</sup> this incident.

It seems reasonable that this man might recognize Joseph; and that this man obviously knows his brothers, the sons of Jacob. This family would have been well-known in that part of Canaan. They were very successful with a massive ranch.

**Genesis 37:17** And the man said, “They are gone from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’ ” And Joseph went after his brothers, and found them in Dothan.

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<sup>89</sup> By recorded, this simply means that Joseph added on to the narrative taught to him from his father and he taught this to his own children.



**The Travels of Joseph** (a map) from [Children's Bible School Lessons](#); accessed March 15, 2016.

Dothan means *two wells*.

Smith's Bible Encyclopedia: *[Dothan is] first mentioned...in connection with the history of Joseph, and apparently as in the neighborhood of Shechem. It next appears as the residence of Elisha (2Kings 6:13). It was known to Eusebius, who places it 12 miles to the north of Sebaste (Samaria); and here it has been discovered in our own times, still bearing its ancient name unimpaired.*<sup>90</sup>

This indicates that Jacob's sons are reasonably well-known in this area. We would expect this to be the case, as they wiped out the family of Hamor and Shechem.



It is hard to improve on Dean's introduction to this portion of the Word of God.

### Dr. Robert Dean's Preparation for Genesis 37–47

One of the things we need to look at is how to interpret Scripture in a biblical framework so that we move from understanding certain episodes and yet going to these episodes to be a source of comfort and strength to us when we are going through adversity and difficulty. We need to learn to think in terms of basic categories of doctrine, and when we think of suffering and undeserved suffering we should have certain things that are stories and episodes in the Old Testament that come to mind. And when we are going through this we stop and reflect upon those situations of undeserved suffering.

The first of four doctrines pertinent here relates to undeserved suffering. Why do the good suffer? Why is there undeserved suffering in the world? The psalmist says, [Why is it that the righteous suffer and the wicked prosper?](#) Why is it that Joseph goes through this suffering, hostility, hardship, rejection? He had been a man of honor and virtue fulfilling the wishes and desires of his father. He may have been a little boastful in his naivety when God gave him the dream related to his future prominence over the brothers but that isn't given as a fault, it is more his youthful, naïve enthusiasm that he did this. All we see is the reaction and hostility of the brothers.

<sup>90</sup> Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Dothan.

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## Dr. Robert Dean's Preparation for Genesis 37-47

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So we have to address the issue of undeserved suffering, and part of that leads to the second doctrinal theme that works itself out and displays itself in this chapter: the outworking of divine discipline, and in this case it is related to the failure of this family. The key element to remember in chapter 37 is that of deception. The brothers are angry so they get together and plot against Joseph, and they are going to deceive their father with respect to what happened to Joseph. Jacob is just going to get a taste of his own medicine. Jacob deceived his father in order to gain the inheritance and the blessing. This whole idea of the inheritance and the blessing is a key element in why the brothers are so angry with Joseph and want to do away with him because it appears that Joseph is the one who is going to get the double portion and the inheritance. The principle that we are going to see worked out here is found in Galatians 6:7-8, "**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap** [what we do in life brings about certain consequences]. **For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.**"

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The third doctrinal theme that we see here is how God works out the details, not only to bring discipline into the family for their lies, murders and deceptions, but how He uses that to bring about His desired glory. As we look at this we need to think about what Joseph is going through. He has been sold by his brothers into slavery. They have done nothing right and he has done everything right, and he is the one who is being surrounded by evil people. As we observe this episode we know that God is working behind the scenes. God isn't mentioned. The same thing happens in our lives. We ask where God is when all this is happening and yet what we must understand from the Scriptures is that God is at work behind the scenes whether we recognize it, understand it, or not. In the midst of all these threads that are happening in history we know that above everything, in a different way from what we think, that God is in control of the details of life. At the same time, not only is He bringing about His purposes in history with all these different people with their own volition trying to do their own thing in rebellion against Him, but He is being attacked by Satan who is ranting and raving about what God is doing and trying to prove that God can't control anything and He can't justify any of these people because they are rebellious sinners. God is working through all of this, and it looks to us from our perspective that the threads are just out of control. The way to get through this when we are going through these kinds of things is to think through the character of God. We know that God is sovereign, which means that He is the ultimate authority in the universe and the ultimate cause in the universe, and therefore nothing that happens occurs besides His permission. No matter how out of control things look in our life they are never out of God's control. That is His sovereignty; He rules and He does it in such a way that He doesn't violate human responsibility or volition but His causation and control is in a different way than ours is. The second thing we have to think about is that God is omniscient. He knows all the knowable.

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The final doctrinal theme is that honorable leaders are developed and not born. The plan that God has for all church age believers is to make us leaders. That means leaders not only in the home, in the family, in the marriage, in work, whatever field of leadership it may be, but the future plan is to prepare us so that we can rule and reign

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## Dr. Robert Dean's Preparation for Genesis 37–47

with Jesus Christ in the Millennial kingdom.

From Dean's Notes; [Lesson #141](#); accessed March 15, 2016 (edited).

Sometimes, when God is not named, He is more active than when He does reveal Himself.

A man is natural leader of a family because of his gender, but the application of his leadership in marriage and family is something which is learned. Each man needs to have learned from his father, from the laws of divine establishment, and from Bible doctrine what it means to be a leader and the proper way to apply his authority. Similarly, women who are shopping for a man need to examine each man and use the example of their own fathers to determine if this is a man suitable to lead her (when a woman is not married, then she is not under the authority of any individual man apart from her own father).

Joseph is going to have great authority in his life, and his exercise of authority must be learned. He is going to be subjected to many unseemly situations and life for Joseph will be unfair; but it is through all these circumstances that Joseph learns how to be a wise and just leader. Many times, when we are the victims of poorly executed authority over us, we learn from that how to exercise authority when we have it.

Joseph's primary influence in his life is Jacob, his father, and how does Jacob exercise authority? With favoritism. Joseph is his favorite son, so Jacob shows favoritism to him. Joseph cannot take that lesson as gospel. Joseph has to see with his own eyes (by his own experiences) that favoritism is not the way to exercise one's authority.

Every time you read about another injustice that Joseph endures, bear in mind, Joseph is learning about the exercise of authority. He is learning how to be a leader.

One of the great things in business that still occurs today is, some people start at the bottom of a business and work their way up. Carly Fiorina is an example of this. She began as a secretary in Hewlett Packard and worked her way up to the position of CEO of the same company. It is good for a person to see how decisions affect the employees of a company and the company as well.

### Quotations on Hitting Bottom

George S. Patton: Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom.

Charles Stanley: If the Lord says to give more than you think you are able to give, know that He will provide for you. Whether things are sailing smoothly or the bottom has dropped out, He is always trustworthy. You can count on Almighty God to keep His everlasting Word.

Bobby Knight: All the years I coached, we sent a card to every professor for each kid I had, and I was able to keep track on a daily basis who cut class or who was dropping a grade average. What I did was bring that kid in at 5:00 in the morning, and he would run the stairs from the bottom to the top until I told him to quit.

From: <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/bottom.html>

## Lesson 388: Genesis 37:18–28

## The Brothers Conspiring Against Joseph

Joseph's brothers are jealous of and angry with Joseph. Joseph has had two dreams which prophetically state that he will be in authority over his brothers. Furthermore, it appears that his father has turned Joseph into his 2<sup>nd</sup> in command, despite being younger than all of his brothers who are out working. This only increases their animosity towards him.

As things stand, it is likely that Jacob would make Joseph the authority over his older brothers. However, Jacob is the worst person to learn authority from. God will teach Joseph authority and how to wield it, as well as authority orientation. As a result, Joseph is going to become a great leader. Even though some people are natural leaders, the actual function of leadership is learned.

Joseph has been sent by his father Jacob to check up on his older brothers and to see how they are doing. He finds them, but as they see him approaching, they begin to talk amongst themselves of a plan to harm him.

**Genesis 37:18** And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him.

Recall that these brothers are not strangers to conspiracy. They quickly determined how to deal with the rape of their sister, which involved a conspiracy that they developed together, apart from their father.

Sins often tend to escalate. In their own minds, the brothers could justify killing Shechem and his family because he raped their sister. But now, their sins are escalating. Joseph's half-brothers are filled with jealousy and other mental attitude sins toward Joseph. They have anger and hatred toward him, which could possibly become manifest in murder. They had these same feelings against Shechem and they dealt with those feelings using violence.

We know that their anger is a result of Joseph being their father's favorite son (or, more favored than they are); and because of Joseph's dreams. It angered these older brothers that their younger brother might rule over them.

Their discussion is going to be about how far they should take it.

**Genesis 37:19** And they said to one another, "Behold, this dreamer comes.

Because Joseph unabashedly shared his dreams with his family, he is now called *the dreamer* by his brothers. It is a term of derision.

Joseph could be recognized from a long distance away because of his tunic. His tunic apparently had long sleeves, which indicated that he had authority and did not do any of the grunt work.

**Genesis 37:20** Therefore come now, and let us kill him, and throw him into some pit, and we will say some evil beast has devoured him. And we will see what will become of his dreams.”

Although vv. 19b–20 are presented as a single quote, this was probably a summary of their discussion. Note the translation: *and **they** said to one another*. So these are things which the young men said to one another.

It is unimportant who said what. The very fact that someone could suggest murder and this be a valid point of discussion indicates how far from God these young men are.

The sons of Jacob had become quite calloused and were willing to kill their own half-brother out of jealousy. When we studied the life of Jacob, his carnality and scheming was probably disturbing to some degree. His sons and their carnality and scheming are far more disturbing.

Paulo Coelho, from *The Devil and Miss Prym: In the beginning there was only a small amount of injustice abroad in the world, but everyone who came afterwards added their portion, always thinking it was very small and unimportant, and look where we have ended up today.*<sup>91</sup>

“If we kill him,” Joseph’s brothers reason, “then what will become of his dreams?” Joseph had dreamed that his brothers would bow down to him. If he is dead, this cannot happen.

**Genesis 37:21** And Reuben heard, and he delivered him out of their hands and said, “Let us not kill him.”

Surprisingly enough, it is Reuben, the firstborn, who does have legitimate authority over his other brothers, says that they should not kill him. In the ancient world, it would be understood that, in the absence of their father, his authority was absolute.

What Reuben says will save Joseph from being killed by his own half-brothers.

Unfortunately, Reuben will not require the brothers to do what is right; he will try to find some middle point between their irrational hatred and doing that which is right. There is no middle ground between good and evil.

Reuben has to think fast in order to save his young half-sibling. They spoke of throwing Joseph’s body into a pit; he suggests, instead, throwing Joseph live into a pit.

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<sup>91</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/injustice> accessed March 28, 2016

Reuben does not feel strong enough to simply tell his younger brothers, “Hands off. You cannot kill him; you cannot harm him. He is your younger brother; he is your father’s son.” He had to think quickly, and this was his solution: put Joseph into a pit and then come back for him later. So Reuben tried to find some common ground; Reuben wanted to find a compromise position and go with that. Leaders ought not compromise with evil.

It did not occur to Reuben immediately that, what his brothers were suggesting was completely wrong; and there are no halfway measures which somehow work.

We have a similar situation with Pontius Pilate and Jesus. Pilate knew that the correct thing to do would be to release Jesus a free man because he had not committed any crimes (John 19:6, 12); but he did not want to have a riot on his hand, so he thought it best to sacrifice the one for the many (compare John 11:49–51). Pilate faced a blood-thirsty mob, and he realized that releasing Jesus would have resulted in a riot and much bloodshed. So, he believed that he found a halfway point, to have Jesus crucified, despite His having done nothing wrong.

Back to Reuben and Joseph:

[Genesis 37:22](#) And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him.” (in order to rescue him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again).

In this area, a pit is a dried up well. It was dug and used until it dried up. Those of us who have owned wells realize that this is definitely a possibility.

Reuben’s plan is so-so, but he is not acting as the leader of his brothers. Many years later, Judah will assume this position.

[Genesis 37:23](#) And it happened when Joseph had come to his brothers, they stripped Joseph out of his tunic, the tunic reaching to the soles of his feet that was on him.

The brothers were particularly mad about this tunic that Jacob had made for Joseph.

There has been much discussion on the nature of this tunic. One explanation which I have heard is, it was a tunic of long sleeves which indicated authority. Some translations call it a *many-colored coat*. Others suggest it was a tunic with long sleeves, which indicated a person who did not work (for instance, he would not carry lamb around with long sleeves). Whatever it was, it was different from what the others wore and it was a sign of authority.

If anyone should have been irritated about this, it should have been Reuben, as this threatened his authority. However, because of the many mothers involved in this family, Reuben has never clearly held authority over his brothers. He has attempted to exercise his authority, but never in the absolute sense (as we see here with Joseph and the other brothers).



Whatever the reason, Joseph's brothers were quite angry about his tunic, and when they had grabbed Joseph to throw him into a pit, some of them called to remove this tunic from him. It would make sense that such a tunic would represent authority—that would certainly anger his older brothers.

Notice just how irrational this is. None of the brothers could wear this tunic. It may have looked great and they were jealous, but none of the brothers would be able to actually take possession of the tunic. That would be tantamount to admitting guilt in the killing of Joseph.

**Genesis 37:24** And they took him and threw him into a pit. And the pit was empty, with no water in it.

This pit was a former well. These were dug out in somewhat of a bottle shape; and if deep enough, no one could get themselves out of it.

*Fausset: To this day there are numerous cisterns hewn in the rock, and bottle shaped with hollow mouth, such as egress, would be impossible from without help. Into such a pit doubtless Joseph was cast here.<sup>92</sup>*

**Genesis 37:25** And they sat down to eat bread. And they lifted up their eyes, and looked. And behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

They are apparently near a well-traveled road, and it is possible that they could look at the clothing or the means of transportation and determine what clan they were observing. The direction that they went and whatever knowledge they had of the trading practices of that clan told them that they were going to Egypt. Or, Joseph, because he was with these traders, knew all about them.

This is the picture: Joseph is in a pit calling out to his brothers, and they are sitting down to lunch. Off in the distance are a group of Ishmaelite traders. These traders have spices which they will take down to Egypt to sell.

The narrative will suggest that Joseph's brothers traveled a distance away from him, so as not to have to listen to him cry out. After all, hearing your younger brother call out for mercy would not be an easy thing to listen to during a meal.

**Genesis 37:26** And Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we should kill our brother and hide his blood?"

Judah realizes that it does them no good to just kill their brother. Their benefits would be limited. They could sell him to the Ishmaelites as a slave, to be sold in Egypt. Obviously, seeing the traders off in the distance gives him this idea.

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<sup>92</sup> Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: Dothan.

Recall that Judah is the 4<sup>th</sup> son, and through him will be the line of Jesus.

Taking Joseph's tunic would gain the brothers nothing; but selling Joseph would at least get them a little cash.

**Genesis 37:27** "Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him. For he is our brother, and our flesh." And his brothers listened.

This idea seems to be well-received by Jacob's sons. They get rid of Joseph but they have not killed him. It seems like a wonderful solution to their problem. If Joseph is taken as a slave, then they would not have to deal with him again.

Note also that Judah is taking a leadership role here (taking a leadership role does not necessarily mean that you guide those around you into doing that which is right). The line of King David will come through Judah (as will the line of Jesus).

**Genesis 37:28** And men, Midianites, traders, came by. And they drew up Joseph and took him out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they brought Joseph into Egypt.

Apparently, while the sons of Jacob were eating, Midianite traders came by, heard Joseph yelling for help, and took him out of the pit. Then they took Joseph to the Ishmaelite traders and got 20 pieces of silver for him.

The Ishmaelite traders took Joseph to Egypt.

## Lesson 389: Genesis 37:29–35

## Joseph's Brothers Suggest He is Dead

We are studying the life of Joseph. He was treated very unjustly by his brothers. They had thrown him into a pit (a water-less well), and while deciding what to do with him, Midianite traders discovered Joseph, took him out, and sold him as a slave to the Ishmaelite traders.

Injustice—man looks at injustice one way; but God is able to use injustice to the benefit of the person who is harmed.

### Quotations on Injustice

Henry David Thoreau: Justice is sweet and musical; but injustice is harsh and discordant.

Nelson DeMille: If everyone howled at every injustice, every act of barbarism, every act of unkindness, then we would be taking the first step towards a real humanity.

Hugo Claus: *I am a person who is unhappy with things as they stand. We cannot accept the world as it is. Each day we should wake up foaming at the mouth because of the injustice of things.*<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/injustice> accessed March 28, 2016

Paulo Coelho, from *The Devil and Miss Prym*: *In the beginning there was only a small amount of injustice abroad in the world, but everyone who came afterwards added their portion, always thinking it was very small and unimportant, and look where we have ended up today.*<sup>94</sup>

Not every person sees injustice as something one must spend a lifetime fighting:

Dorothy Day: *As for ourselves, yes, we must be meek, bear injustice, malice, rash judgment. We must turn the other cheek, give up our cloak, go a second mile.*

Voltaire: *Injustice in the end produces independence.*

Unless otherwise noted, these are from:

<http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/injustice.html> (accessed March 28, 2016)

Not realizing that the traders have already taken Joseph, Reuben surreptitiously returns to the pit rescue him. Probably, the time frame was, they threw Joseph into the well, they ate their meal, and Reuben returned to the pit after it was dark.

Or, just as likely, the brothers came to an agreement to sell Joseph into slavery, and Reuben went to check on him and possibly to bring him some food, and discovered him to be gone.

Reuben's plan was to go back to Joseph and to rescue him out of the pit. Rather than stand up to his violent brothers, Reuben acted as if he would go along with them, and secretly rescue Joseph when he had the chance to. This is not the approach of a leader.

Reuben does not appear to have thought any of this out. Once he rescues Joseph, then what? If he returns to their father Jacob, then what?

**Genesis 37:29** And Reuben returned to the pit. And behold! Joseph was not in the pit! And he tore his clothes.

However, Reuben goes to the pit, whether in secret or by some pretext, but his younger brother is not in the pit anymore. He had already been taken.

This narrative, which so far, has had information that only Joseph would know, suddenly begins dealing with things that Joseph would not have known at this time. Vv. 29–35 would not be known by Joseph until 25 years later. We do not know if he could hear his brothers discussing what to do with him. This seems unlikely, as the Midianite traders pulled Joseph out of the pit without the brothers knowing about it.

In any case, this suggests that the material which is recorded here was not recorded for at least 25 years after these things took place. Or that Joseph added this to his narrative when he found out what had happened with his brothers. We see all of this as a seamless narrative; but there are sections of this narrative that Joseph does not personally observe.

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<sup>94</sup> From <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/injustice> accessed March 28, 2016

In any case, Reuben had gone to the pit, Joseph was not there, and Reuben was upset and possibly even a little irrational at this time. Obviously, Joseph would know about none of this until decades later. But, you will observe that this narrative proceeds without a hitch, as if all of this is being observed by someone overhead.

**Genesis 37:30** And he [Reuben] returned to his brothers and said, “The child, he is not. And I, where will I go?”

Reuben is in charge; he is responsible to his father, Jacob. For a very long time, both Jacob and Leah would have taught Reuben that he is the oldest of the brothers and he is therefore in charge. He would have learned with that authority comes great responsibility. Reuben never did quite embrace his authority properly, something his father had noticed and would point out many years hence.

Under his watch, Joseph has come to them—sent by their father—and Reuben had allowed Joseph to be carried off (they don’t know by whom at this point). All of this falls on Reuben’s shoulders. His younger brothers are his responsibility; particularly Joseph.

**Genesis 37:31** And they took Joseph's tunic, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.

The brothers were all angry with Joseph and his coat of long sleeves, so they took this away from him before putting him into the pit.

Jacob’s sons have to explain why Joseph is missing. So they will put blood on Joseph’s tunic and bring that to their father. Essentially, that would be their explanation.

Even though the brothers were jealous about the tunic, none of them will be able to ever use the tunic.

**Genesis 37:32** And they sent the tunic reaching to the soles of the feet, and they brought it to their father. And they said, “We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's coat or not?”

This is actually a very lousy lie.

Had Joseph actually been attacked by wild animals, how likely is it that the brothers would have come across the tunic and recognized that it might have belonged to Joseph? How likely would they find the tunic and not the body? And if the wild animals dragged Joseph away, how likely would it have been for them to come across it? And why is the tunic not in unrecognizable tatters?

Jacob’s overwhelming grief will prevent him from thinking through this incident and the lack of explanation provided by his sons.

**Genesis 37:33** And he knew it, and said, “It is my son's tunic. An evil beast has eaten him. Joseph is without doubt torn in pieces.”

Jacob is so eaten up by grief, he does not think any of this through. If a wild beast has attacked Joseph, then the tunic is going to be partially shredded. It is quite difficult to make a tunic look like the person wearing it was mauled by a wild animal. However, Jacob takes all of this at face value. Here is his son's tunic; it is covered with blood; and he comes to the conclusion that his sons wanted him to come to.

**Genesis 37:34** And Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

Jacob truly loved Joseph and was very hurt by this turn of events—believing that his son had been killed.

**Genesis 37:35** And all his sons, and all his daughters, rose up to comfort him. But he refused to be comforted. And he said, “For I will go down into the grave to my son mourning. And his father wept for him.”

Jacob would not be comforted. He is saying that he will continue mourning for his lost son for the rest of his life.

This is one of the few times Jacob is said to have *daughters* (I cannot think of another time; although such a thing would have been implied when Hamor offered to intermarry with his family). Up until now, all we knew about was one daughter, Dinah, who had been raped.

We have to reasonably assume that Joseph later knew about this set of events from one of his family—very likely from his father, Jacob, or from Reuben, his older brother—and he has included it here, in chronological order. As pointed out earlier, Joseph was very good with narrative. So we have portions of the narrative where he was a part of that narrative; and we have what his father tells him 20 years later; and he intertwines these things into a seamless narrative (I have assumed that Joseph is the writer of this portion of Genesis).

No matter how we look at this, vv. 1–17 and vv. 23–28 and v. 36 are written from Joseph's point-of-view. In fact, remember that man who told Joseph that his brothers went to Dothan? *Only* Joseph would have known about that little detail in this narrative. However, the other stuff in vv. 18–22 would have been mostly the experience of his brothers (Reuben in particular); and vv. 29–35 would have been mostly the experience of his father.

When they are all reunited again, what would be on Reuben's mind? The tremendous guilt that he has carried over all these years about not taking a clear stand on behalf of his young brother Joseph. And what would have been on Jacob's mind, the moment he became aware of who Joseph is, and that he is still alive, would be the great grief that he felt, herein described. The logical thing for Reuben and Joseph to discuss would be how he has felt about abandoning Joseph all those many years ago. The logical thing for Jacob

to tell his son Joseph, in the future is, how heartbroken he was from the moment he heard of his death.

So, logically, Joseph would have taken this information, and placed it seamlessly into the narrative of his life. Joseph was much more attuned to the concept of writing a thorough narrative (far more than his father Jacob was).

Somehow, in Joseph's experience in Egypt, he learned a great many skills. He spent a great deal of time in prison in this experience. What would he do during this time? Telling fellow prisoners the story of his life and his experiences. As a result, Joseph became an excellent story teller (and I am not implying that any of this history is made up or exaggerated; just that Joseph developed the skill to give a clear and suspenseful narrative).

This is a great deal of difference between the writing styles of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. Abraham was episodic in his biography. Isaac revealed very little information in his biography, apart from deaths, births and marriages. Jacob gave us more detail than his father and grandfather, but he still wrote in the episodic approach of his grandfather, Abraham, leaving us with gaps and questions. But, nearly from the very beginning of this narrative about Joseph, we feel as if we are with him the entire time, able to see things as he does; but also able to see the things pertinent to his circumstances, even though they are outside of Joseph's range of personal observation.

The Joseph narrative is quite remarkable and skillful in its unfolding. He knows when to follow out this or that set of events; and he knows when to bring us back to his own personal experiences. He knows how to so integrate his own experiences with information he is given 20+ years in the future. Yet, this skill is rarely remarked upon by commentators. The writing of his own history is so well-executed as to escape notice of those who read it.

There will be an exception to this, and that is Genesis 38, which seems to have been thrown into the midst of Genesis 37–50 so as to barely belong to the overall narrative. However, Genesis 38 reveals to us why Joseph, for a time, was the leading tribe in Israel; and what Judah's tribe was not.

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**Lesson 390: Genesis 37:36****An Apparent Contradiction**

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Joseph was sent to find his brothers and to report back what was going on. They see him coming and talk about killing him. Reuben says it would be better to sell him into slavery than to kill him, but he says this in order to save Joseph later.

The jealous brothers take his long-sleeved tunic from him and cast him into a pit. Reuben intended to save Joseph later; the other brothers intended to sell Joseph into slavery later.



Someone (it appears to be the Midianites) draws Joseph out of the pit and sold him to the Ishmaelite traders, who then took Joseph to Egypt. Who did what will be the focus of this lesson.

Then we read of Reuben's panic upon returning to the pit and not finding Joseph there; and the decision of the brothers to tell their father that Joseph was probably attacked by a wild animal and killed. When they tell this to their father, he refuses to be comforted over the Joseph's death.

However, Joseph, at this time, is actually en route all this time to Egypt. What takes place will require a great deal of explaining.

[Genesis 37:36](#) And the Midianites sold him [Joseph] into Egypt to Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, the chief of the executioners.

Several translations use the word *eunuch* of a man who has a wife. The word is *çârîyç* (סִיֶּרֶס) [pronounced *saw-REECE*], and it means, *official, minister of the court; prince; eunuch*. Strong's #5631 BDB #710. Might he be both an official and a eunuch? Possibly. We really do not know. We know for certain that he has a higher position, as he has a beautiful wife, a very large home, and a lot of servants.

While all of this is going on in the home of Jacob, the Midianites sell Joseph to Ishmaelite traders, who then bring Joseph to Potipher, a eunuch/officer of Pharaoh and the chief of the executioners. Although the Ishmaelites are not named in this verse, they are named back in v. 28.

What happened in vv. 29–35 (the interaction between his brothers and his father) would not be known by Joseph for many years.

The narrative that makes up Genesis 37 is known as [3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient](#).<sup>95</sup> The author may or may not be one of the characters (in this case, he is); and the narrative includes things which occur at this time, but things which the author himself was not a part of or a witness to. Although this is probably not the first time such a narrative is written, it is possibly one of the earliest narratives of this type to come down to us in ancient literature. This is the most common approach of fiction writing in modern literature.

Job 1–2 is also written in 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient.

Even though a narrative may have a central character (Joseph, Job), there are things which take place in the narrative that the central character does not himself personally observe. But the narrative continues often in roughly chronological order, often switching back and forth between two scenes which might even be taking place at the same time.

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<sup>95</sup> In the Bible, usually the thoughts of individuals are expressed verbally. 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient often is able to look at what people are thinking, but that is not what we have in Genesis 37; the thoughts we know are those which are expressed verbally.

**Explaining the Contradiction Concerning Who Sold Joseph into Slavery:** There is an apparent contradiction. That is, it appears that one passage contradicts another passage. Now let's look at some verses which are said to contradict one another:

**Genesis 37:24** And they [Joseph's older brothers] took him [Joseph] and threw him into a pit. And the pit was empty, with no water in it.

**Genesis 37:25** And they sat down to eat bread. And they lifted up their eyes, and looked. And behold, a company of **Ishmaelites** came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spices and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt.

**Genesis 37:28** And men, **Midianites**, traders, came by. And **they** drew up Joseph and took him out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the **Ishmaelites** for twenty pieces of silver. And **they** brought Joseph into Egypt.

**Genesis 37:36** And the **Midianites** sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, the chief of the executioners.

**Genesis 39:1** Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the **Ishmaelites** who had brought him down there.

Joseph's brothers see the Ishmaelite traders, but it is the Midianite traders who draw Joseph out of the pit (at least one translation suggests that Joseph's brothers draw him out of the pit to sell him). The Midianites sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver. However, a few more verses down has the Midianites selling Joseph to Potiphar. Then, in the next chapter, it is the Ishmaelites who sold Joseph to Potiphar. This is what is known as an apparent contradiction.

For those who maintain that this is a contradiction, some of them claim that there are two writers of Genesis, both who developed similar narratives about Joseph being sold to the Egyptians (eventually). These two narratives are blended together many hundreds of years later, and whoever did the blending was smart enough to blend the narratives, but not smart enough to catch the apparent contradiction. It seems to say one thing in v. 28 and something else in v. 36. Critics who tell you that the text was quite fluid and malleable, and easily changed; also seem to think that, after all of this was done, the text was not malleable enough for a scribe to recognize and then remove the apparent contradiction. Somehow they discovered this great contradiction, but it somehow eluded those who wrote and finalized the Scripture in the first place (who they nearly always claim were not the participants in these events).

In order for this to be a real contradiction, we have to accept several things: (1) there is no reasonable explanation which allows all of these verses to be true; (2) the two narratives existed for whatever length of time, were blended together, but those who did this were not

smart enough to see this contradiction of verses (which were in the same chapter) and “fix” it; and (3) that Scripture is so malleable as to allow for various narratives and historical accounts to be woven together, thrown into the mix, and then accepted as Scripture; but not malleable enough for anyone to have ever “fixed” what appears to be a fairly obvious contradiction in the text.

In truth, there are 2 or more narratives combined here, but likely combined together by the same man (Joseph). We have what he personally observed; but we also have the interactions of his brothers and father, which he did not observe.

Assuming that the text is accurate (which I do), how can we explain it?

In the ancient world, one job that some men took up was that of trading, buying and selling. They would go to one country, buy stuff that is peculiar to that country, and then haul these things to another country and sell them for a reasonable markup. However, this is not the only way that traders functioned. Let’s say these Midianite traders bring back 50 lbs of myrrh, but there is only a demand for 10 lbs of myrrh—do you see how that can screw up their business model considerably? They may not have a profit margin built in to their costs to cover purchasing stuff that no one wants.

What is one way around this? The Ishmaelites do not have to do all trading on spec (speculation). They might interact with someone wealthy like Potiphar and Potiphar might give them a list of things which he wants; and he may even finance this future purchase by either paying for an item up front or giving them a deposit for the purchase of an item.

So, (and I am going to simplify this) Potiphar says, “I want one young male slave who is reasonably intelligent, and I am willing to pay up to 20 pieces of silver for him; and here is the money.” At that point, the Ishmaelites are acting as agents for Potiphar. They will purchase a young male slave as agents for Potiphar.

I practiced real estate for several decades, and when buyers were interested in a house, and they signed the contract and gave me the earnest money, I would take that contract and earnest money to the selling agent and hand it over to him. I was *not* buying the house myself, even though I handed the check over to the other agent. I was acting as an agent for or as a representative of the buyer. Even though I handled the earnest money and gave it to the selling agent, I was not *personally* paying for or buying that house. Years later, when anyone might talk about the sale and purchase of that house, my name would never be used in connection with the actual purchase of the home. If you looked at the deed and observed the various title holders to the property, my name would not be on that list of title-holders. The seller’s name would be there and the buyer’s name would be there; my name would not. Nor would the selling agent’s; nor would the title company have their name on the deed, even though they handled all of the money necessary for the sale of the house, and properly distributed all of the funds in order to close the deal.

In one sense, the sellers have sold the house to the buyers, and I have acted simply as an agent for the buyers. However, it is not outside the realm of human experience for the buyers to, at some point in time, tell their friends, "Real estate agent Kukis sold us this house." This would be the perspective of the buyers, as they might not ever meet the actual sellers or the sellers' agent.

So, legally, I have sold them nothing; I merely act as their agent. Informally, because I am the person that they interact with several times a week, they see me as selling them the house.

So, if the Ishmaelites are acting as representatives or as agents for Potiphar, then they are not actually buying or selling Joseph; they are simply acting as agents for Potiphar, who is buying the slave from the Midianites. So, legally, in one sense, the Midianites have sold Joseph to Potiphar (Genesis 37:36); but, in another sense, it is the Ishmaelites who sold Joseph to Potiphar (Genesis 39:1). If you have ever bought a house, then you understand how this is.

Similarly, if you go to purchase a car on a car lot, you might say, "Charley Brown, over at Brown's Motors, sold me this car." Informally, that is what happened. Legally, the car may be registered to the previous owner, to Charley Brown, to Brown's Motors or to some other legal entity set up to take temporary possession of the cars on the lot.

Now, I cannot guarantee that this is how it all went down. This is merely one reasonably simple explanation for how these verses could be read literally, understood literally, without there being a contradiction (even though there appears to be a contradiction).

In order for a contradiction to stand, there must be no normal and reasonable explanation that could explain how all sets of verses could be true together. Here, I contend that the Midianites sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites, who were acting as agents for Potiphar. So, it is the Midianites who sell the slave to Potiphar, even though this is done through the intermediaries, the Ishmaelites.

I have seen other explanations for these few verses, and, I find most of them lacking (most of them equate the Midianites and the Ishmaelites; or have the two groups traveling together). But I think that mine (which I believe to be original with me) is the most reasonable.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr. provides a different explanation: *The name "Ishaelites" changes back and forth. In chapter 37 they are referred to as Midianite traders and Ishmaelites. This is because those who had descended from Ishmael intermarried with the descendants of Abraham through his second*

*wife Keturah from whom came the Midianites. So both terms applied to these traders who were also engaged in the slave trade.*<sup>96</sup>

We are not given every detail for every narrative of Scripture. So, these are options as to how this apparent contradiction might be explained. One explanation may be more elegant than another; another explanation might introduce other problems in understanding the narrative. Having studied Scripture for the past 45 years, I have not come upon a contradiction which destroyed my faith. Some of them were difficult (not many) and some even challenged my faith; but in all circumstances which come to mind, most often, the explanation for an apparent contradiction is often quite simple.

As an aside, you can search out websites which list the apparent contradictions in Scripture, and a few of them actually allow you to interact with the person who posted the apparent contradictions. You can offer them a reasonable explanation to explain the contradiction (which means, it is no longer a contradiction), but, they will not remove that apparent contradiction from their website. The reason is, they are not in the business of disseminating accurate information; they are in the business of making you think that the Bible is filled with contradictions. If they removed every apparent contradiction which has a reasonable and plausible explanation, then they would no longer have a long, long list of such contradictions. That would defeat their purpose for having a website in the first place.

The idea is, if you throw enough mud against a fence, some of it will stick. Mud-throwers are not benefitted by reducing the amount of mud that they have.

When working on this particular lesson, I had the occasion to explore new *Bible contradiction* sites, and must admit to being quite amazed. Some person or group put together an interactive chart of all the 63,779 *cross references in the Bible*,<sup>97</sup> and the result is quite stunning. An entire website (<http://bibviz.com/>) has been dedicated to this endeavor, which is all about shaking the faith of the faithful. I cannot even begin to comprehend the number of man-hours dedicated to this project, to graphically list all of those cross references (primarily to show contradictions), and then design an interactive site all around it. It is quite impressive. The lengths that some people will go to in order to express their own negative volition toward God is nothing short of amazing. This goes far beyond the list of 101 or 500 Bible contradictions. My own work, cited below, is quite puny by comparison.

See **Alleged Bible Contradictions** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Now, I can personally understand putting in a great deal of time into the study of the Word of God, because the Word of God lives and abides forever (Isa. 40:8). It is more difficult for me to understand a person putting the same amount of work into a book that he does not believe in. For hundreds of years, people have written anti-Bible books, some of which

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<sup>96</sup> From [Lesson #146 \(Providential Preparation\)](#); accessed August 2, 2016 (slightly edited).

<sup>97</sup> From [Patheos.com](#); accessed April 5, 2016.

claim in the preface that their book would end the Bible for all time. Such authors are soon forgotten, yet the Word of God continues as a beacon of light.

Occasionally, I will read through a portion of an anti-Bible website or open up a book on Amazon.com (using their preview feature), and nearly every time, the first few things I read are simply incorrect.

For instance, Jason X wrote [\*Bible Problems: Contradictions, Factual Errors, and Evil Moral Teachings in the Bible\*](#). My guess is, Jason would like to keep his identify secret and maybe make a few dollars on his book on Kindle (which is actually a pretty good deal for authors who cannot get published).

For whatever reason, his first chapter = his introduction; and chapter two, *Contradictions*, starts out with *How long did it take God to create the Universe? Genesis 1:1–32 says that God created the universe in six days; but Genesis 2:4 says that God created the universe in just one day.* Upon reading this so-called contradiction, I know that this is not going to be a scholarly work, as the Bible does not say that God created the universe in 6 days or in 1 day. God created the universe (= the heavens and the earth) instantly; and He restored the earth in 6 days. Genesis 2:4 speaks of *the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens*; innumerable times in the Bible and in common usage, the word *day* does not always refer to a 24 hour period of time. It simply refers to a period of time during which something occurred.

Doug Holken wrote [\*Contradictions and Absurdities in the Bible \(The Bible Contradictions Book 1\)\*](#); also available on Kindle. The first thing that concerns him about the Bible is Genesis 1:1 where the word is not *God* but *Elohim*, which is plural. So, right away, Doug is concerned that we don't know that the Bible teaches polytheism. He does not mention that the verb associated with *Elohim* is a masculine singular verb; and that the Hebrew treatment of singular and plural is different than our treatment of singular and plural. They have the concept of *Pluralis excellentiae* or *pluralis majestatis* (known to us as the royal plural).

*Gesenius writes, Of...the pluralis excellentiae or maiestatis, as has been remarked above, is properly a variety of the abstract plural, since it sums up the several characteristics belonging to the idea, besides possessing the secondary sense of an intensification of the original idea. It is thus closely related to the plurals of amplification, treated under e, which are mostly found in poetry.*<sup>98</sup>

However, the simplest way to explain *Elohim*, which is a plural noun, is, this is the Triune God, 3 in person, 3 in number, but 1 in essence and purpose. Therefore, using a singular verb with the plural *Elohim* is exactly what we would expect in the Bible. Now, on occasion, the Bible uses this same word *elohim* to refer to multiple [false] gods. Context and the associated verbs make it clear which definition is being used.

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<sup>98</sup> From [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralis\\_excellentiae](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralis_excellentiae) accessed April 5, 2016.



In any case, I have devoted another lesson entirely to alleged contradictions found in Scripture, and have answered them as well.

In most cases, I can go to any website or to any book and answer the first 5–10 alleged contradictions without requiring any research; by that time, I am bored and move on to other things.

Am I able to answer every Bible contradiction? I am certain that there are some out there which I am unsure as to how to address them. I have come across verses and passages which I could not fully explain, and in the context of those particularly difficult verses, I certainly admit to not having a firm grasp of the meaning intended.

On the other hand, I have never come across a series of apparent contradictions that I have read and ended up thinking, “Hmmm, I really need to reconsider this whole Bible thing.”

### **Lesson 391: Genesis 37:1–10      Summarizing Genesis 37 Part I (using the NKJV)**

When I began this study many years ago, I used the Modern KJV. Let’s review this chapter, but the translation used throughout will be the New King James Version. The titles in bold come from the NKJV.

In this chapter there are several important observations:

#### **Observations Made in Genesis 37**

1. This chapter is a contrast between the progeny of the twin brothers, Jacob and Esau. Genesis 36 told us about Esau and his sons and where they lived; and Genesis 37–50 will tell us about Jacob, his sons and where they lived.
2. Throughout the patriarchal period of Genesis, this is always the contrast between the line of God and the line of man.
  - 1) First there was the line of Abraham and the line of Lot. Abraham was the line of promise. Abraham depended upon God; Lot depended upon himself.
  - 2) Then we have the lines of Isaac and Ishmael. Both of these sons were descended from Abraham; but Isaac was the line of promise. It would be unfair to characterize Ishmael as depending only upon himself, as God intervened in his life at two critical points (when his mother was pregnant with him and when he and his mother had been cast out of the Abrahamic household).
  - 3) Most recently, we have studied Jacob and Esau. Jacob continued the line of promise; and Esau did not.
3. With Genesis 37, there is a change. Although there are 11 brothers in this chapter, there are 3 in particular who are in view: Joseph, Reuben and Judah. When a quotation is given in this chapter, it will be either a quotation of one of

## Observations Made in Genesis 37

- these 3 sons or, there will be a generic quotation from the brothers. This is because Reuben, as the oldest brother, is supposed to be a leader; and yet he fails at this responsibility. Joseph, although the 2<sup>nd</sup> youngest son, will rule over his brothers in the near future. However, ultimately, Judah would become the ruling tribe.
4. Personally, I believe that Joseph recorded the information beginning with Genesis 37:1 and continuing to the end of Genesis 50. This does not mean that he wrote anything down—but, at the very least, Joseph repeated the book of Genesis up to his time (Genesis 1–36) and then appended it with his own experiences.
    - 1) Recall that Joseph spent a lot of time at home with his father Jacob, and it is possible that Jacob taught him the Scriptures.
    - 2) Joseph seems to have a strong moral compass throughout this last section of Genesis, suggesting that he learned this in some way from someone. Logically, knowing the book of Genesis up to that point in time would have given Joseph the moral training he seems to have had.
  5. Whereas Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob all had limitations when it came to recording the narrative of their lives, this section of Genesis by Joseph is by far the most polished narrative of the 4 patriarchs, moving seamlessly from events that Joseph himself experienced to events that were outside his realm of perception.

**Joseph Dreams of Greatness** (these headings come from the NKJV, which is the translation used in these two summary lessons)

Genesis 37:1–2a [Now Jacob dwelt in the land where his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. This is the history of Jacob.](#)

We find this approach each time we have the phrase *these are the generations of*. What follows has very little information of the patriarch named, but that phrase is always followed by a narrative about his son (or, in this case, sons).

What we observe are the results of the actions of Jacob. As the father, he, for the most part, set all of these events in motion, but without necessarily participating in them. A great theme of Scripture, which is true in life, is the profound effect a father has upon his son (or sons). The most important male in any man's life is his father.

This will be the 10<sup>th</sup> and final section of the book of Genesis.

## Wenstrom's Outline of Genesis 37:1–50:26

- I. Introduction to the dysfunctional family of Jacob (Genesis 37:2-38:30)
  - A. Joseph rejected by his brothers and sold into slavery (Genesis 37:2-36)
  - B. Judah sins against Tamar and has twins (Genesis 38:1-30)

## Wenstrom's Outline of Genesis 37:1–50:26

- II. Joseph ascent to rulership in Egypt (Genesis 39:1-41:57)
  - A. Joseph in Potiphar's house (Genesis 39:1-20)
  - B. Joseph in prison and the interpreter of dreams (Genesis 39:21-40:23)
  - C. Joseph in the palace and second only to Pharaoh (Genesis 41:1-57).
- III. The dysfunctional family of Jacob reconciled (Genesis 42:1-46:27)
  - A. First journey: Joseph tests his brothers (Genesis 42:1-38)
  - B. Second journey: Joseph entertains his brothers (Genesis 43:1-34)
  - C. The brothers tested and reconciled (Genesis 44:1-45:15)
  - D. The reconciled family of Jacob migrates to Egypt (Genesis 45:16-46:27)
- IV. The family of Jacob blessed in Egypt looking for the Promised Land (Genesis 46:28-50:26)
  - A. Israel's arrival in Egypt (Genesis 46:28-47:12)
  - B. Joseph's administration in Egypt during the famine (Genesis 47:13-31)
  - C. Jacob's blessing on Joseph (Genesis 48:1-22)
  - D. Israel's blessings for the twelve tribes (Genesis 49:1-28)
  - E. Jacob's death in Egypt and burial in Canaan (Genesis 49:29-50:21)
  - F. Joseph's death in Egypt and future burial in Canaan (Genesis 50:22-26).

From [Wenstrom.org](http://Wenstrom.org); accessed April 12, 2016.

Genesis 37:2b **Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad was with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to his father.**

Bilhah and Zilpah were Jacob's secondary wives, having fewer rights and privileges than primary wives. No dowry was usually offered and divorce was easier. They were the personal servants of Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives and made secondary wives at the insistence of Leah and Rachel. They became surrogates for the children of Leah and Rachel, and, in that way, became secondary wives.

As has been discussed earlier, none of this justifies polygamy. Although polygamy occurs throughout the world and throughout history, God's plan is for one man to be married to one woman. See the Doctrine of **Polygamy** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Leah's sons were quite a bit older than Joseph, and he may have been placed with Bilhah and Zilpah's sons for protection.

Genesis 37:3–4 **Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.**

Israel (Jacob) showed favoritism toward Joseph—not a very good idea—and the tunic of many colors was probably a long-sleeved tunic, indicating that he did not do the physical

labor of those with short sleeves. This suggested the favoritism of his father and for some, this might indicate authority over the brothers wearing short sleeves.

Because of this favoritism, Joseph's brothers hated him and could not hide it.

Genesis 37:5–7 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told it to his brothers; and they hated him even more. So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

The standing sheaf of Joseph and the fallen sheaves of his brothers suggest that they are bowing down before Joseph.

Genesis 37:8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

This angered Joseph's brothers even more. "Do you think you are going to reign over us?" they asked him. Remember, in this chapter, there are 3 who are quoted from: Joseph, Reuben and Jacob. When the other brothers speak, they are not individually attributed with the quote.

Genesis 37:9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

Joseph has a second dream where the sun, moon and 11 stars bow down before him, indicating that his father, mother (probably his surrogate mother) and brothers all bow down before him.

Genesis 37:10–11 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" And his brothers envied him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

His father understood the dream, as did his brothers. These dreams just angered his brothers, and his father was taken aback by it, but he did keep it in his mind.



**Joseph Reveals His Dreams to His Brothers by Raphael Santi and Giulio Romano** (a painting) (Raphael inventing the design and Giulio executing the painting under the master's guidance); Oil and Tempera on Canvas from [Raichel.org](http://Raichel.org) accessed April 12, 2016.

This narrative of Joseph's inspired a great deal of art.

**Joseph Sold by His Brothers** (NKJV heading)

Genesis 37:12–13a **Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in Shechem. And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding the flock in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."**

Joseph was sent to check up on his brothers regularly. This in itself was somewhat of a supervisory position.



Genesis 37:13b So he said to him, “Here I am.”

Joseph is simply stated that he is there to serve, to do what his father requests.

Genesis 37:14 Then he said to him, “Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me.” So he sent him out of the Valley of Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

Jacob sends his son Joseph out to check on his brothers. There was nothing necessarily wrong; this was simply something that Jacob wanted to know about. He supervised the family business at this time, as an older man; and did not participate directly.

Genesis 37:15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, “What are you seeking?”

It is clear that Joseph is looking for someone or something; and it is possible that this man recognizes him. The man asks what he is looking for.

Genesis 37:16 So he said, “I am seeking my brothers. Please tell me where they are feeding their flocks.”

Joseph says that he is looking for his brothers and wonders where they are. The conversation was surely more detailed than we find here.

Genesis 37:17 And the man said, “They have departed from here, for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’” So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in Dothan.

The man apparently overheard them planning to move out to Dothan.

As noted before, this little detour would be only known to Joseph.

### **Lesson 392: Genesis 37:18–36 Summarizing Genesis 37 Part II (using the NKJV)**

We continue with a summarization of Genesis 37:

Genesis 37:18–20 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. Then they said to one another, “Look, this dreamer is coming! Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, ‘Some wild beast has devoured him.’ We shall see what will become of his dreams!”

The sons of Jacob begin to conspire against Joseph, having reached a point where they could no longer tolerate him. We have no idea which brother is saying what, but this is a discussion that takes place—it is not one overbearing brother calling all the shots.



Genesis 37:21–22 But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, “Let us not kill him.” And Reuben said to them, “Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him”—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father.

Reuben is the oldest brother and he has the authority, in Jacob’s absence. He knows that he cannot allow his brothers to kill Joseph, and he tries to find a middle point between doing the right thing and doing the great evil of killing Joseph. Sometimes, there is no middle ground with evil.

Bear in mind, the only brothers who will be named are Reuben, Judah and Joseph, because there is a leadership issue among them.

Genesis 37:23–24 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the tunic of many colors that was on him. Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it.

Therefore, Reuben convinced his other brothers to simply put Joseph into a pit. As the oldest brother, he does not think is simply stand with Joseph as his protector.

So the brothers pull off that tunic that angered them and cast Joseph into a dry pit; a former well.

As discussed previously, we do not know what manner of tunic this was. Some translations suggest that it had many colors; others that it was a tunic with long sleeves, indicating authority (which seems to be the most likely, to me).

Genesis 37:25–28 And they [Joseph’s brothers] sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. So Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh.” And his brothers listened. Then Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

You may recall that there was an apparent contradiction here and with verses that follow.

The NKJV adds in the words *the brothers* (see how those words are italicized). Literally, v. 28 reads: However, [a band of] men—Midianite traders—passed over [and saw Joseph]. They drew [him] out and lifted Joseph out from the pit. They sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for 20 silver coins, and the Ishmaelites [lit., *they*] took Joseph to Egypt. So you see, the text is unclear as to who takes Joseph out of the pit and sells him. Is it his brothers or the Midianite traders?

Whether Joseph's brothers or the Midianite traders haul Joseph out of the pit and sell him, this does not, in itself, solve the apparent contradiction of v. 36, which reads: [Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.](#) Since we have already spent half a lesson on this apparent contradiction, we will not revisit it.

Interestingly enough, the NKJV probably does not say that it is Joseph's brothers who take him out of the pit in order to fix the contradiction, but it is probably based on a later verse which reads:

[Genesis 45:4–5 And Joseph said to his brothers, Come near to me, I beg of you { pl }. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your { pl } brother, whom you { pl } sold into Egypt. And now don't be grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you { pl } sold me here: for God sent me before you { pl } to preserve life. \(Context Group Version\)](#)

This suggests that the brothers not only discussed selling Joseph into slavery, but that they actually did it. So, there are several things which are not specifically mentioned which happened. Reuben planned to go back to Joseph later and rescue him. Reuben separated from his brothers (reasons unknown) and the remaining brothers sold Joseph into slavery. Perhaps they liked the idea, but were worried that Reuben might not follow through here; so they did this apart from Reuben.

[Genesis 37:29–30 Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph was not in the pit; and he tore his clothes. And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad is no more; and I, where shall I go?"](#)

Reuben was going to free Joseph and then send him (or take him) back home. But Joseph is not there and Reuben is panicked.

We have no idea what was said at that point. "He's not dead; we sold him." Or no explanation was given, and they start discussing the tunic and making it appear as if Joseph is dead.

[Genesis 37:31–32 So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?"](#)

They had already taken Joseph's tunic off because it angered them. You will notice that the previous quotations are simply attributed to *the brothers*.

[Genesis 37:33–35 And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 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.](#)

Jacob knows the tunic; he sees the blood, and he thinks the worst has happened.



**Joseph's Bloody Coat Brought to Jacob by Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velázquez** (a painting) (Oil on canvas, 1630, at the Monasterio de San Lorenzo). From the [Web Gallery of Art](#); accessed April 12, 2016. I seriously doubt that Jacob owned a small dog.

Genesis 37:36 [Now the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh and captain of the guard.](#)

*Wenstrom: The "providence" of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was sold into slavery and ended up in Egypt did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob's family and to bring glory to Himself.<sup>99</sup>*

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<sup>99</sup> From [Wenstrom.org](#); accessed April 12, 2016.

Our founding fathers often used the term *Providence* to stand for God or for God's overruling will in the founding of our country.

George Washington wrote August 20, 1778: "The Hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this—the course of the war—that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more wicked that has not gratitude to acknowledge his obligations; but it will be time enough for me to turn Preacher when my present appointment ceases." I bet that you did not know that Washington was considering becoming a preacher after his career as a military general. Secular history has a way of editing out the religious parts of our history.

Joseph has faced a great deal of animosity from his brothers; and, even though he may have brought some of this on himself, his brothers acted way out of proportion to Joseph's sins. As a result, Joseph was treated very unjustly; and so would be his life for the next decade or more. Joseph, if he is going to have great authority, needs to understand authority from the wrong end, what unfair treatment is; and he needs great adversity in his life. He will rise to a position where he has the power of life or death; of provision or starvation. Joseph needs to be guided by his thinking and his empathy in the future so that he does not make arbitrary decisions or snap judgments based upon emotion. This is what we will study for the next few chapters.

Joseph is about to face some very difficult years. He has been taken by the Ishmaelites and sold into slavery in Egypt. In Egypt, he is going to face some grave injustices.

R. B. Thieme, Jr. originally taught the difference between adversity and stress; I have no idea how much Dean added to this doctrine. This is applicable to Joseph here; and to our own lives as well.

*Dean: Joseph is facing people testing. As a result of the fact that his brothers have betrayed him he also has to face thought testing. When he gets sold into slavery he is going to have to start dealing with system testing. He is facing all these different kinds of tests at the same time and God is training him to develop a relaxed mental attitude, to develop objectivity, because the first thing that happens when we get hit with a test is that we start to focus on ourselves—the way we have been hurt, the way we have been disappointed—and if we don't catch that and nip it in the bud the next thing we know we are involved in a lot of self-pity. Joseph has to learn all this because God is preparing him to be the number two man in Egypt and he is going to be hearing and dealing with all manner of problems when those seven years of famine come. He has to maintain an up-beat and objective attitude in dealing with people out of objectivity and not out of emotion.*

### **Basic Points on Adversity vs. Stress (by Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.)**

- 1) Adversity is the outside pressure of either adversity or prosperity. Just about anything in life that we run into puts pressure on the soul, whether we realize it or not. So adversity is that outside pressure which comes from circumstances of life. Stress is inside pressure in the soul.



## Basic Points on Adversity vs. Stress (by Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.)

- 2) Adversity is what the circumstances of life do to you. You live in a fallen world with fallen people. Those fallen people run corrupt systems, everything is part of Satan's cosmic system. Therefore, you can be assured of adversity in your life. Stress is what you do to yourself, how you choose to respond to that external pressure that comes from the circumstances of life.
- 3) Adversity is inevitable. You can't run away from it, hide from it, deny it or ignore it. Stress is optional and is your decision.
- 4) Stress is always the result of the sin nature control of the soul. The fragmentation that takes place internally that as a result of the outside pressure is the result of sin nature control. The sin nature can produce some extremely attractive solutions to external adversity. The look, feel and sound good, and they work, but they only work on the short term. The short term can be a year, five years, ten years, but eventually it doesn't work. The result is always stress and that is a failure to handle adversity through the gracious provision of the ten stress-busters. When you don't use the stress-busters you are using sin. You are relying upon yourself rather than God's provision, God's promises and God's principles.
- 5) The stress-busters allow the believer to face any situation in life and remain poised, stable and in control of the situation no matter how horrible or agonizing it might be, without giving into the sin nature. This is what we mean when we say that God's Word is sufficient.
- 6) Sin nature control means arrogance, always. It is either in overt arrogance or it is in pseudo-humility—both are manifestations of arrogance. This means there are the five arrogance skills:
  - (1) There is self-absorption where you just focus on yourself, always just thinking about your problems, your issues.
  - (2) That leads to and has produced self-indulgence, and that is part of the thinking of our generation.
  - (3) That leads to self-justification, where, no matter what you do, you rationalize it.
  - (4) Then you practice self-deception where you create your own concept of the world, your own little world, your own little norms and standards, your own value system, and then you start living like all the world should be that way.
  - (5) This leads to self-deification because, ultimately, you are in rebellion against the authority of God, and you have taken God out of the picture and put yourself into the picture as the ultimate authority for everything in life.

Dean offers the solutions: *The solution. We have these basic stress busters. We confess sin, and that is our recovery. Then we have to put something positive in there. That comes when we are walking by means of the Spirit and we take the Word of God—faith-rest drill—and take some promise or principle and substitute that for the sinful reactions, thoughts, attitudes that we have. Then we have to think in terms of grace: how can I deal with this person in grace and in kindness when it is the last thing we want to do? Then in doctrinal orientation we have to align our thinking with Scripture. We have other stress-busters as we advance: our personal sense of our eternal destiny, personal love for God, personal love for all mankind, occupation with Christ.*

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Rom. 12:2–3 expresses it this way: **Do not be conformed to this age** [which is awash in human viewpoint and cosmic thinking], **but be transformed by the renovation of your thinking, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God** [that is, divine viewpoint]. **For I say (by means of the grace which has been given to me) to every one who is among you, stop thinking of yourself in terms of arrogance beyond what you ought to think, but think in terms of sanity for the purpose of being rational without illusion as God has assigned to each one of us a standard of thinking from doctrine.** (More or less, an R. B. Thieme, Jr. translation)

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From [Robby Dean's Notes](#); accessed April 12, 2016 and edited.

## Lesson 393: Genesis 38:1

## Introducing Genesis 38

I spent a lot more time researching this chapter than most, and found a great many excellent resources (Ron Snider, Jack Ballinger, Robert Dean). Nearly every commentary that I read from had some excellent insights as well as some mistaken notions about this chapter.

The time frame of this chapter has pretty much a built-in minimum based upon the events in this chapter. Judah will get married, he will have 3 sons; all 3 sons will grow to adulthood; two of them will get married; and Judah's wife will die. This suggests a minimum number of years of around 20. Before Joseph is sold into slavery, he is 17 years old (Genesis 37:2), he will enter the palace of Pharaoh at age 30 (Genesis 41:46), and this will be followed by 7 years of prosperity and 1 year of depression which causes his brothers to come to him in Egypt (Genesis 41:53–57 42:1–5). That makes Joseph at least 38 or 39 when his brothers come to him. So, on the high end, this story of Judah must be able to fit within the 21 or 22 years of what is happening with Joseph in Egypt.

We abruptly leave Joseph as a slave in the home of Potiphar in Genesis 37 and return to Canaan to visit the family of Jacob back in the land of Canaan for Genesis 38. Actually, the narrative of Genesis 37 left us the option of two directions to go: (1) we could follow Joseph into slavery in Egypt (Genesis 37:36 **Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.**) or (2) we could stay with Jacob's family in the land (Gen. 37:34–35 **Then Jacob [thinking that his son Joseph was dead] tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days. All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted**



and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.). The author, whom I believe is Joseph, chooses to follow the life of Jacob and his sons—in particular, one set of incidents in the life of Judah.

To understand what is going on, keep in mind that there are 3 men that we have been concentrating on: Reuben, Judah and Joseph. Reuben is the firstborn and should have received the rights, privileges and responsibilities of the firstborn. However, Reuben never seems to fully embrace his responsibilities. He is always stuck somewhere between doing the right thing and being influenced by his younger brothers to do the wrong thing. A true leader cannot do this. A true leader has to do the right thing, whether those under him like it or not. He cannot choose to do something in between good and evil or between right and wrong. If he recognizes right and wrong, the one with authority must stand with what is right.

The second man we have been watching is Judah. You will recall that when the older brothers talked in the previous chapter, only Reuben and Judah were specifically identified and associated with particular quotes. Judah would become the patriarch of the ruling tribe, but it is clearly not because he is a great man. In fact, in this chapter, Judah is going to come off looking *anything but*.. Nevertheless, he will redeem himself later in the book of Genesis.

The patriarch we would expect to head the ruling tribe instead of Reuben is Joseph. He faces a variety of injustices and yet, rises to the second highest office in the land of Egypt. He reigns, exercising his authority with great wisdom and restraint. He does not use his authority to harm those who have harmed him. This will not be ignored by God. God will give Joseph the double portion (usually reserved for the firstborn).

The Bible has a great historic arc to it, and most people have no appreciation for this great arc because they see the Bible as a single book (which it is). The Old Testament is made up of books that were composed over a period of over 1000 years (I would contend that the single book of Genesis was composed over a period of 1500 years).

There are two important issues before us: (1) which son will be the head of the ruling tribe; and (2) which son will be the father from whom the Lord Jesus Christ will come? There are 3 possible men: (1) Reuben, the firstborn; (2) Jacob, the 4<sup>th</sup> born; and (3) Joseph, the 11<sup>th</sup> born. Joseph will exhibit the grace of God in his life, despite being persecuted by his brothers. In the narrative, if one of these 3 men has something to say, then we will know it. If Simeon or Levi or Asher has something to say, they will be referred to as *the brothers*.

No one during the lifetimes of these brothers knows which tribe will be the ruling tribe; no one during their lifetimes knows from which tribe will come the Lord Jesus Christ. No one during the life of Moses, some 400 years later, will know these things. Yet, the writer of this portion of Genesis seems to know that it must come down to these three men. Does Joseph (the likely author of Genesis 37–50) know this? Is he thinking in terms of the ruling tribe? Is he thinking in terms of the future Messiah? It is unclear that he has this on his mind. Who would know this? Who would know the end from the beginning? God the Holy

Spirit. God the Holy Spirit knows that it comes down to these 3 men and the tribes which will come from them. Therefore, what they say and do is carefully recorded. What Dan does or what Zebulun does is just not that important.

Because Genesis 38 is so unusual, this doctrine will help us to have an idea as why Genesis 38 is in the book of Genesis. The bulk of this doctrine comes from Makarios Bible Church.

### Preliminary points for Genesis 38

1. This chapter, like several others in Genesis, has been considered to be useless in terms of teaching material.
2. The chapter serves several purposes which should not be overlooked,
  - 1) It acknowledges the passing of time between the sale of Joseph and the events of chapter 39.
  - 2) It demonstrates how quickly Jacob's family deteriorated and immersed themselves in Canaanite culture, which helps to explain why God separated them from that culture.
  - 3) Therefore, this chapter provides us the background reasons for why the transfer to Egypt was necessary.
  - 4) It serves to contrast the lot of the reversionist with the lot of the adjusted believer; Judah and Joseph.
  - 5) It serves to continue the genealogy of the line of Messiah, which strangely enough passes through Judah and Tamar.
  - 6) This chapter reveals that God the Holy Spirit is not legalistic, ascetic or prudish.
3. These things make this chapter *profitable for doctrine, reproof and instruction in righteousness*.
4. This chapter includes such topics as, the violation of right man/right woman, dishonorable sex, prostitution, incest and the sin unto death.
5. Jacob's family was in danger of being absorbed by the native Canaanites, and this chapter demonstrates how quickly and easily they fell in with them.
6. The Canaanites, although inferior in every way, were quite amiable (some of them) and ready and willing to establish close ties with the seed of Abraham. This should also remind you of Shechem and how quickly they were ready to intermarry with the sons of Jacob.
7. The line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is well-defined as is the line of promise. Therefore, Satan is going to want to muddy this line up. We saw a major attack on their line back with the family of Shechem.
8. This chapter makes it clear why their sojourn in Egypt was necessary. The family of Jacob needed to completely separate from the Canaanites. They had to remain separate from the Egyptians (intermixing had to be kept to a minimum).
9. This is exceptional material to demonstrate to the believer the necessity for applying the doctrine of separation.
10. The cosmos is more than willing to put pressure on you to fit in with them and to integrate you into its culture and thinking.

## Preliminary points for Genesis 38

11. There is a correct balance. As believers, with are in the world and not of the world. We do not become better Christians because we buy a cabin out in the woods and live apart from everyone else. We are not better Christians because we join a convent or a monastery and live only with those who are like us. We are not better Christians because we join a cult, and in that cult, we cut off all ties to former friends and family members. These are perversions of the Christian life.
12. The line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will remain separate; but they will live in Egypt for the next 400 years rather than in Canaan.
13. Genesis 38 will actually keep the future ruling tribe separate from the Canaanite.

From [makarios-bible-church.org](http://makarios-bible-church.org) (this will open up in Word or WP); accessed April 13, 2016 (edited and appended).

From the time that Joseph is taken to Egypt to the time that his brothers come to Egypt, a period of at least 20 years transpires. The Bible Hub has Joseph going into slavery 1898 B.C.; and then Jacob and his sons go down to Egypt 1875 B.C.<sup>100</sup> This is consistent with the events of Genesis 38 occurring within the limits of such a timeline.

**Genesis 38:1** And it happened at that time Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain Adullamite, named Hirah.

As we see above, there is a phrase to connect the two chapter narratives: *And it happened at that time* (MKJV); *It came to pass at that time that* (VW); *About that time* (God's Word); and, *And at that time it came to be that* (The Scriptures 1998). I was hoping to come across *meanwhile, back at the ranch*; but I could not find that one.

In Genesis 37, we bring Joseph and Judah together; and then they go off in two different directions: Joseph off to Egypt as a slave and Judah back to his father to lie about Joseph's death. Both narratives are important.

In the book of Genesis, there are several unusual narratives, and this chapter is certainly one of the most unusual. Key to this chapter is keeping in mind the preliminary points already presented. However, like the previous chapters which we have studied, this will have great meaning to us, despite the dramatic cultural differences that we will encounter.

Throughout Genesis, there are some narratives that, on your first read, you may wonder, *now why is this here?* All of Genesis is recorded for a reason—this is the Word of God, after all, authored by both man and by God the Holy Spirit. So, there ought to be a very human reason why this or that is recorded in Scripture; and a divine reason as well.

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<sup>100</sup> The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

Nevertheless, even knowing this, the narrative of Genesis 38 is still going to strike you as being very unusual.

While Joseph is in Egypt, this is *meanwhile, back at the ranch*; it is what is happening in Canaan. This is one of the few times in the *Joseph section* of Genesis where there is an abrupt change in narrative (however, there are transitional words used to allow this change of place).

It ought to be noted that Genesis 37 does not flow naturally into Genesis 39:

Gen 37:31–32 Then they took Joseph's robe and slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. And they sent the robe of many colors and brought it to their father and said, "This we have found; please identify whether it is your son's robe or not."

Gen 37:33–34 And he identified it and said, "It is my son's robe. A fierce animal has devoured him. Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." Then Jacob tore his garments and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days.

Gen 37:35 All his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father wept for him.

Gen 37:36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard.

Gen 39:1–4 Now Joseph had been brought down to Egypt, and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, had bought him from the Ishmaelites who had brought him down there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he became a successful man, and he was in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD caused all that he did to succeed in his hands. So Joseph found favor in his sight and attended him, and he made him overseer of his house and put him in charge of all that he had.

My point here is, someone did not come along 300 years later and suddenly stick Genesis 38 into the middle of a continuing narrative. It is placed there because we are watching carefully the lines of Judah and Joseph. Joseph's line will appear destined for greatness; and, in this chapter, Judah's line, not so much.

On the other hand, if Joseph is the author (which I believe him to be), then his life went from Genesis 37 to Genesis 39; but he himself inserts Genesis 38—a series of incidents which he finds out about long after the fact.

The short summation at the beginning of Genesis 39 indicates clearly that there is something which comes between these two chapters (given the repetition of the information in Genesis 37:36 and 39:1), even though that *something* will turn out to be quite an unusual chapter. We take such transitional words for granted in literature, but Joseph is much better at writing than his father and grandfather were.

Based upon what has happened so far, Reuben seems to have been set aside as the likely ruling tribe. We will not hear him speak again until Genesis 42.

At this time, our sympathies are with Joseph and we will learn a great many spiritual lessons from him. However, the line of humanity of Jesus Christ is going to go through Judah, and not through Joseph. In this chapter, Judah's line becomes rather muddled, and it is explained herein. In fact, apart from this chapter, we would have no idea how the Judaic line continues through Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

Judah's line will be quite remarkable. He will marry a Canaanite women (which is not a good idea) and yet, the line of Christ through Judah will not have any Canaanite in it. Pretty slick, don't you think?

The Bible follows one genealogical line in particular throughout the Old Testament, and that is the line that leads to Jesus Christ. Obviously, the human authors did not fully realize what they were recording, but the Divine Author did. What I mean is, looking at this from the human standpoint, the author (Joseph) would not have known that this is the line of the Messiah. From his point of view, this narrative might help to ultimately explain why his family is better off in Egypt. But there is much more to it than that.

Of the authors who speak of this particular line, each one has his own reason for recording that portion of the line, but there is no satisfactory explanation for the entire line of Christ being recorded in Scripture apart from the will of God.

As I have pointed out on several occasions, genealogies are not just randomly thrown into the middle of this or that chapter. There is but one genealogy that is carefully followed from beginning to end, and that is the line of Christ, which begins with Adam, goes through Noah and Shem, then through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; then through the tribe of Judah all the way down to David, and eventually leading to Joseph, the legal father of Jesus (this line goes through Solomon); and the other leading to Mary, the mother of the humanity of Jesus (that line going through Nathan, another son of David). This entire line is found in the Bible. There is the possibility that one name has been left out due to a copyist error early on; but, apart from that, we know every single generation that takes us from Adam to Jesus (the name of that missing person is in the Greek manuscripts).

You may recall that, the first genealogy posted also presented the history of man and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Although we study some *cluster genealogies* (like Esau's or Ishmael's), we *never* return to those genealogies. No author of Scripture thinks to himself, "I wonder what is going on with the line of Esau right now." However, we *always* return to the genealogy of Jesus Christ. As readers and students of the Bible, we see the Bible as one book, and so, following the genealogy of our Lord does not seem all that fantastic to us. However, the books of the Bible were composed separately by a great variety of authors of different eras and different stations in life; and yet, none of these authors accidentally decides to follow the wrong genealogy (the exception to this is the first half of 1Chronicles, which is a grouping of many genealogies—primarily those of the 12 tribes). Later on, for a variety of reasons, when the inspiration of Scriptures were recognized, then a selection of books had to be made—which were inspired of the Holy Spirit and which were simply written by men?

What will happen in this chapter will seem pretty messtup; but God is able to take *messtup* and use it for His Own glory.

## Lesson 394: Genesis 38:1–5

## Jacob Among the Canaanites

We have just begun Genesis 38 and have discussed the reasons for its being here and being recorded. So, it is more than just an interesting narrative, where Judah is talking to Joseph, and he says, “Oh, here’s sort of a funny story...”

The sons of Jacob would eventually move to Egypt with their families; and Judah would have an adult son and a pair of much younger twin sons. He also had, more or less, a young wife. Joseph would have no doubt asked about each man’s family; and Judah gave him the most unusual explanation (it is possible that the explanation was coaxed from Judah’s young wife, Tamar). The background of Judah’s family is Genesis 38.

We have two sets of narratives occurring simultaneously; Joseph in Egypt and Judah in Canaan. There is no exact chronology set up for Judah; but an approximate chronology can be determined. Ron Snider estimates<sup>101</sup> that between Joseph being sold into slavery and his brothers coming down to Egypt, approximately 22 years transpire (this can be calculated). Snider has a time frame for the events of this chapter, which I will share once we complete these events. Bear in mind that Genesis 38 would take place over a period of time less than the parallel events in Egypt. However, because of what happens, it would be very difficult for the time period of Genesis 38 to be under 20 years.

**Genesis 38:1** And it happened at that time Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain Adullamite, named Hirah.

Judah apparently had set up some business dealings with Hirah the Adullamite.

An Adullamite would be from the city of Adullam, which is located in the territory later known as Judah. Although this city will not be named until the book of Joshua (as a conquered city in Joshua 12:15), it is apparently an established city during the time of Jacob and Judah. Because of this, Adullam would logically be a Canaanite city during Judah’s time.

This city will play an important part in Israel’s history throughout many eras (during the time of Joshua, the judges, Saul and David, and Rehoboam).

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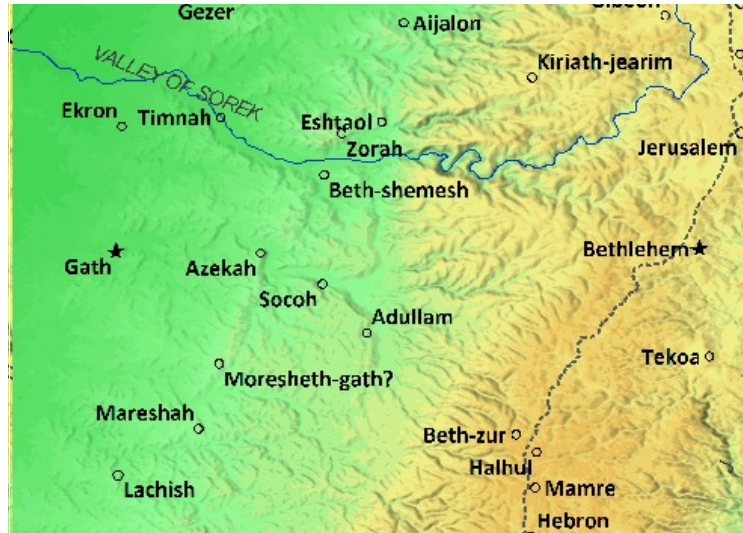
<sup>101</sup> From [Makarios Bible Church](#); accessed May 17, 2016 (Word document will open in Word or WP on your computer).



**Map of the Shephelah** from [Pilgrimage Panorama](#); accessed April 13, 2016.

**Genesis 38:1** And it happened at that time Judah went down from his brothers and turned in to a certain Adullamite, named Hirah.

We also have the phrase here *Judah went down from his brothers and turned in...* This really sounds like Judah has separated from his family. This is a temporary separation which has taken place, but in this chapter, we will only hear the name of Judah and those related to him in marriage. We will not hear about Jacob or about Reuben or anyone else from his family.



Given the time frame, this separation appears to be quite lengthy; possibly 20 years. Ron Snider, one of the few commentators to recognize this, suggests a number of reasons—the lies to their father about Joseph and the selling of Joseph into slavery (we are not sure that the sons of Jacob did this; but they intended to). Perhaps Joseph is not disgusted with his brothers, but disgusted with himself for participating. Maybe he feels guilty? Could you face your father every day if you are partially responsible for his great sorrow?

Given the circumstances of the previous chapter, it is not hard to imagine several sons separating from the rest of the family. Jacob would be distressed and mourning; he would focus all of his attention on Benjamin, his youngest son.

Jacob's older sons would be held responsible, to some degree, for the *death* of Joseph. Somehow, they are supposed to watch out for their younger brother. Failing to do so lowered Jacob's estimation of them in his eyes. The sons themselves would have felt guilty about all of this, as they are responsible for Joseph being sold into slavery and being separated from his father Jacob.

Hirah appears to be a long-time friend of Judah's. There will be considerable interaction between these two men; but none between Judah and his brothers or father.

**Genesis 38:2** And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite man named Shuah. And he took her and went in to her.

Judah used these out-of-town trips to meet women as well. Here he takes a Canaanite woman. This is a problem; and the history of his family should have taught him that this is a problem—but he just went ahead and did it anyway. Judah was sometimes led astray by the ladies.

The problem was not that this was an interracial marriage and God wants to keep the races pure; the problem with this is, she is a Canaanite, and they were a very degenerate people. In fact, they are so degenerate that God will have the children of Israel, 400 years hence, wipe most of them out. You may recall that Esau's Hittite wives were very troubling to his parents.

The Canaanite woman is not named, but her father's name means *wealth*. So, she is the daughter of wealth. It is possible that, Judah, even knowing of his family's history with the Canaanites, figured, *the problem is, they did not marry into class*. So, whereas Judah may have viewed Esau, his uncle, as making the mistake of marrying the wrong kind of heathen woman, Judah marries a rich one, thinking, somehow, that this will be better.

God has sent Abraham and his sons to the land of Canaan; and Israel will be commanded by God to destroy the Canaanites. Therefore, we ought to know something about these people.

### Doctrine of the Canaanites

1. The Canaanites were descended from Ham. Genesis 10:6
2. They were an accursed race. Judah would have known very little about the Canaanites from Scripture, apart from Genesis 9:24–26 *When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers." He also said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant."* It is possible that Judah (of the people of Shem) was unaware of the Scriptures. However, he would have known them by reputation and by their actions.
3. The Canaanites were comprised of seven distinct nations. Deut. 7:1
  - 1) This is where it gets to be a little tricky. There is a specific group of people called the Canaanites, descended from Canaan, the son of Ham.
  - 2) However, when they established themselves in Canaan, people who came after them to live in Canaan were sometimes called Canaanites as well, after the land where they lived.
  - 3) How important a distinction this is, is debatable. But that helps to explain why seemingly disparate groups of people are sometimes all called Canaanites. Context would be the guide here; but the distinction is not always important.
4. The Canaanites are described as...
  - 1) Great and mighty. Num. 13:28 Deut. 7:1
  - 2) Idolatrous. Deut. 29:17
  - 3) Superstitious. Deut. 18:9–11
  - 4) Profane and wicked. Lev. 18:27
  - 5) Extremely numerous. Deut. 7:17
  - 6) They had many strong cities. Num. 13:28 Deut. 1:28
  - 7) They were expelled for wickedness. Deut. 9:4 Deut. 18:12
5. Abraham and the Canaanites:
  - 1) Abraham was called to dwell among them. Genesis 12:1–5

## Doctrine of the Canaanites

- 2) He was promised the country of the Canaanites; their land would be his inheritance. Genesis 13:14–17 Genesis 15:18 Genesis 17:8
- 3) Abraham had his faith tried by living among the Canaanites. Genesis 12:6 Genesis 13:7
- 4) Some Canaanites were kind to the patriarchs. Genesis 14:13 Genesis 23:6
6. Israel was commanded...
  - 1) To make no league with. Deut. 7:2 Judges 2:2
  - 2) Not to intermarry with. Deut. 7:3 Joshua 23:12
  - 3) Not to follow idols of. Ex. 23:24 Deut. 7:25
  - 4) Not to follow customs of. Lev. 18:26 Lev. 18:27
  - 5) To destroy, without mercy. Deut. 7:2 Deut. 7:24
  - 6) To destroy all vestiges of their idolatry Ex. 23:24 Deut. 7:5 Deut. 7:25
  - 7) Not to fear. Deut. 7:17 Deut. 7:18 Deut. 31:7
  - 8) Terrified at the approach of Israel. Ex. 15:15 Ex. 15:16 Joshua 2:9–11 Joshua 5:1
  - 9) Partially subdued by Israel. Jos. 10:1–11:23 Jdg. 1:1–36;
7. Some Canaanites were left in the land, even after Joshua conquered it. They were left for several reasons:
  - 1) To try Israel. Judges 2:21 Judges 2:22 Judges 3:1–4
  - 2) To chastise Israel. Num. 33:55 Judges 2:3 Judges 4:2
  - 3) To ensnare Israel. Judges 2:3 Judges 2:19 Psalm 106:36–38
8. Some descendants of Canaan still remained in our Lord's time. Matt. 15:22 Mark 7:26;

Primarily from R. A. Torrey's New Topical Textbook; from e-Sword, topic: Canaanites (heavily edited).

Given the doctrine above, even though God is fully aware of the degeneracy of the Canaanites; it is not clear that Judah appreciates that.

[Genesis 38:3](#) And she conceived and bore a son. And he called his name Er.

There is actually very little focus in this narrative on the woman taken by Judah. We do not even know if they are properly married (although they appear to be, given that she has 3 sons by him; and later in this narrative, she will be called *Judah's woman*). We do not know her name, only that she is the daughter of Shuah. We will find out that two of their sons are pretty worthless as human beings.

I am of the opinion that, most (or all) of the people named in Scripture were believers; and most of the people who play a part in a Scriptural narrative, but are not named, are unbelievers. The story of the rich man and Lazarus illustrates this.

Now, you might pose the question, *what about 1Chron. 2:3? Isn't this woman named in 1Chron. 2:3?* [1Chron. 2:3](#) The sons of Judah: Er, Onan and Shelah; these three **Bath-**

**shua** the Canaanite bore to him. Now Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death. So there is her name, right? *Bath-shua*. However, *Bath-shua* literally means *the daughter of Shuah*. So, you think that she has been named, but really, it is her father who is named, and she is his daughter.

Sometimes, we find out a great deal about the spiritual life of the parents by the name they give their children. Their first child is named *awake*. Judah names the first son. There is no reference to God in his name and we are not told what is said at his birth.

**Genesis 38:4** And she conceived again, and bore a son, and she called his name Onan.

We do not know whether Judah took her as his wife and brought her back, or if he kept her there, as his live-in girlfriend in southern Judah (those who settle this area will be descendants of Judah and the land will be called Judah).

The second child is named *strong*. Notice, it is the mother naming the second child.

**Genesis 38:5** And she yet again conceived and bore a son. And she called his name Shelah. And she was at Chezib when she bore him.

She has at least 3 male children by Judah. She names the third child *a petition*. None of these sons has a name related to the God of Jacob.

God has given us the privilege of bringing life into this world; and our thinking when we have our first child may or may not include the recognition of God as the Giver of All Life. In the time of Judah, this recognition would often result in a name which reflects our thinking (and whether or not God is considered when a child is born).

### **Lesson 395: Genesis 38:1–10      Onan's Likely Motivation/Genealogy Interruptus**

**Gen 38:1–5** It happened at that time that Judah went down from his brothers and turned aside to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua. He took her and went in to her, and she conceived and bore a son, and he called his name Er. She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his name Onan. Yet again she bore a son, and she called his name Shelah. Judah was in Chezib when she bore him.

There are very heavy time constraints upon this narrative. Judah has returned with his brothers and told his father that his favorite son, Joseph, is probably dead. We will follow Joseph in other chapters, where a very specific number of years are laid out, during which this narrative must occur. Before Joseph is sold into slavery, he is 17 years old (Genesis 37:2). When he ascends to the office of prime minister of Egypt, he is 30 years old (Genesis 41:46). This will be followed by 7 years of prosperity (as predicted by Joseph—Genesis 41:47–48). When the years of famine began, men from all over the world came to buy grain from Joseph (Genesis 41:56–57). When famine came to Canaan

(this would be in year 8), the sons of Israel went down to Joseph for grain (Genesis 42:–18). This could take place in no more than 22 years.

Judah's starting point is *going down from his brothers and turning aside to Hirah, an Adullamite*. He will reunite with his brothers and fathers in about 22 years to go down to Egypt for grain.

On the other hand, this narrative has events which require a minimum amount of time to occur (Judah will marry, father 3 children, then marry off the first child, and finally, his 3<sup>rd</sup> son reaches an age where he is old enough to be married). At a bare minimum, that is 20 years, allowing that his sons could be married in their middle teens (given the influence of the Canaanite culture, that is not unlikely).

**Genesis 38:6** And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, whose name was Tamar.

Time passes—say 10 or 15 years. When Er is old enough to take a wife, Judah finds one for him. This was a common custom of that era. You will recall that Abraham had his most trusted servant choose a wife for Isaac.

A year or so ago, I talked to an Indian (from India), and we talked about arranged marriages. This was very common in his culture and he was comfortable with it. He was surprised that I, as an American, also believed it to be a reasonable practice as well. Few people know you as well as your parents do. They know who you befriend, who you do not like to spend time with; what you like to spend time doing, how you think, how you reason and how you communicate. Your parents know other families with daughters of a marriageable age. They know these families, what sort of people they are; and they know about the daughter, what she is like. They know the values that she is raised with.

Many times, the son of one family may be promised to the daughter of another, and they might never meet until their wedding day. Other more progressive parents might put them together, with the knowledge that they will marry; just to see what happens.

This is what Judah did—he found a wife for Er, and they married. He did this despite—or, possibly because—he chose his own wife, a Canaanite woman. He seemed to make a better choice for his son than he did for himself. We know nothing about this Canaanite wife—not even her name. She and Judah obviously had relations, but all that is unsaid about her suggests that Judah, in retrospect, probably could have chosen better for himself. This is very likely the reason he found a woman for Er, and while Er was still young.

Given the time frame to which we are confined, Er probably marries at age 14 or 15.

**Genesis 38:7** And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of Jehovah. And Jehovah killed him.



*Robby Dean: What we are told about Er is that he did evil in the sight of the Lord. The phrase "he did evil in the sight of the Lord" is used some 56 times in the Old Testament. It is only found 6 times in the Torah: once in Genesis, once in Numbers, and four times in Deuteronomy. It describes this unstated evil behavior of Er here, it describes the rebellion of Israel against God at Kadesh-barnea, in Deuteronomy it twice refers to idolatry and twice to transgressing the covenant. In Judges it almost exclusively describes idolatry. In 1Samuel 15 it describes Saul's rebellion when he fails to completely slaughter all of the Amalekites and Samuel has to come and reprimand him and tell him the sin of rebellion is like the sin of divination. And it is used numerous times in the books of Kings and Chronicles to describe idolatry. So when this term is used it is a serious term. The term "evil" is also used to describe the fact that man did evil continuously before the Lord in Genesis 6. It describes the sexual sins and perversion with the sons of God and the daughters of men in Genesis 6. It also describes the activities of the Sodomites in Sodom and Gomorrah.<sup>102</sup>*

Er, Judah's firstborn, dies the sin unto death, and at a very young age (in order for this to fit within the time frame to which we are constrained). God would have to take Er's life when he is 14 or 15 or 16, not too long after his marriage. Remembering what I was like at age 14 and older gives me great pause to consider this.

Quite obviously, parents often have a blind spot for their own children, and may not realize just what they are like. This is the case with Judah and Er. We do not know what Er's sins were—just that he was wicked, and God killed him. Quite possibly, his wicked behavior could be attributed in part to the training (or lack of same) that he received from his mother, a Canaanitess. Judah appears to be no prize himself in the morality department.

It is reasonable to suppose that Er was a believer. The sin unto death is reserved for believers only. God kills unbelievers; but for the most part, these sorts of deaths recorded in this way are about believers who have gone wrong.

Er has a wife that Judah chose for him; and Onan, his next younger brother, is to play the part of the responsible younger brother.

**Genesis 38:8** And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to your brother."

This was a custom of that era. Each son was to maintain an identity and a genealogical line if he married, even if he died before fathering children. A brother (or a near relation = kinsman) would step in and father a son by the man's wife (in marriage), and this firstborn son will be considered to be the son of the deceased. This son would be treated as if he were Er's son; and not as Onan's son, even though he would be raised and cared for by Onan. Notice that Judah tells him to marry the woman. This is known as a levirate

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<sup>102</sup> From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen145.htm> accessed April 26, 2016 (edited).



marriage and it was a custom of that era (in fact, it is a fairly widespread custom). However, a levirate marriage was a social custom, not a divine commandment.

Onan would also be expected to take care of this woman and her son (notice that he was to marry her). Sometimes, in an arrangement like this, perhaps the remaining brother might marry another woman as well—we don't know, as this sort of union is only mentioned thrice in Scripture. However, although there are no laws about this, marrying more than one woman seems to be less common.

You will note that Judah found the wife for Er and Judah presses his son Onan to fulfill his levirate obligation. This would make great sense, given that his sons are in the middle teens in this narrative. Judah would be the one taking the initiative.

From a spiritual standpoint, this means that each and every individual is important, and their children are important.

This tradition was common to that era; and Onan could have certainly refused. How much social pressure was on him is not known to us. However, when this custom is codified in Deut. 25:5–10, the brother (or the kinsman) is given an out.

**Genesis 38:9** And Onan knew that the seed would not be his. And it happened when he went in to his brother's wife, that he spilled on the ground, not giving seed to his brother.

Onan was apparently attracted to Tamar, enough to have sex with her, but he intentionally did not impregnate her, not wanting to father a son who would not be considered his. There are two things at play here: Onan did marry this woman (that would be logical, as it was a levirate marriage); but he intentionally did not have children by her (and he has a very specific reason for doing so).

The technique that he used is not 100% effective; but it was effective in this case. In fact, it appears that this happened on several occasions.

Let's take a look at the Hebrew here. We begin with the wâw conjunction followed by the Qal perfect of the verb hâyâh, which means *to be*. Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means *and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass* (with the wâw consecutive).

Then we have the hypothetical particle 'îm (אם) [pronounced *eem*], which can mean *if*; but it can also mean, *when, whenever*. This is followed by the Qal imperfect of *to come in, to come, to go in*. Now, if this occurred on one occasion, then the Qal perfect would have been used. The imperfect can suggest extended action, successive action (when there are several together), or several actions repeated.

The next verb, which follows a wâw conjunction, is the Piel perfect of shâchath (שחַתַּת) [pronounced *shaw-KHAHTH*], which means (in the Piel), *to destroy, to ruin, to lay waste [to]; to spoil, to corrupt; to deal corruptly [with]; to act wickedly*. Strong's #7843

BDB #1007. This verb is followed by *to the ground*. The word *seed (semen)* is implied (it is found 2 other times in this verse). This is the result of whenever Onan would go into Tamar.

The ESV translates this:

**Genesis 38:9** But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother's wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother.

By doing this, he rejected having that first son by Tamar. Without giving a graphic explanation, Onan went out of his way not to impregnate her. The purpose of a levirate marriage is to raise up a son on behalf of the deceased brother, and Onan was not going to do that.

What is going on with Onan here? What is his thinking? I am unaware of any commentaries who understand what is going on. Let me explain. Er was the firstborn son. He was entitled to the double-portion, but he was dead. What happens if Onan raises up a child by Tamar? That child carries on Er's line and he receives the double portion that would have come to Er. If there is no Er and there is no child to carry on in his place, who gets the double portion? Onan. So Onan is motivated both by inheritance and, to a much lesser extent, sexual desire.

If there is no son raised up under the name of Er, then Onan becomes entitled to the double portion. Let's look at this in dollars and cents. Let's say that Judah is worth \$100,000. He has two sons: Onan and Shelah remaining. Onan would get a double-portion as an inheritance, which is \$66,667; and Shelah gets the rest. Now, let's say that Onan fathers a child, who is considered to be Er's child. *That child* would get the double portion, which would be \$50,000; and Onan and Shelah would split the remaining \$50,000 evenly. So, you see, there is a lot of money at stake here.

Bear in mind the short time during which all of this takes place. Onan is not very old at this time. He might be as young as 14 or 16. Old enough to think through this situation, and selfish enough to work it out just for himself.

Because sexual relations were designed for marriage, Onan and Tamar were married and they were probably both living with Judah at this time. There is no indication that there would have been continued sexual union without benefit of marriage. There is no indication that this levirate marriage did not include marriage. The central point of this narrative is not their marriage, but Onan did not follow through completely to raise up a son by Tamar in his brother Er's name, because that would have cut into his own personal inheritance.

Also, as an aside: this passage has nothing to do with a condemnation of birth control. It is all about Onan's selfish plans and his agreeing to do something that he was intentionally not doing.

**Genesis 38:10** And what he did was evil in the eyes of Jehovah. Therefore He killed him also.

This is the line of Jesus, and God would see to it that there is a son of Tamar raised up, in the line of Judah. Tamar would bear a son whose line would lead to the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, bear in mind, Tamar is *not* related to Judah in any way, but by marriage. So, how does the line of Christ go through her, who is not necessarily from the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? That is what this chapter is chiefly about. Tamar will be in the line of Christ, as will Judah.

Onan could have refused; and the sin unto death would have been unlikely. He chose to engage in intercourse with his dead brother's wife, but stopped short of impregnating her. It was not God's plan for Tamar to go on without a son. God's plan is for the line of Judah to be continued, as this would become the greatest tribe and from this tribe, Jesus would be born.

Next question—why didn't Onan simply refuse? Although we do not know the amount of social pressure that was placed upon him, financially, this would be an easy call. If he did not marry Tamar, then his younger brother Shelah would have married her, and the son raised up would have been Er's and entitled to the double-portion. By marrying Tamar, but not fathering a son by her, he insures that he would get the double-portion of inheritance.

Do you see how differently degenerate man thinks as opposed to God? Onan is likely thinking all about his inheritance; and God is thinking about the line for the humanity of Jesus Christ. Onan is concerned with the money that he will get, sometime in the future; and God is concerned with the salvation of all mankind. **For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.** (Isa. 55:8–9; ESV; capitalized) Living the Christian life is learning to think like God thinks.

### **Lesson 396: Genesis 38:10–11 Judah, Mistakenly, Tries to Preserve His 3<sup>rd</sup> Son**

Judah got married and fathered 3 sons. He found a wife (Tamar) for the first son, but God took that son (Er) by the sin unto death. We have theorized that Er did not have the best of parents, as his mother was a Canaanite. As a result, there is this young woman, who has been taken in marriage by Er, but that marriage did not produce any children. This is a problem for two reasons: (1) Er has no genealogical line and (2) Tamar is without a husband and, in that culture, essentially, unmarriageable.

Judah brings his second son, Onan, into the picture. He is married to Tamar by means of a Levirate marriage, and their first son will be in the line of Er. My educated guess is that Onan did the math and realized that, if he fathers a son by Tamar, his own inheritance will be substantially reduced, so he goes out of his way to see that he does not impregnate Tamar, his wife.

Genesis 38:10 And what he [Onan] did was evil in the eyes of Jehovah. Therefore He [God] killed him also.

Judah, at the very least, should have asked God what the problem was (although it is unclear what sort of relationship the sons of Jacob actually had with God and if there was any communication at all). In any case, based upon what we have observed so far, Judah and his brothers do not seem to be all that interested in God's view of things (again, look at the names of Judah's sons).

As an aside, you will recall that both Abraham and his grandson Jacob spoke with God on many occasions, but we do not seem to have that benefit for the sons of Jacob.

God does not need direct interaction between Himself and various men. He is able to execute His plan without direct contact. For whatever reason, God would see to it the Tamar bore a child in the line of Judah that would lead to the humanity of Jesus. And, interestingly enough, the genetic contribution of the Canaanites would be kept out of the picture. So, somehow, Judah would marry a Canaanite, which he should not have done; he will sire 3 sons by her; and yet, somehow, his unnamed Canaanite wife will contribute no genetic material to the line of Judah that leads to Jesus Christ. This is actually a pretty neat trick!

Furthermore, this will all be brought about while nearly no one acts like they have believed in the Lord. Rom. 8:28 **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.** (ESV) This is the parallel between the narrative of Judah and the narrative of Joseph—this is God working all things out for good; this is showing us that, for both men, Jesus Christ controls history. The difference between these men? Judah did not understand or appreciate what had happened to him—so far, only 10 verses into this chapter, he has lost two sons, yet that is God's plan. Joseph, on the other hand, was cast into slavery because of his own brothers, focused on the Living God. Therefore, when he faced insurmountable difficulties in life, he knew that God was in charge.

Judah, who had 3 sons by a Canaanite woman, lost two of them to the sin unto death. However, he blames Tamar, the wife of the first son, for their deaths. He promised his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her, but does not appear to have any intention of fulfilling this promise.

Judah's 3<sup>rd</sup> son, Shelah, will reach the age where he could marry, but Judah will not honor his commitment to Tamar.

Judah married a Canaanite woman and had 3 sons by her, none of whom reflected God's grace—not by their names or by their actions. Judah found a wife (Tamar) for his firstborn, Er, but after getting married and before siring a son, Er died the sin unto death. Judah gave his second son to Tamar, but because of his actions, he also died the sin unto death.

So, Judah apparently thinks that Tamar is the problem. He promises his next son to her, but then gets her the heck away from him and his remaining family.

**Genesis 38:11** Then said Judah to Tamar, his daughter-in-law, “Remain a widow at your father's house until Shelah my son is grown.” For he said [better understood to mean, *but he thought*], “Lest perhaps he die also, as his brothers did.” And Tamar went and lived in her father's house.

Notice that I have made a change in the translation. Literally, the text reads *for he said*, but this is better understood to mean, *but he thought* (which is a legitimate way to render that Hebrew word).

What Judah has done here is shirked his responsibility as a father. It was Judah's duty, more or less, to have his sons raise up children by Tamar. Logically, his own sons would be her kinsmen redeemer. Yet, Judah had no intention of fulfilling this responsibility.

Tamar is Judah's daughter-in-law, but she is associated with the deaths of Judah's first two sons. However, there is nothing to indicate that Tamar herself did any particular evil; but that all of this was on Er and Onan, the two sons of Judah who had each died the sin unto death. From what we know about Judah, there is no reason to assume that he was a very good father. Furthermore, their mother was a Canaanite; so there is little reason to think that she had a positive affect on the way that their sons were raised.

Since there does not appear to be any direct contact with God, at this point, it is reasonable to assume that Judah advances in life based upon the spiritual information in his soul, which is not very much.

There is nothing in this narrative (what we have studied or what follows) which suggests that Judah is introspective about Er's death, and considers, *is there something which I have done wrong?* What seems to be clearly the case is, Judah thinks that Tamar is bad luck. He does not allow Shelah to marry her and raise up seed in the name of Er because he is worried that Shelah will die like his older brothers.

Recall that much effort was expended to find wives for Isaac and Jacob outside of Canaan. When Esau married Hittite women, they were difficult for Rebekah, their mother-in-law, to deal with.

Here, Judah marries a Canaanite woman, and their first two sons die the sin unto death. However, at no point does Judah seem to stop and consider, maybe he should not have married a Canaanite woman.

When you marry, you need to think about what you are doing and follow some basic rules: do not date a person who uses drugs (no matter how infrequently) and do not pursue someone whom you have seen drunk on more than one occasion. If someone is unfaithful to you while dating, stop dating, cut them off, and move on to someone else. If you are a believer positive toward Bible doctrine and they are not, you need to move on. These are simple yet effective guidelines for the young believer.

The man, when he considers a woman, must understand and properly evaluate her character, and he must understand that marriage is a relationship where he becomes responsible for this woman for her entire life, from marriage to the point of her death (just as her father was responsible from birth to marriage). The man's consideration all of his life is to see that his wife and children are taken care of, when he is alive and after he has passed.

Now, you may think that this is old fashioned and how does this have any application to the United States of America in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Consider: this expectation of protection and provision is an innate need that women have. When men do not fulfill this need (their father first, their husband next), then do they stand on their own, shaking their fist against societal norms? No, they replace their fathers and their husbands with government. Such women do not really stand on their own; such women do not really say, "I am woman; hear me roar." Instead, such women vote for the government to provide for them. The government is to provide for them if they are pregnant and without a husband; and the government is to make provisions for them throughout their lives. All of this, a couple of generations ago, was done by the two main men in their lives. Single women today who reject gender stereotypes tend to be liberal women, and what do they consistently vote for? More government, more safety nets, more assurances that government will take care of them. This was sold to women as [the Life of Julia](#) (which was an interactive promise from Barack Obama to take care of women for their entire lives by means of the government<sup>103</sup>). For these women who have rejected their dependence upon men, Uncle Sam becomes their father and their husband to them. With one side of their mouth, they cry for independence from old fashioned norms of a past society; and with the other side of their mouth, they call for a compassionate government to be their daddy and their husband.

Marriage for the woman is much different than marriage for the man. The woman enters into an arrangement of obedience. She is under the control of her father in his home; if she leaves, then she exercises her own volition to determine her life. However, when she marries, she is placing her volition in the hands of the man she marries. For that reason, a woman needs to look that man over carefully to determine if she can make that sort of lifetime commitment. He might be rich and handsome, but he might also be a jerk.

Judah's Canaanite wife probably did not even believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. She is probably in Hades today.

This chapter suggests that God may have intentionally wanted to keep the Canaanite race out of the line of Jesus Christ, perhaps under the principle, *a little leaven leavens the whole lump*.

Judah tells Tamar to wait it out, but he decides that he should not ask his third son to raise up a son through her because two of his other sons had died while in association with her.

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<sup>103</sup> I am unable to find this web page; only a [spoof](#) of it.



Tamar is not living with Judah (her father-in-law); she is living with her actual father at this time. Generally speaking, if a woman has lost her virginity, then she is no longer considered to be marriage material. This was a very big deal in that era (as it has been in many periods of time, in many cultures). So Tamar would not be considered for marriage by other men. Furthermore, not only is she not a virgin, but she has been with two men now.

**Genesis 38:12a** And the days were many, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shuah, died.

Time passes, and Judah's Canaanite wife does as well. We know that she dies within 20 years of marrying Judah. Also, during this time frame, the man promised to Tamar, Shelah, had grown into an adult (say, age 14 or so).

Throughout these many years, Judah retains a business partnership with Hirah, his friend from Adullam.

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Jack Ballinger observed a number of parallels here. These seem to be designed by God with the intention of Judah recognizing what he and his brothers put their father through. Because of Judah and his brothers, Joseph is in slavery in Egypt; and his father, Jacob, believes that he is dead.

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### **Ballinger: Judah Suffers as His Father Jacob Suffered**

1. Judah's experience parallels those of his father.
2. Both lose a son or sons, and both lose their wives.
3. Judah felt that he had to separate from his father; Jacob had to separate from his father. Judah appears to have separated from his father and brothers; Jacob separated from his father and brother.
4. Jacob is deceived by his sons—they lie and tell him that Joseph is dead. Onan deceives his father, pretending to fulfill his levirate obligations, but he did not.
5. Judah did not fully appreciate the pain that he and his brothers caused his father (but he will come around to this eventually); Jacob, by deceiving his father, probably did not realize just how much he pained his own father.
6. When Jacob deceived his father, it was all about his inheritance; when Onan deceived his father, it was all about his inheritance. In both cases, money was more important to them than their relationship to God and family.
7. Jacob had been deceived by others more than once.
8. First Laban, and now his sons in regard to Joseph.
9. One interesting parallel, but not one that Judah would have known about: Tamar disguised herself so that Judah would have sex with her; just as Leah (Judah's mother) disguised herself (not revealing who she was on their wedding night) so that Jacob would have sex with her.

Just as Judah tried to ignore Tamar, but that did not work; similarly he has tried to ignore his part in the disappearance of Joseph; and that is not working either.

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From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen38.htm>; accessed May 18, 2016 (edited and appended).

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## **Lesson 397: Genesis 38:7, 10, 12–19 Tamar poses as a prostitute and lures Judah**

Judah (the 4<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob and the half-brother of Joseph) seems to have separated from his family, married a Canaanite, and fathered 3 sons. He found a wife (Tamar) for the first son, who died the sin unto death. He gave his second son to her, but he died because he intentionally did not give her a son. Judah then sent Tamar packing to her father's home, promising her the 3<sup>rd</sup> son (but he had no intention of delivering on that promise).

On the one hand, Judah had assumed responsibility for Tamar by taking her to marry his first son; but, on the other hand, he seems to have concluded that she is bad luck, so he sent her back to her father.

When Tamar realized that Judah was not going to give his 3<sup>rd</sup> son to her, she decided to take matters into her own hand.

**Genesis 38:12** And the days were many, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shuah, died. And Judah was comforted, and went up to shearers of his sheep, he and his friend Hirah of Adullam, to Timnah.

Judah's wife dies and he is going to go up and handle his business. Now, there is this odd juxtaposition. We do not know how long Judah mourns before going back to work, but Tamar is still wearing mourning clothes for the loss of her husbands. We also know that this entire narrative only covers a time period of maybe 20 years (which includes Judah's marriage to the Canaanite woman, the birth of their 3 sons, and the marriage of two of them to Tamar).

Did you notice how her death is different from the death of her sons?

**Gen. 38:7** But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD put him to death. (ESV)

**Gen. 38:10** And what he [Onan] did was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and he put him to death also.

God puts Er and Onan to death; the Canaanite wife of Judah dies. Her sons die the sin unto death; she simply dies—probably an unbeliever. As noted before, her name is not even given.

Judah, apparently, decides to have some fun on this business trip.

**Genesis 38:13** And it was told to Tamar, saying, “Behold, your father-in-law goes up to Timnah to shear his sheep.”

Tamar, when she realized that she would not marry Shelah and become a part of Judah’s family (as she had been promised), needed to figure out her life. Her options were to remain with her father, mourning her two husbands, and never to marry; or to somehow make herself a part of Judah’s family. Bear in mind that, in the ancient world, this was her only option for marriage and children, having lost her virginity. Men married virgins, for the most part (this custom has only recently changed in American society, and elsewhere). In that era, marrying a woman who is not a virgin would have been grounds for divorce.

Tamar developed a plan. She probably knew about Judah’s business dealings and knew of his travels. Her plan seems to indicate that she knew of Judah’s proclivities (or weaknesses) as well. Her plan makes more sense if she understands Judah somewhat.

The narrative sounds as if this is a hail Mary approach, but there is no reason to assume that Tamar is not both intelligent and calculating.

Someone did not come by to Tamar and visit and say, “Oh, by the way, your father-in-law is going up the sheer some sheep.” Tamar has no doubt put together a plan, has a friend on the *inside*, so to speak (perhaps a servant of Judah’s), and has already said, “The next time Judah goes on a business trip, please let me know and give me the details.” No doubt, there is someone on the Judah ranch who is sympathetic to Tamar. Tamar should be under the care of Judah’s family and she is not. There are many who would understand this and how she has been wronged.

Apparently, Jacob’s sons were reasonably successful. You may recall that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had all been blessed with great herds. It logically follows that his sons were also successful in farming and/or ranching as well.

**Genesis 38:14** And she put off her widow's clothes, and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself. And she sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown and she was not given to him as wife.

Tamar knows how many years have gone by, and she knows that Shelah, Judah’s third son, is old enough to father a child by her. That should be his duty, as prompted by Judah. However, Judah was not doing any prompting because he worried that he would lose his third son.

This might be 2–3 years later. Because of the time constraints, not much time can have passed. Besides, Tamar was still wearing mourning clothes.

At this point in her life, she has no child, no proper relationship to the family of Judah through marriage—and she should. Yet, it is through her that the line of Jesus would go (obviously she does not know this nor does Judah).

This is another place where the MKJV goes astray in its translation. The ESV provides a better translation:

Gen. 38:13–14 And when Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep," she took off her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, wrapping herself up, and sat at the entrance to **Enaim**, which is on the road to Timnah. For she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she had not been given to him in marriage.

The name of the place where she sat is 'Ēynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced *gay-NAH-yihm*], which means, *a double spring, a double fountain; two eyes*. Strong's #5879 BDB #745.

It is unclear what Judah saw when he saw Tamar; it is unclear what caught his eye through the veil. Could he see her two eyes? Was he mesmerized by her eyes? Women are often very smart about their appearance, and there are times when they learn to emphasize one attribute over others, so that all attention is drawn to that attribute—and few things are as beautiful as the eyes of a woman. Perhaps she arranged her veil so that her striking eyes caught Judah's imagination?

Furthermore, a smart woman can do a lot, particularly with her eyes. She can say a great deal with her eyes, without you even realizing that she is not speaking aloud.

Perhaps it was her form. In any case...

**Genesis 38:15** When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face.

Tamar covers her face so that Judah does not recognize her, but, apparently, it was also the custom of that time for prostitutes to cover their faces when soliciting business. Perhaps the idea was, this kept them from being recognized. The fact that she is out alone is also an indication of her profession.

We do not know how much of her face was covered; I prefer to think that her eyes were visible and that she was using them to manipulate Judah.

**Genesis 38:16** And he turned aside to her by the wayside, and said, "Come now, let me come in to you." For he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, "What will you give me, so that you may come in to me?"

Judah is attracted to her and desires her for sex, not knowing that this is his daughter-in-law. After all, he is a single man again, his wife having just died.

There are some indications that this was not abnormal behavior for Judah, as Tamar deceived him in this way. It ought to be understood that, not every man will proposition a woman that he recognizes as a prostitute. Tamar, by doing this, seems to know Judah fairly well.

What Judah does not see is, the identity of this woman—a woman he personally picked out for his eldest son.

**Judah and Tamar, By Horace Vernet** (an oil painting)- The Yorck Project: 10.000 Meisterwerke der Malerei. DVD-ROM, 2002. ISBN 3936122202. Distributed by DIRECTMEDIA Publishing GmbH., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=160018> accessed April 26, 2016. This incident inspired many paintings.

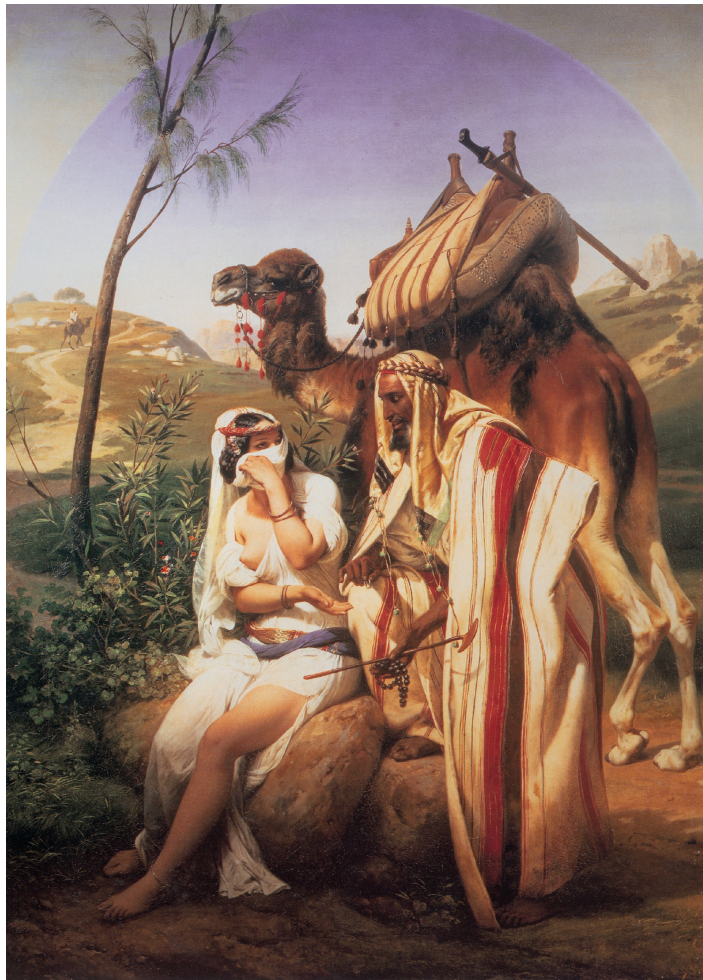
**Genesis 38:17** And he said, “I will send a kid of the goats from the flock.” And she said, “Will you give me a pledge until you send it?”

They determine a price, but it is something that Judah does not have with him at the time. So he will need to give her something of value so that he will be certain to pay her the fee she has requested.

Do you see how convenient cash is?

She reasonably requires of him some collateral; something that he will want back, but not necessarily negotiable. Essentially, he gives her his Israeli driver’s license.

**Genesis 38:18** And he said, “What pledge will I give you?” And she said, “Your signet, and your bracelet, and your staff that is in your hand. And he gave to her, and came in to her, and she conceived by him.”



There are two common conjunctions in this verse, and it helps us to understand the difference between them. When she says, “Your signet, and your bracelet, and your staff...”; these are wâw conjunctions. They simply combine things together. However, the final sentence is, **And so he gave [this stuff] to her, and so came in to her, and so she conceived by him.** The words *and so* represent Hebrew wâw consecutives. Many times, these are used to set up a series of events which are in a chronological or logical order; and, at times, are related events. A good translation for the wâw consecutive is *and then*; however, that can get monotonous because there are so many wâw consecutives in Hebrew narratives.



What she asks for are not necessarily valuable items, but they are important to him, so that he will want them back. They are personal items. Furthermore, these things are also very identifiable as Judah's. Tamar had determined that she will make Judah to act as her kinsman-redeemer.

Unfortunately, the MKJV is not always accurate (the NKJV is much better). A more accurate translation is:

**Genesis 38:18** He asked, "What pledge should I give you?" And she answered, "[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*]." Therefore, he gave [those things] to her. He went in to her and she conceived by him.

The problem with the MKJV translation are the 3 items, which are correctly identified above. One of them in the MKJV is way off (it is a *cord*, not a *bracelet*). The word in question is pāthîyl (פִּתְיֵל) [pronounced *paw-THEEL*], and it means, *cord, thread; lace; line, ribbon, wire*. Strong's #6616 BDB #836.

**Genesis 38:18a** He asked, "What pledge should I give you?" And she answered, "[Give me] your signet ring, your cord and your staff that you carry [lit., *that [is] in your hand*]." Therefore, he gave [those things] to her.

### The Three Items (Genesis 38:18)

The Item	Its Function/Identification
His signet	His personal seal for signing transactions. Today, this would be his credit/debit card for business transactions. This guaranteed any financial obligation with his name.
His cord	The cord by which the signet was held. Judah's signet would have probably been in view—or, at least the cord which attached his signet to him. If you have been in a public school recently, often the staff wears ID badges secured by a cord around the neck.
Ballinger: <i>The "seal" was made of stone or metal and was attached to a "cord" affixed around the neck.</i> <sup>104</sup>	
His staff	The staff is a symbol of his leadership in the family and later in the tribe which would bear his name.

From [Makarios Bible Church](http://www.makariosbiblechurch.com); accessed May 18, 2016 (Word document will open in Word or WP on your computer). Edited and appended.

Tamar does not want these items as a pledge; she wants them in order to show the identify of the father later on when she is discovered to be pregnant. So, she is not going to stick around here to get her actual payoff. She has her payoff.

<sup>104</sup> From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen38.htm> accessed May 18, 2016.



When this is all over, Judah will tell his friend, Hirah, all about it.

**Genesis 38:19** And she arose, and went away, and laid away her veil from her, and put on the clothes of her widowhood.

Apparently, during all of this time, she was to continue wearing clothes appropriate for a widow, which would have made it impossible for her to remarry. The time period here was probably a couple months or even a couple of years.

A kinsman-redeemer is to take her mourning clothes from her.

## Lesson 398: Genesis 38

## The Levirate Marriage Custom

We are studying Genesis 38 and we have come upon the first mention of a levirate marriage in the Bible. A levirate marriage is when the husband of a wife dies, the wife is childless, and so his brother (or another close relative) steps up and marries the woman. In the Bible, this is always done with the expressed desire to raise up a son in the name of the deceased brother; but these kinds of marriages can come about even when a family has already been started.

The people involved in Genesis 38 are these:

### The People of the First Recorded Levirate Marriage

Person	Description
Judah	Judah is the 4 <sup>th</sup> son of Jacob, the grandson of Abraham. Judah appears to be estranged from his family at this time. Judah will be the line of Messiah, although no one would have known this at this time.
Er	Er is the first son of Judah. Judah arranged a marriage between Tamar and Er; but Er will die the sin unto death before fathering a child by Tamar.
Tamar	Tamar is a woman of unknown origin. Judah finds her and arranges a marriage between her and Er. She and Er marry as a very young couple (Er could be as young as 14).
Onan	Onan is Judah's second son, who had the responsibility to marry Tamar and raise up a child by her. He married her, but went out of his way not to have children by her. The likely reason is, a child raised up as Er's child would have deprived Onan of a sizable inheritance.
Shelah	Shelah is the 3 <sup>rd</sup> son of Judah, who had been promised to Tamar; but Judah had no intention of delivering here, believing Tamar to be bad luck (a <i>black widow</i> , if you will).

This scorecard will make it easier to understand the names and actions of those mentioned below.

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The overall time frame appears to be a around 20 years, during which time, Judah returns to his father, and then separates from his family. He marries a Canaanite and has 3 sons by her. These sons grow up old enough to be married (probably mid-teens), and Judah's wife dies. There are constraining factors of other portions of Genesis which confine this time period to 22 years or less.

Judah, one of the sons of Jacob, married a Canaanite woman and had 3 sons by her. He found a wife (Tamar) for his first son (Er), but that first son died the sin unto death early on in the marriage. Therefore, Judah compelled his next son, Onan, to impregnate her and marry her (the first son would be brought up as a son of Er rather than the son of Onan). Onan appeared to go along with this idea, but *he spilled his seed on the ground* so that he would not impregnate Tamar (this happened on numerous occasions). Onan had probably figured out that, if he fathered a son in Er's name, that son would have reduced Onan's own inheritance considerably (because Er died, Onan would now get the double portion of his father's inheritance; however, if Onan has a son under Er's name, that son would get the double portion). Because he did not father a son as he had agreed to, God took him out by the sin unto death.

Judah promises Tamar his next son, Shelah; but he does not follow through on this promise, apparently blaming Tamar for the deaths of his other two sons.

In any case, had Onan followed through and impregnated and married Tamar, this would have been a levirate marriage with a resultant son raised up as Er's son.

**Surprising things about a levirate marriage:** There are many things which might surprise you about the Levirate marriage: (1) there are only 3 Old Testament passages which speak of it and (2) this is a custom practiced all over the world (see Wikipedia on [Levirate Marriage](#)). (3) There is no indication that God instituted levirate marriage; but He seemingly condones it, as Moses made it a part of the Mosaic Law in Deut. 25. Once this study is complete, you will understand why. God's laws, as given to Moses, seemed to take into account the cultural norms and standards of that era.

The levirate marriage is made fun of by those in the gay marriage movement, who found a number of unusual marriages in the Bible and said, "If you are okay with these kinds of marriages in the Bible, then surely you cannot object to gay people marrying." (Or words to that effect.) The logic is, religious Christians were the main people who objected to gay marriage; so unusual marriages were found in the Bible (and gay marriage proponents put the worst possible spin on them). Furthermore, gay marriage proponents presented these marriages as God-approved marriages (some were, some were not; and some were distorted<sup>105</sup>). The reasoning being, "God approves of these marriages, so you cannot

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<sup>105</sup> I should also point out that, some of these passages are mistranslated as well in some Bible translations.

object to gay marriage.” We briefly studied these various marriages in **Marriage Alternatives in the Bible** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The problem is, God does not approve of all forms of marriage found in the Bible (God does not condone polygamy, but He tolerates it). Nor do all of these forms of marriage originate with God (the levirate marriage appears to be a very common custom of that era). Also, gay marriage proponents often portray some sets of marriages in the Bible inaccurately (you should not expect expert exegetical information from the gay community when it comes to the Bible—a large majority of them reject the Bible as authoritative and the few who put some stock in Scripture, twist it about in order to justify their own behavior).

The passage we are studying, Genesis 38, appears to be the oldest literature (that I am aware of) which speaks of such a marriage; but it is recorded in Genesis as an existing custom. Judah does not look the situation over and say, “Hey, I’ve got a great idea here!” God does not speak to Judah, saying, “Listen, son, this is what I want you to do...” What takes place in Genesis 38 simply falls within the cultural norms of that day, and given that day and time, this is not a bad cultural norm.

There are some things which are not clear about this custom (known to us today as a *levirate marriage*). Could Judah have divorced Tamar (his daughter-in-law) from the family? Could he have come and said, “Look, we will not be providing for you a kinsman to stand in for Er.” Or was it his responsibility to see that Er’s first child would be raised up through her? The latter seems to be the case. In fact, there appears to be a reasonable amount of social pressure for Judah, the father-in-law, to take care of this. Furthermore, near the end of Genesis 38, Judah will try to have Tamar executed for being pregnant; and that would make sense if she is married or promised in marriage; but it would make less sense if she is simply a widow.

Primarily, a Levirate marriage is described from the man’s point of view in the Bible. The doctrine below considers both the men and the woman in the arrangement.

### **Robert Dean and Jack Ballinger on the Levirate Marriage**

1. A levirate marriage (or levirate obligation) is the marriage of a childless widow to her husband's brother. This seems very odd to us. If a woman is married and her husband dies before they have children, then his brother has the responsibility to come in and to marry her for the purpose of raising up children in the dead man's name. The first son is considered the son of the deceased husband; not the brother's. The term Levirate derives from the Latin word for brother-in-law.
2. This custom preserved the name and inheritance of any son who died prematurely.
3. The custom, which may seem to be somewhat bizarre to the modern reader, was widely practiced among Israel’s neighbors. The Assyrians and the Hittites and Nuzi and Ugarit held to this custom.
4. The brother-in-law, in this case Onan, is supposed to come in, marry Tamar, and

## Robert Dean and Jack Ballinger on the Levirate Marriage

- their first child that they have would not be considered his. They are considered hers and Er's, because he is the oldest. As a result, their first child would be the beneficiary of double the inheritance.
5. The Mosaic law incorporated Levirate marriage into the law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. It is designed to protect widows in society who have lost their husband, who don't have a source of income. Such women do not have a male to protect them, and, because they are childless, they don't have sons to grow up and take care of them. That is part of the reason for this custom. The book of Ruth is based on this practice, although in Ruth, it is a distant relative who marries Ruth.
  6. The Sadducees also used this law in an attempt to trap Jesus (Luke 20:27-44).
  7. The passage in Deuteronomy provides a way out for the brother of the deceased to avoid this obligation. There was some humiliation, but if he truly objected to this marriage, he could get out of it.
  8. The principle provided for the widow who was left without a husband, without protection, and without a source of income. It was designed to take care of her.
  9. The law was also designed to protect the family inheritance. There is a significant emphasis in Scripture on protecting inheritance and providing inheritance for the next generation.

From <http://phrasearch.com/Trans/DBM/setup/Genesis/Gen145.htm> accessed April 26, 2016; and from <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen38.htm> accessed May 18, 2016 (both were edited).

**The Levirate Marriage from the woman's perspective:** The Bible explains the levirate marriage primarily from a male viewpoint. A man and a woman are married; the husband dies, but before giving his wife a son. A member of the man's family is then brought in to impregnate the woman, to raise up a child in the name of her deceased husband. Logically, this son would continue the line of the deceased husband and this son would be entitled to his inheritance as well.

This custom is confusing and even troubling for many, but perhaps if I put a slightly different spin on the custom, you might better understand and appreciate it. Unlike today, when a woman might have many sexual encounters and several husbands, and yet still manage to get married once again, that was not the way things were done in the era of ancient Canaan (later Israel).

Marrying a virginal bride was so important in the ancient world that the bloodied bed sheets from the first night of their marriage bed were collected and delivered to the father of the bride, and he saved them as proof of his daughter's virginity (Deut. 22:13-17). This indicates that the father delivered a virginal bride to her new husband; and that the new husband is now responsible for this woman—the woman whose virginity he took.

Most of the time in the ancient world, once a woman has had sexual intercourse, even within the confines of marriage, that made her nearly ineligible for a second marriage, regardless of the circumstances of the first marriage. Furthermore, it was much more difficult in that era for a woman to make it on her own (hence the Bible often speaks of caring for the widows and orphans).

Therefore, a woman whose husband has died early, without giving her a son, has several strikes against her: (1) she is not as marriageable as she was as a virgin; (2) it is not very easy for such a woman to take care of herself; and (3) she has no son to care for her in her old age. Since these are not considerations for a woman in 21<sup>st</sup> century America, a levirate marriage would be inappropriate. On the other hand, in its cultural context, you might understand how a levirate marriage provided protection for the widow.

When this woman married into a family, she became a part of that family. If her husband died, then she was still a member of her new family, and it was up to them to look after her. This was accomplished through a levirate marriage.

There are other factors at play as well. There is a natural yearning in most women to have and raise children. Even though there are obvious exceptions to this, it is normal for both men and women to desire children. Furthermore, even in today's deviant society, the family is still the essential building block of society.

A union with another member of the family (her kinsman-redeemer, as it were) offered this woman a family as well as the protection and provision of marriage. So, such a woman is not cast aside in society, but she embraced by the family that she originally married into; and provided for and protected by that family (usually by the brother of her deceased husband).

In summation, the name of the brother who dies prematurely is preserved; and the woman who married into his family continues as a part of that family, and she is protected and provided for.

By understanding all the ramifications of such a marriage, it helps us to better understand why it was important to ancient culture, in that it protected and provided for the weak. This also explains, from a human standpoint, why the Bible would allow and even support such a marriage.

This lesson ought to be put back a few lessons. Perhaps after v. 9?

### **Lesson 399: Genesis 38:20–23 Deut. 22:23–24 Judah tries to pay the “prostitute”**

Back to Judah and his affair with the supposed prostitute.

Judah had married a Canaanite woman and had 3 sons. The first married Tamar (an arranged marriage), but he died the sin unto death. The second was supposed to marry Tamar as her husband's brother and give her a son, but he intentionally did not impregnate her and he also died the sin unto death. Judah sent Tamar packing back to her father's house and promised her the 3<sup>rd</sup> son, but did not follow through on that. He was worried that his 3<sup>rd</sup> son would die if he married her.

A few years pass. The 3<sup>rd</sup> son grows up to become an adult (probably middle teens), but Judah does not give him to marry Tamar. Judah's wife, the Canaanitess dies, and so, Judah goes on a business trip. You may recall that, Tamar, right at this moment, is still wearing mourning clothes for the loss of her husbands. However, Judah's wife dies and he goes back to work soon thereafter.

Tamar finds out about this business trip—probably from a sympathetic servant—and apparently has a plan already in mind. Anticipating his route, Tamar goes to a city through which Judah would pass, and poses as a prostitute. Judah takes her, promises her a young goat in payment; and leaves some very identifiable personal items with her to hold until he pays her.

Judah, a man of his word, made a promise to pay her, and attempts to do that:

**Genesis 38:20** And Judah sent the kid of the goats by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand. But he did not find her.

Judah viewed this as a simple financial transaction. All he did was have sex with a prostitute; he promised to pay her, and so, he arranges payment for her. Judah did not return to this area himself, but he sent his friend, Hirah, with a young goat to pay her and to collect his stuff. Judah anticipates that his friend will deliver payment, pick up Judah's stuff, and he will be done with the matter. **But he [the Adullamite] did not find her.** She's not there.

So now, at least one man, Hirah, knows what Judah did and that a prostitute is in the possession of things which are specifically Judah's.

**Genesis 38:21** Then he [Hirah, Judah's friend] asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who was by the wayside?" And they said, "There was no harlot here."

Tamar was careful to interact only with Judah, her father-in-law, so that she would not be known as the prostitute of that area. When Judah's friend asks around, no one knows anything about the prostitute that he is inquiring about.

"Where is the prostitute that usually frequents this place?" "We have no idea; we don't have a prostitute who works here."

It is interesting that Judah sends his friend Hirah instead of going himself. Several possible explanations come to mind: (1) Judah might be a bit ashamed and did not want to face the



prostitute again (otherwise, why didn't he return to that city with two young goats?). Or (2) he is giving his friend the opportunity to sample this prostitute for himself. (3) There is certainly the 3<sup>rd</sup> possibility that Judah is tied up at home and Hirah is going back that way, and so, this is simply an errand, with nothing more to be read into the situation than that.

It is also interesting that Hirah uses a different word for prostitute. When Judah described her, he used the feminine singular, Qal active participle of the word *zânâh* (זָנְיָה) [pronounced *zaw-NAW*], which means, *adulteress, fornicator, sexually promiscuous person; harlot, whore, prostitute; a madam*. The emphasis is upon her immorality. Strong's #2181 BDB #275. However, Hirah uses the word *q°dêshâh* (קִדְשָׁה) [pronounced *keh-d-ay-SHAW*], which means, *prostitute, harlot; female temple prostitute, cult prostitute*. Strong's #6948 BDB #873. She is not a common prostitute, but one who is set apart as a religious prostitute. It is not entirely clear to me why Hirah uses this different designation.

When Judah takes Tamar before the local court, to have her executed for being pregnant, he will use the Qal perfect of the verb *zânâh* (זָנְיָה) [pronounced *zaw-NAW*], which describes her as being exceedingly immoral. Judah uses one word; but Hirah uses a different word entirely when looking for the young woman. I am not sure of the significance here. It suggests to me that the cult prostitute is seen as a higher calling, and perhaps Hirah simply used that word so as not to be so insulting to this little place where Judah met Tamar. It could simply be their different vocabularies.

All languages have synonyms and that could be all that we are seeing here.

**Genesis 38:22** And he returned to Judah, and said, "I cannot find her. And also the men of the place said, 'There was no harlot here.' "

Judah's friend has no luck, and he returns to Judah, telling him that he was unable to find the prostitute in question. The men there were unaware of a prostitute working in that area. Hirah made a reasonable effort to find the prostitute but he did not.

**Genesis 38:23** And Judah said, "Let her take it to her, lest we be ashamed. Behold, I sent this kid, and you have not found her."

The first half of v. 23 is difficult to translate. Literally, it reads: *And so says Judah, "She will take to herself lest we are to be shamed."* We could get away with translating it: *Judah said, "She will keep [those things] as her own [lit., to her], so that we are not shamed."* The idea is, *she's got my stuff, we tried to pay her but could not find her; we have done nothing wrong.*

Judah tried to take care of this debt immediately, but the prostitute he knew was not there and no one knows anything about her. Nothing more could be done. Quite obviously, Judah had no idea what was actually going on.

Judah's cold cruelty will be made manifest in the next verse.

**Genesis 38:24** And it happened, about three months afterward, that it was told Judah, saying, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom.” And Judah said, “Bring her forth, and let her be burned.”

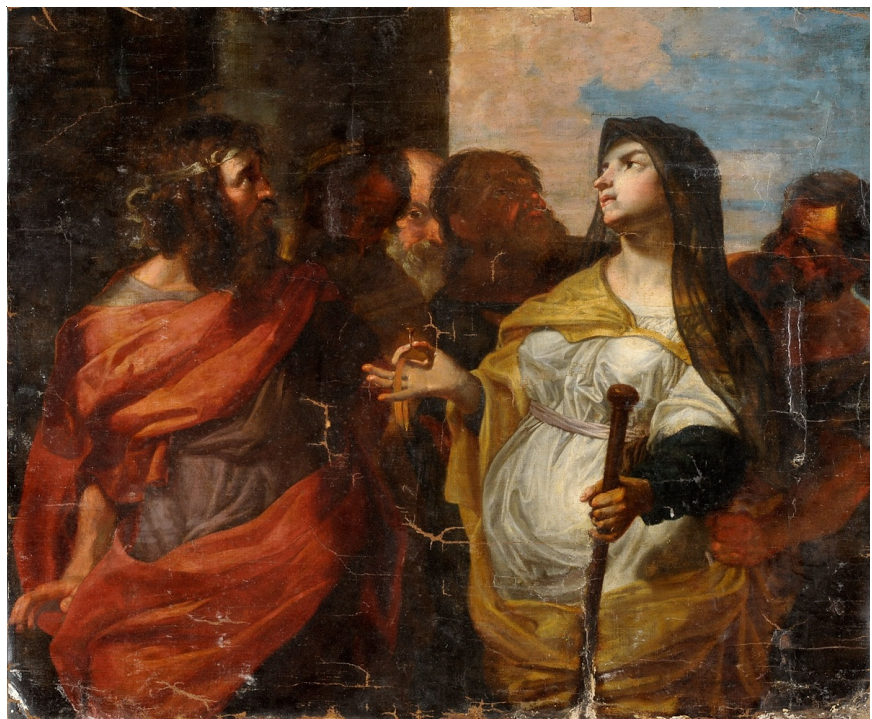
Tamar has been a burden to Judah. He chose her originally for his son Er. In fact, interestingly enough, Judah married the woman he himself chose, but, for his first son, decided that he ought to choose on behalf of his son (suggesting that, in retrospect, Judah may not have been overjoyed over the woman that he chose and married).

Apparently, there were people who kept Tamar informed of Judah’s activities, and others who kept Judah informed of Tamar’s activities. Tamar being pregnant is a very big deal in that day and time. This would have certainly gotten back to Judah, as this is quite scandalous (in our culture today, we have no idea, but in my youth, no teen would show up to high school pregnant—it just would not happen).

This is 3 months after Hirah is sent up to find the prostitute, so we are probably 3 or 4 months or so into her pregnancy.

**Juda and Thamar** (a painting), but the artist is unknown. From [Wikimedia](#); accessed May 31, 2016. Painting is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Judah finds out that his daughter-in-law is pregnant (not realizing that she is pregnant with his son), and this gives him an excuse to remove her from their lives. She has committed adultery (by the standards of that era), and therefore, should be executed. How fortunate indeed, Judah might be thinking. He no longer has any responsibility towards her. She screwed up big time, and she is deserving of death, in his opinion. Maybe he



thought that her chickens have come home to roost (having thought that the death of his two sons were somehow related to her).

Remember that Judah was cold enough to want to sell his own half-brother into slavery. Here, there is this girl that he himself arranged to marry his son; and Judah is ready and willing to have her executed—in fact, to be burned to death, a horrible death.

What could he have done? He could have told her, “You are out of bounds here. Please do not trouble my family any further.” (Remember, when Mary was found with child, Joseph was going to put her away *privately*; that is, with no legal action) But Judah was willing to take his daughter-in-law to court (or, to the authorities), to embarrass her and her father publically and to have her executed—and he has committed the exact same moral transgression that he has attributed to her.

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law... (ESV)

It is unclear as to how the law operated in that day and time. However, someone representing some authority showed up on her doorstep (probably a group of men) for the expressed purpose of burning her alive. This was to be her punishment for being promised to a son of Judah's and getting pregnant during the time that she is waiting.

Who is not there? Her chief accuser, Judah. And it appears that she is not being hauled into court to give a defense, but she is going to be taken forthwith and executed—burned alive.

In the Mosaic Law, many centuries in the future, if a woman is promised to be married, and she is raped, the rapist will be killed. If she engages in a consensual union, despite being promised, she and the man will be executed (Deut. 22:23–26). It reads like this:

**Deut 22:23–24** "If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

The Mosaic Law did not exist at this time, but it gives us insight into the culture of that era. A *betrothed virgin* is a woman promised to be married. Although Tamar is not a virgin, she is betrothed to be married to Judah's 3<sup>rd</sup> son. And even though Judah is not arranging for their marriage though the son is old enough, that is still her status.

In the Deuteronomic law (this is the part of the Law written by Moses), when a woman promised to another young man, engages in consensual relations with a different man, the man and woman are to be executed.

**Deut. 22:25–27** "But if in the open country a man meets a young woman who is betrothed, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. But you shall do nothing to the young woman; she has committed no offense punishable by death. For this case is like that of a man attacking and murdering his neighbor, because

he met her in the open country, and though the betrothed young woman cried for help there was no one to rescue her.” (ESV)

Here, if this occurs out in the country, where no amount of screaming will save the woman, the man is assumed to be guilty and woman is assumed to be innocent. The man is executed.

So, if Tamar is about to be hauled away to be executed, the one thing she will be asked about is, *who is the father?*

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out [to be executed], she sent [messengers] to her father-in-law... The words in the brackets are supplied.

#### **Lesson 400: Genesis 38:24–26**

#### **Judah Calls for the Death of Tamar**

Judah, in a very short period of time, married, had three children, lost two of those children, and then lost his wife. He had a responsibility toward Tamar, who had married his first two sons, who both had subsequently died. Judah had promised her his youngest son in marriage, but did not deliver on that promise. Rather than assume the responsibility, Judah shuffled her off to her father’s house, made promises about the third son, but had no intention of following through.

When Tamar realized that Judah had abandoned her to her father, she took steps to disguise herself and pose as a prostitute to tempt Judah when he traveled through a particular village. Judah was intrigued and propositioned her, and they had intimate relations—but Judah had no idea who she was. He did not have their agreed upon price (a young goat) with him, so he gave her some personal items to hold as collateral.

This Tamar is apparently a very smart young lady (remember that she would have been roughly the age of Judah’s sons—so she is probably 16 or 17 at this time). She wants these personal items in order to identify Judah as the father, but she cannot ask for them right off the bat. She, in their brief conversation, she examines Judah, what he is carrying, and what he lacks, and she asks for a common, reasonable item (a young goat) that he does not have with him. Based upon that, she can then ask for some personal items as collateral. Judah would not think that she has any interest in his personal items, because she wants a young goat for payment. Therefore, he gives them up readily, expecting to get them back in a very short time.

However, when Judah sends his friend, Hirah, to find this young lady, he cannot find her; so they apparently decide, *que sera sera* (whatever will be, will be); or *c'est la vie* (*that's life*). That appears to have been their agreed upon observation when the woman could not be found.

Judah excuses his own behavior, but he will not excuse Tamar’s similar behavior.



**Genesis 38:24** And it happened, about three months afterward, that it was told Judah, saying, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom.” And Judah said, “Bring her forth, and let her be burned.”

3–4 months later, it is clear that Tamar is pregnant. She is promised to Judah’s 3<sup>rd</sup> son, and, even though that marriage is not going to happen, her pregnancy indicates that she has fooled around on the side with another man. In today’s culture, the man might write a country and western song about it; in that culture, the woman was executed.

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law... (ESV)

I first pictured this as a court case, in an open air court; and the people of the town are there and Judah and Tamar are there, and this takes place in the midst of the trial. Several paintings of this narrative seem to have the same understanding. However, that does not appear to be exactly what is happening.

We have the Hophal participle of *yâtsâ’* (יָצָא) [pronounced *yaw-TZAWH*], which means, *is brought forth, being taken out*. The Hophal is the passive of the Hiphil (causative stem) and the rarest of the seven stems. Strong's #3318 BDB #422. So, she is probably at home, and men come for her, to take her out. It is likely that she is not being taken from her home to go to trial, but to be executed.

While she is being taken out (presumably from her home), she sends a message to Judah, to his home, because he is not there with the men who have taken a hold of her. The verb is *shâlach* (שָׁלַח) [pronounced *shaw-LAKH*], and it means, *to send, to send for [forth, away], to dismiss, to deploy, to put forth, to stretch out, to reach out*. It is one of the most common verbs in the Old Testament, being found nearly 900 times. Very often, it indicates that a message is being sent or messengers are being dispatched, but this is almost never specifically named. In the ESV above, the translation is *she sent word to her father-in-law*. But the word, *word* does not actually occur in the Hebrew. So, this is more accurately rendered *When she was brought out, she sent to her father-in-law,...* (VW). So, Judah is nowhere around. The CEV, not a very accurate translation for the most part, gives us a very good feel for what is being said here: *As Tamar was being dragged off, she sent someone to tell her father-in-law,...* It is very likely, Judah does not have to stomach to watch Tamar being executed, even though he has initiated her punishment. “Bring her out to be burned,” he said.

**Genesis 38:25a** As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, "By the man to whom these belong, I am pregnant." And she said, "Please identify whose these are, the signet and the cord and the staff." (ESV)

What appears to be the case is, she sends a messenger (or two) with Judah’s personal items to show him. The interaction between Tamar and the men dragging her out of her home is downplayed.

The men who came to her home would have asked her very pointed questions. “Are you pregnant? Who is the father?” Tamar says, “Yes, I am pregnant; and the father of my child is the owner of these items. Judah can identify who the man is.” Her exact words are recorded in this passage. What I have written above is a reasonable guess at the conversation between Tamar and her executioners.

This puts a halt to everything. Judah is her accuser and he also holds one of the important pieces of the puzzle—just who the father of this child is. Logically, if Tamar is guilty of adultery (as she is promised to Shelah), then her partner is as well (which standard appears to have been preserved in Deut. 22:23–24).

Judah, who is likely the author of this chapter of Genesis (or, he told these events to Joseph, and Joseph included them in his own narrative) was not be there to observe the interaction between Tamar and the men. All he would know is, a messenger (or, messengers) show up at his house, and they are carrying his personal items.

No doubt, messengers from Tamar coming to Judah with his personal items knocked him for a loop (figuratively speaking).

We do not know Judah’s immediate response. Did the messengers show up, and Judah, seeing the item, just say, “These are mine; where did you get them?”?

Or did the messengers say something like, “These things belong to the father of Tamar’s child—she says that you can identify them;” while holding Judah’s staff, signet ring and cord for him to identify. Judah is a smart man, and he puts it all together in a matter of a few seconds.

Whatever happened, it was quickly ascertained that these are Judah’s personal items and that Tamar had been in possession of these things. Therefore, the messengers and Judah realize that Tamar is pregnant with his child. And he is calling for her execution, as the father of the cuckolded son. Awkward.

All of this suggests that there was some semblance of law in Canaan and that people could not simply take vengeance into their own hands. On the other hand, this does not appear to be something which takes place in an open court (although, Tamar may have possibly been tried in absentia).

This is all a pretty amazing scene. Messengers show up at Judah’s door with his signet ring and other personal items. What Judah has accused Tamar of—fornication—he is equally guilty of committing.

At the very least, Judah and his friend were aware of Judah’s dealings with the prostitute; and even more people, given that Judah’s friend asked around about the prostitute in that area. But, when these messengers showed up with his personal possessions that Tamar had, the pieces of the puzzle began to come together.



What happened here would have been the talk of the town. What could be more salacious than Judah, who has called for the execution of his pregnant daughter-in-law; and then it turns out, he is the father! For months—perhaps longer—this would have been all the gossip.

This narrative also helps us to better understand a set of instructions given by Moses in Deut. 17:6–7. When witnesses are found who sentence a man to his death by their testimony, those witnesses are to be the first to cast a stone in his execution. The idea is, some people are willing to lie in court, but, if they must then begin the execution process, they know, in their own hearts, that they are committing murder. A false witness might be able to lie about a defendant in court, but if he must afterwards throw the first stone, it would be more difficult for him to lie. It does not matter that the end result is the same; it is the personal participation that makes the difference and better assures accurate testimony.

Note that Judah has testified against Tamar, but he is not there to witness her execution. He finds it easy to accuse her; not easy to view her execution.

***Judah and Tamar***, a painting by Cornelis van Haarlem (1562–1638); painting 1596; taken from [Wikimedia](#); accessed May 31, 2016.

Genesis 38:26a And Judah acknowledged them, and said, “She has been more righteous than I have, because I did not give her to my son Shelah.”

Judah fully realizes that Tamar was the prostitute that he had; and that the child she was carrying (actually, twins) belonged to him.



It is quite difficult, given what is known, for Judah to hide what he has done. He has impregnated his daughter-in-law, and has, by this act, fulfilled the custom of the kinsman-redeemer by becoming the kinsman redeemer himself. He has raised up a son (actually, sons) through his daughter-in-law. He should have given over his son Shelah to her, but impregnated her instead, not knowing who she was.

Tamar became a part of Judah’s family by his choice. She was not some Canaanite gal that Er picked up in a bar (I am exaggerating using a scene from today). Judah himself

chose Tamar; and because he did that, he was doubly responsible for her. Sending her back to her father was completely the wrong thing to do.

He did not fulfill his responsibility to her by giving his third son to her; but he unintentionally took that responsibility on himself (which was culturally legitimate). Judah actually clears himself and Tamar by making the statement, “[She has been more righteous than I have, because I did not give her to my son Shelah.](#)” If he did not give her to his third son, she has not committed that form of adultery. If he takes her to himself in marriage and provides for her, then both she and he are off the hook.

Since we now have a better understanding of a levirate marriage, we understand that providing seed is only a part of the social arrangement. He now must take care of her and her child (actually, children—she will give birth to twins—which may be why she is big enough to be showing at 3 or 4 months).

When Judah said, “[She is more righteous than me;](#)” he is acknowledging his duty to this young girl. It was wrong for him to ask her to return to her father’s home and then just wait for him to call upon her. When she married his son, Tamar became a part of the family of Judah. When his son died, Judah remained responsible for this young lady. He abdicated his responsibility (much as his son, Onan, had done).

Does everyone in this city/town/village know the whole story here? Judah’s friend, Hirah, has, no doubt, figured it all out. Judah obviously knows what happened, as does Tamar. Whether the messengers or those who were taking Tamar out of her home understood all that happened is not known, although, they no doubt realized that Judah is the father of the unborn twins of Tamar.

Very likely, for the people of this village who did not get all of the details, this would have been discussed among the locals for some time, and there are logical questions which would have come up. Why did Tamar have Judah’s personal items? How did that come about? Why did Judah first call for Tamar’s execution, but now he is not? If he is the father, then why did Judah do what he did? It would be somewhat confusing for Judah to impregnate Tamar, but then later, call for her execution. Knowing the entire narrative explains all of this.

Judah cannot hide the facts of what he did, nor can he demand Tamar’s execution, as she is carrying the next generation of Judah’s line. This was his duty. He would be the son’s father by nature and the son’s grandfather by law (the firstborn would be the heir of Er).

[Genesis 38:26b](#) [And he never knew her again.](#)

It was an odd relationship between Judah and Tamar, as Tamar will go into the land of Egypt with Judah (presumably, as he took her two sons by her into Egypt—Genesis 46:12); but, as we are told here, he did not continue a sexual relationship with her. She would have lived with him in his house; she would have been supported by him (and their children); but, for whatever reason, Judah did not continue relations with her. I find that

to be an interesting statement, knowing his predilections. He was exposed to the entire city, embarrassed by this situation with Tamar; but the exact nature of their relationship is not fully known. He apparently supports her; he raises her children, but they do not have relations again. I guess the missing piece of information is, did Judah marry Tamar? This is no doubt one of the most unusual relationships in the Bible.

That they do not continue to have sexual relations has been stuck in the back of my mind for sometime now, but I think that I now understand why. There are probably two reasons for their lack of relations: (1) Judah is afraid of Tamar. Two sons had sexual relations with her and they are dead. Judah has had sexual contact with Tamar, but he did not know who she was. So now, Judah appears to be wedded to Tamar, without the benefit of conjugal relations, as he seems to think that he might die if he continues to have relations with her. (2) Judah just tried to have Tamar executed. Tamar is willing to have his sons and be supported by him, but she may not have the warmest of feelings toward him after all of this. Therefore, she may not want intimate relations with this man either.

What this reminds me of is the author [O'Henry](#), who often had an unusual twist of circumstances which came out at the end of his stories ([The Gift of the Magi](#) is an excellent example of this, and it is a short story).

Judah has let his sexual desire lead him into a bad marriage with a Canaanite woman and later to having relations with a prostitute (with someone who he thought was a prostitute). We have no idea if there were others (I don't think that there were; but this could be argued). His sexual desire leads him into a marriage, first to the wrong woman; and then into a second marriage where he is afraid to have sex with his wife (both sons were legitimately married to Tamar when they had relations with her). We, the readers of this narrative, know that he can have legitimate marital relations with Tamar; but, because Judah lacks Bible doctrine in his soul, he does not realize this. Tamar, because she seduced Judah in the first place, may have had an honest desire for him—but then, he took steps to have her executed. Nothing kills a romance like setting up your partner to be executed.