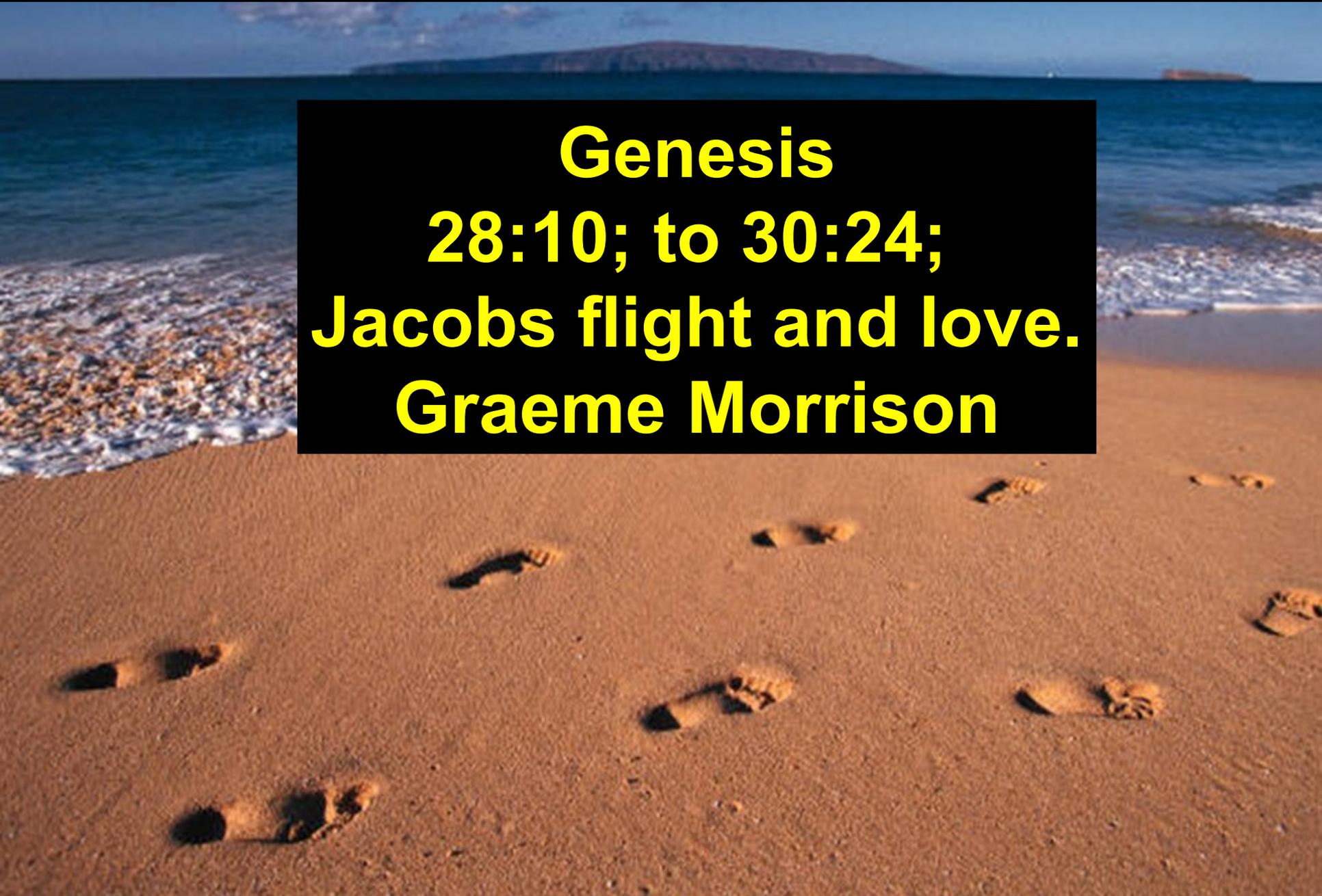
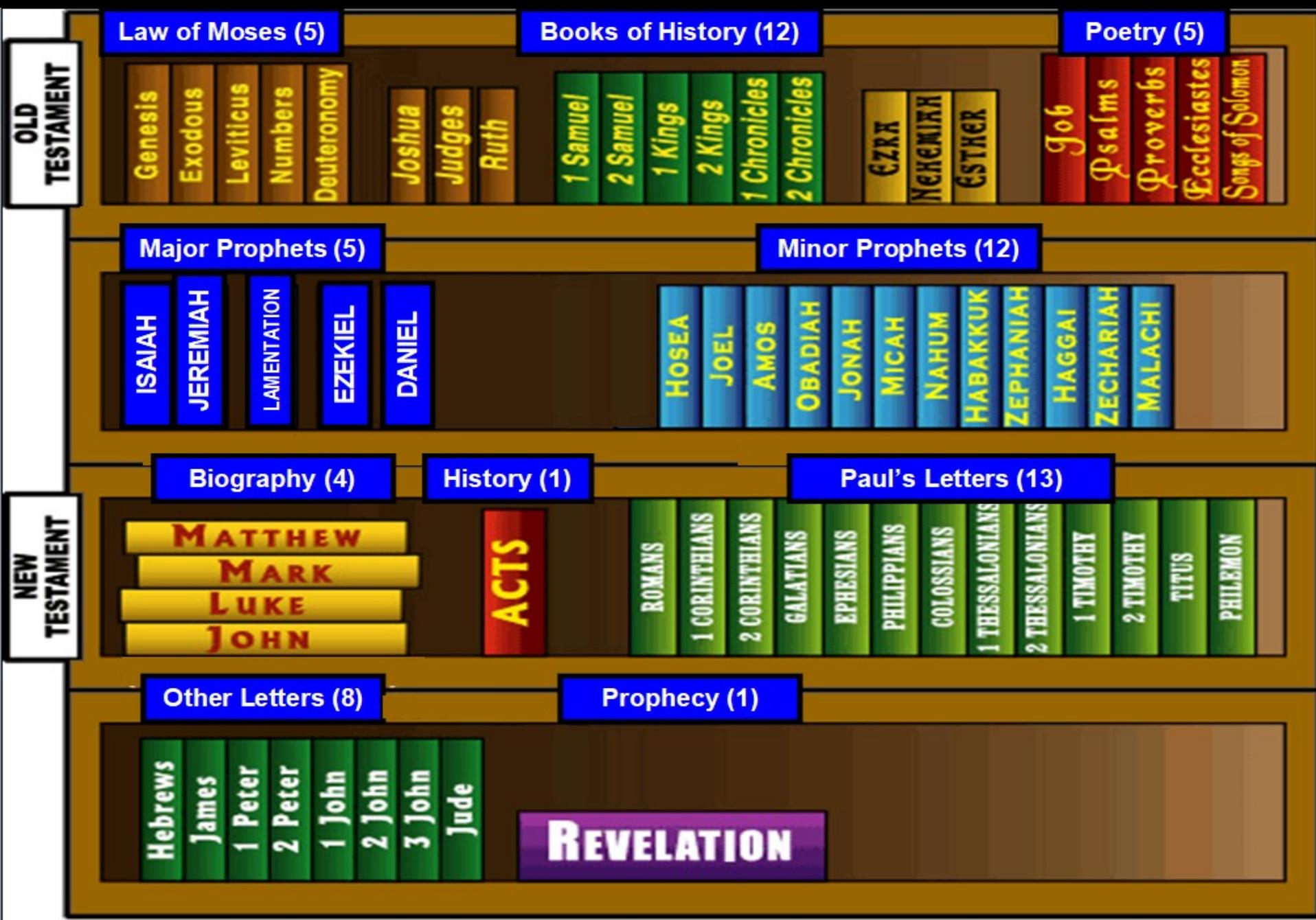


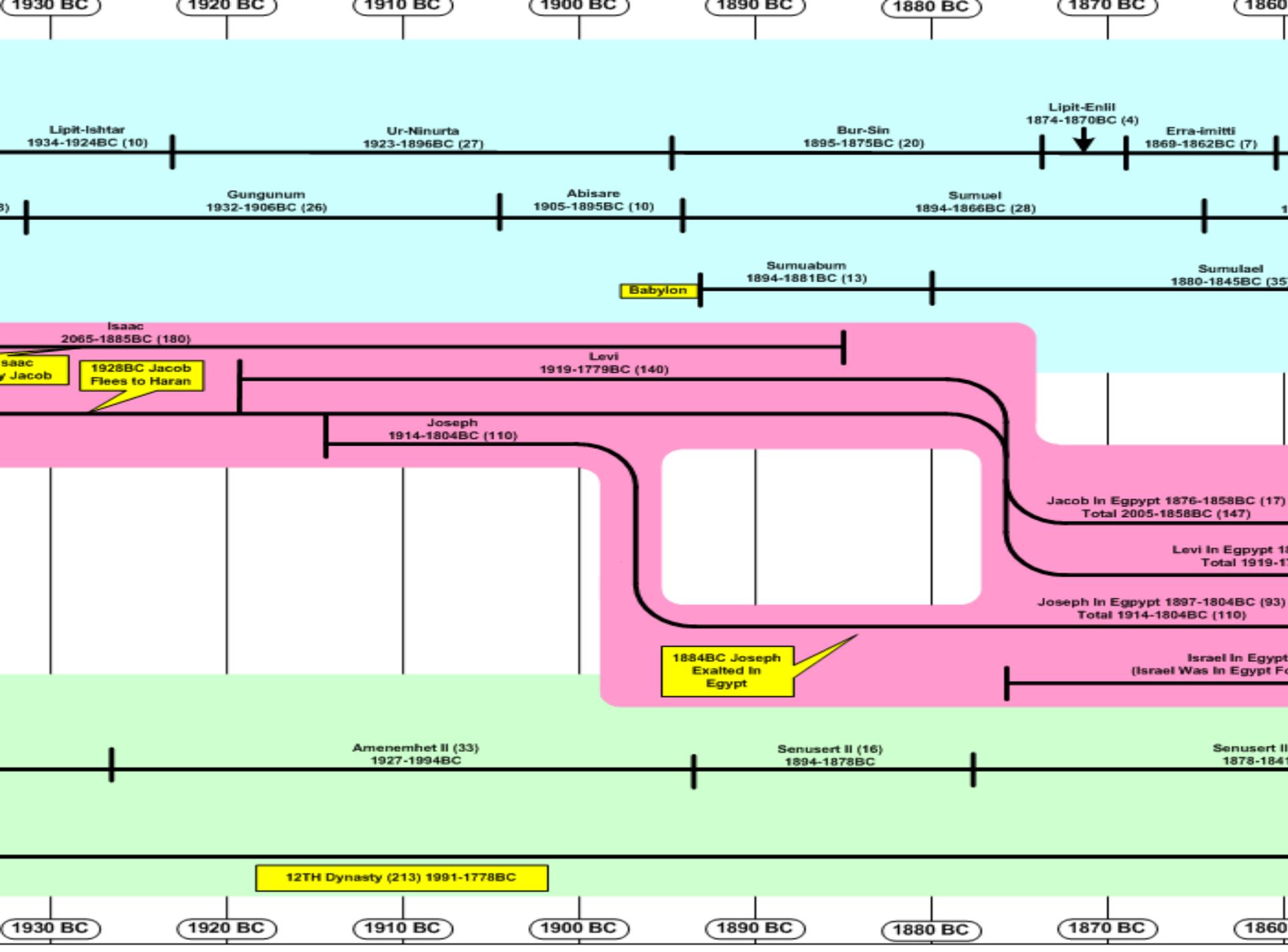
Patriarchal Age – The Patriarchs.

**Genesis
28:10; to 30:24;
Jacobs flight and love.
Graeme Morrison**



Remember The BIBLE is a LIBRARY of 66 Books.





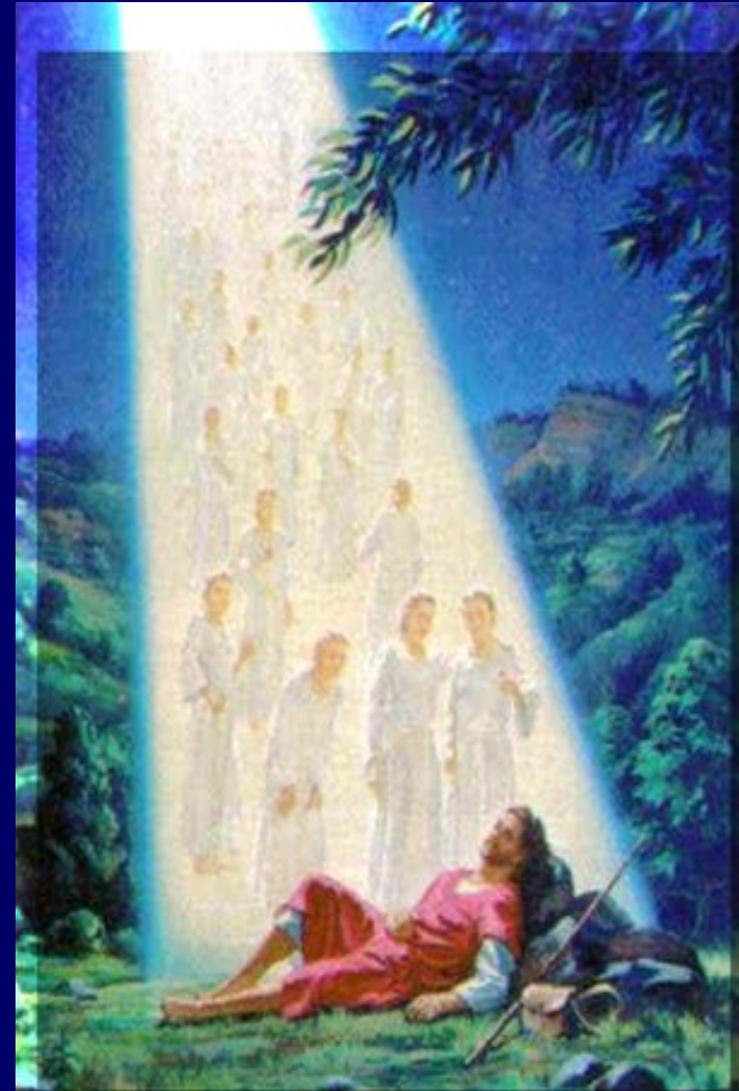
Flight into Padan Aram. (Syria) Gen 28:10-30:43;

Jacob's dream of heaven's ladder at Bethel.

**Jacob's love, marriages
and children.**

**Jacob's 20 year service
to Laban.**

His flight from Laban.



Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Do you ever get the feeling that life is a struggle?

**We live in a competitive world
and the trouble with the rat race
is that, even if you win, you are still a rat.**

**Jacob's story is the story of a struggle.
He came out of the womb that way. He was a twin.**

**His twin brother was named Esau
and the Bible tells us that these two brothers
began their struggle in the womb.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

It was **a struggle** that was to continue
through their descendants
for more than **two thousand years.**

Esau: Even though they were twins,
it was **Esau who was born first.**

He grew up to be **a hunter, an outdoorsman.**
From **his descendants** would come the Edomites.

Jacob: If Esau was a hunter and an outdoorsman,
Jacob was an indoors man.

He was the soft man to Esau's roughness.
It would be **through him** that
would come the nation of Israel.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

**When the two brothers were born,
the second-born son was
holding onto the heel of the first-born.**

**This was considered to be a significant omen
and this child was named **Jacob**,
meaning "heel-grabber."**

**This was an idiom for a con artist;
someone who is out to "trip you up."**

**We have a similar idiom today
when we speak of "pulling someone's leg."**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Jacob's role as a heel-grabber is seen in his dealings with his older brother.

The first such indication is when **Esau, the outdoorsman** to Jacob's stay-at-home approach to life, **came in from the fields to find Jacob with a tasty pot of stew.**

We are not told whether or not Jacob had craftily planned the incident or whether **he happened to be in the right place at the right time with the right temptation.**

The result was the same in any case **Esau was persuaded to sell his birthright for a pot of stew.** No used car salesman ever made such a good deal.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

The heel-grabbing came to full fruition when their father, **Isaac, determined to give to Esau the family blessing.**

While Esau was away, Jacob was coaxed by his mother to don a disguise that would **fool his aged and blind father into thinking he was Esau.**

By means of this deception, he was able to steal the family blessing.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

For Esau, this was the last straw.

**As far as he was concerned,
Jacob had swindled him for the last time.**

**He swore revenge and Jacob was forced
to leave his home, fleeing from the wrath of Esau,
never to see his beloved mother again.**

**It was while he was on the run,
that Jacob had his
first significant encounter with God.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

“And Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran. And he came to a certain place, and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place.”

And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven: and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

As we begin reading this section,
**there is nothing within the context
to prepare us for the impending event.**

The circumstances seem far from the supernatural.
Indeed, they seem to be laced with
the dreariness of the natural and the secular.

Jacob is in the midst of a journey.
He has set out from Beersheba
and **he is headed for Haran.**

He is alone upon the road and the reason that
he is alone and the reason he is upon the road
is because **he is a fugitive from his own family.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

On his journey to Paddan aram,
Jacob was accompanied only by his staff. (32:10;)
and his thoughts. It would not seem difficult
to speculate with fair accuracy
as to what these thoughts were about.

**Surely he must have considered
the wisdom of his actions in deceiving his father.**

**He must have compared his expectations
in this plot with the outcome of it.**

He should have **felt guilt** at the thought
of **his treatment** of his brother and father.

**He undoubtedly grieved
at having to leave his mother.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

He must have wondered what kind of reception he would have from Laban.

He would not be able to overlook the fact that he had nothing to offer Laban as a dowry for a wife.

What would his wife be like?

When would he ever be able to return home?

Jacob's Journey to Mesopotamia. (Beersheba to Bethel.)

CANAAN IN THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS

Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40

The Great Sea



Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Jacob's Dream.

**He stopped to rest
and placed a stone under his head.
(28:10-11;)**

Jacob had a dream. (28:12-16;)

He saw a ladder that extended to heaven.

Angels ascended and descended.

The LORD stood at the top and spoke.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

**Whatever his thoughts must have been,
Jacob was finally at the end of himself.
He came to realize that he would never prosper
on the basis of his schemes and struggles.**

**His self assurance was probably
at an all time low.**

**This was the ideal time for God
to break into his life.**

**For now Jacob knew how much
he needed God in order to be blessed
as his father had been.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

He comes to a place near the city of Luz.

We do not know what the name means
and it doesn't appear
to have meant much to Jacob, either.

There is **nothing compelling** about this place.
It is just a place to stop for the evening.

When this night is over,

Jacob will give this place a new name.

It shall be called Bethel - the House of God –
the Gate of Heaven. (Gen 28:19;)

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Night seems to have overtaken Jacob before he arrived at the city of Luz.

The city gates would have been closed for the night, so Jacob, as shepherds customarily did, slept under the stars.

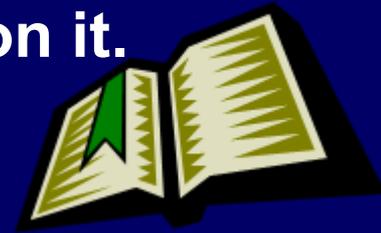
He found a suitable spot, took a stone from nearby, and propped himself up for the night.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

In his sleep he had an awe inspiring vision.

He saw a ladder reaching from heaven to earth,
with angels ascending and descending upon it.

Above this ladder was God,
who spoke these words to him.



**“I am the LORD God of Abraham your father
and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie
I will give to you and your descendants.”**

**“Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth;
you shall spread abroad to the west and the east,
to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed
all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”**

**“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go,
and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you
until I have done what I have spoken to you.”**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

There are three aspects to this dream.

Each of the three aspects
is introduced by the word **"behold."**

1. A Ladder. The dream involved a vision of a ladder.

This seems odd because
there is no mention earlier in Genesis of a ladder.

The word used here for ladder is sullam.

It is a hapaxlegomenon. It is only used
this one time in the Old Testament.

It has been suggested that the same word
could have been used to indicate **a stairway,**
perhaps pointing to **the ziggurats of Mesopotamia,**
but there are more definite words for stairway .
(ma'alah would be the normal word for "stairway").

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

2. The Angels of God.

Even more foreign is the concept of angels of God ascending and descending.

Angels have already been pictured.

Angels came and visited Abraham.

Angels were involved in the rescue of Lot from Sodom. And the Angel of the Lord has been seen interacting both with Hagar and with Abraham

Certainly, they have been shown to be divine messengers. But here, for the first time, they are seen in the midst of delivering messages to and from heaven.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

This picture of the **angels of God ascending and descending** is found in only **one other place** in the Bible.

It is John 1:51; When Jesus speaks to Nathanael.
And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (John 1:51;)

In the words of Jesus, there is no mention of the ladder. The angels are ascending and descending **on** the Son of Man.
Jesus IS the ladder.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Thus, if the ladder represents God's presence upon earth, then Jesus is seen as the One who is "God with us."

3. The Lord Stood Above It.

At the bottom of the Ladder was Jacob.

At the top of the Ladder was the Lord.

The ladder, therefore, served as the connecting link between them.

This vision has been the victim of many interpreters.

Its significance has been said to be deep and profound.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

No, Rather it was intended to be understood very simply, just as Jacob did.

We need to base our interpretation of its meaning and significance upon four considerations:-

- (a) The words of God to Jacob;**
- (b) The words immediately spoken by Jacob;**
- (c) The words spoken on a later occasion by Jacob;**
- and (d) The words of Jesus in John 1:51;**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;



Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

A) The words of God to Jacob;

The words spoken by God are very **similar to previous declarations** to Abraham and to Isaac.

Isaac's pronouncement that **passed on the blessing of Abraham to Jacob** (verse 4) **was now confirmed by God Himself.**

While there are various aspects to these covenant blessings, **foremost seems to be the references to the land.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

“the land on which you lie; I will give it to you.”(v13;)

“and you shall spread out to the west

to the east and to the north and to the south.” (v14;)

“and will bring you back to this land.” (v15;)

Jacob saw the significance of the place, too,
for he immediately narrowed his thinking to
the awesomeness of the place where he lay:

**“surely the LORD is in this place,
and I did not know it.” (v16;)**

“How awesome is this place!

**This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gate of heaven.” (v17;)**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Later on in his life Jacob looked back upon this vision, still realizing the manner in which God signified the special nature of that place:-

“I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.” (Genesis 31:13;)

Jacob prayed for protection as he went forward, based upon the promise of God in the vision at Bethel:

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

“Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and attack me, mother with children. **For YOU SAID,** “I will surely prosper you, and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.” (Genesis 32:11-12;)

As Jacob, in obedience to this command, approached the land of promise, he received a report that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. (Gen 32:6;)

These statements of God and Jacob fit together nicely, especially in the light of the context of the vision.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Jacob was about to leave the land of promise for a twenty year sojourn in Paddan aram.

He might be tempted never to return to this land again.

By means of this dramatic vision, God impressed Jacob with the significance of this land.

It was the place where heaven and earth met. It was the place where God would come down to man and where men would find access to God.

It was, as Jacob asserted, "the gate of heaven."

Throughout those twenty years Jacob would never forget this dream.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

**He would realize that ultimately,
to be in the will of God,
he must be in the place of God's choosing,
the land of promise.**

**It was in the land that God's blessings
would be poured out upon God's people.
While Jacob must leave, he must surely return.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Eagerly the Israelites must have read this record.

**The books of the Law were written by Moses
and thus must have been completed
before his death and before
the entrance of Israel into the promised land.**

**What a sense of anticipation the Israelites
must have had as they looked across the
river Jordan knowing that, in some special way,
God's presence was to be revealed in that place.**

**The experience on Mount Sinai
must surely gave substance to this hope.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

**In the first chapter of John's gospel
Jesus had invited Philip to follow him. (1:43;)**

**Philip likewise sought out Nathanael,
assuring him that he had found the Messiah.**

**This Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth. (John 1:45;)
Nathanael wondered at how the Messiah **could**
come from such a place as Nazareth. (John 1:46;)**

**When Jesus saw Nathanael coming,
He identified him as **a man**
"in whom is no guile." (John 1:47;)**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Further, **Jesus** indicated that He had **seen Nathanael** while he was **“under the fig tree.”** (John 1:47;)

This was **enough to convince Nathanael** that **Philip** was right, **Jesus was the Messiah!**

Our Lord did not stop at this, however. While commending his belief, He went on to give even greater revelation concerning Himself:

Jesus said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” (John 1:51;)

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

Nathanael had put too much stock in a place.

How could Messiah come from Nazareth?

Jesus had been born in Bethlehem.

God had revealed Himself to man in Israel.

**But while Jacob had focused upon the ground,
the place where the ladder was situated.**

**Jesus drew Nathanael's attention
to the ladder itself.**

He, Jesus of Nazareth, was the ladder.

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

**It was not the place where the ladder stood
which was now most important
but the person who was the ladder.**

**Jacob saw God above the ladder;
Jesus revealed God (Jesus) as the ladder.**

**It was Jesus Christ who bridged the gap
between heaven and earth.**

**It is through Him that God has come down to man.
It is through Him that man will have access to God.**

**Jacob saw what he needed to see at that moment in his life.
Jesus revealed to Nathanael
that there was much more to be seen
than what Jacob had seen in his day.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

God's Plan Unfolding.

**The promise which is given to Jacob
is essentially the same one
which was given to Abraham and to Isaac.**

God Promises a Land and a Saviour through:
Abraham.
Isaac.
Jacob.

Abraham	Isaac	Jacob
<p>“I am God Almighty.” (Gen 17:1;)</p>	<p>“I am the God of your father Abraham.” (Gen 26:24;)</p>	<p>“I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.” (Gen 28:13;)</p>
<p>“For all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants Forever.” (Gene 13:15.)</p>	<p>“For to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands.” (Gen 26:3;)</p>	<p>“The land on which you lie, I will give it to you and To your descendants.” (Gen 28:13;)</p>
<p>“And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth.” (Gen 13:16;)</p>	<p>“And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven.” (Gen 26:4;)</p>	<p>“Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth.” (Gen 28:14;)</p>
<p>“And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen 12:3;)</p>	<p>“And by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen 26:4;)</p>	<p>“And in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen 28:14;)</p>
<p>“Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you.” (Gen 15:1;)</p>	<p>“Do not fear, for I am with you.” (Gen 26:24.)</p>	<p>“And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go.” (Gen 28:15;)</p>

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

However, there are also some differences. Isaac had been told by God to stay in the land (Gen 26:2;) Jacob, on the other hand, is told that the **Lord will be with him** and shall accompany him on his extended **journey out of the land** and that ultimately **he shall be brought back** to the land of promise.

This is to be the basis of Jacob's believing all of the earlier promises. The reason he can believe that he will receive the inheritance of land from which he is presently fleeing and that **his descendants shall be as numerous as the dust.**

When he hasn't even a wife and that his descendants shall be a blessing to all of the families of the earth **DESPITE** having **stolen a blessing** from his own brother **God WILL be with him.**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

This is what the vision of the ladder is all about.

It is a sign that God is with him.

It is not there for God's sake.

It is there for Jacob's sake.

The miracle is not that there was a ladder.

The miracle was that Jacob could SEE the ladder.

It was that Jacob

could see the manner in which

God had communicated Himself to men.

Jacob's Declaration. Gen 28:18-22;

Jacob's response to this dramatic disclosure of the divine purposes and promises of God can be summarized by three statements.

Jacob Set Up a Pillar.

“So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on its top. And he called the name of the place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz.” (Genesis 28:18-19;)

The pillar was to serve as a memorial. It marked a place to which he would return to build an altar and worship God.

Jacob's Declaration. Gen 28:18-22;

Jacob Made a Profession of Faith.

Then Jacob made a vow, saying,

“If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father's house in safety, then the LORD will be my God.” (Gen 28:20-21;)

Some are inclined to view the “ifs” of these words as evidence of Jacob's bargaining nature.

It is as though **Jacob is striking a deal with God.**

While **Jacob's faith is certainly immature** at this point, It is more likely that the “ifs” are **more in the sense of “since.”**

Jacob's Declaration. Gen 28:18-22;

Jacob Made a Promise.

“This memorial pillar will become a place for worshiping God, and I will give God a tenth of everything he gives me.”

(Genesis 28:22;)

Jacob planned to return, consistent with the thrust of the vision he had seen.

At that time he would build an altar and give a tithe to God.

While the Scriptures record the building of the altar. (35:7;)

No reference can be found to the giving of the tithe.

It may be, however, that this tithe was involved in the sacrifices which would be offered upon the altar.

Some lessons we can learn.

This chapter has some very sobering lessons for us as parents.

Isaac's apathy in the matter of instructing his sons may sound uncomfortably familiar.

In addition to this we find Isaac's love to be based upon Esau's performance.

Isaac "loved Esau because," we are told. (25:28;)

Interestingly, in this same verse we are told only that Rebekah loved Jacob. No conditions are expressed.

Some lessons we can learn.

Both Jacob and Esau illustrate the futility of scheming and self effort in achieving divine acceptance.

Look at the insecurity of Esau.

Here was a 77-year-old man, still desperately trying to win the love and approval of his father - and with good reason, for his father loved on the basis of his performance.

Then, also, it would seem that as a favoured son Esau was pampered by his father.

Nowhere are we ever told of the discipline of either of Isaac's sons.

Some lessons we can learn.

Discipline, as the Bible repeatedly informs us,
is one **manifestation of genuine love.**
(cf. Proverbs 3:12; 13:24; Hebrews 12:5 11;)

Some words of admonition and correction
in the life of **Esau** would have assured him
of his father's love. **Discipline is not**
the enemy of love but the evidence of it.

Both Jacob and Esau illustrate
the futility of scheming and self effort
in achieving divine acceptance.

Some lessons we can learn.

Esau's sincere and diligent efforts to win approval by marrying a daughter of Ishmael are worthless.

**While his sincerity is evident,
his actions do not conform
with the requirements of faith.**

**Sincere effort to please God
which is not based upon divine revelation
is folly. If you love me
you will keep my commandments.**

Some lessons we can learn.

All of Jacob's efforts to achieve the blessing of God are in vain as well.

It was only by entering into a relationship with the covenant God of Abraham and Isaac that Jacob could experience the blessings of God.

**The basis for such a relationship was the revealed word of God.
It is by resting in Him and in His Word that we can be blessed.**

Some lessons we can learn.

**Two further lessons from this text
could be pointed out.**

First, place is important.

**It surely was important so far as Jacob
was concerned. Experiencing the blessing of God
meant being in the place
where God had promised to bless.**

**We hear people say things such as, “I can worship God
just as well at the football match as I can in a church.”**

**But the Word of God tells us, “not forsaking our own
assembling together, as is the habit of some.” (Heb 10:25;)**

**There are surely certain places where
it would be difficult, even impossible,
for a Christian to contemplate on the glory of God.**

Some lessons we can learn.

Second, a profession of faith does not mean our immediate **entrance** into blissful experiences and **rose petal strewn pathways.**

For **twenty years** after this conversion experience **Jacob** was to live **away from** his mother and father, **away from** the land of promise.

For **twenty years** **Jacob** was to be administered a large dose of his own medicine, **dealt out by an uncle** who was even more deceitful than **Jacob.**

Entering into a relationship with God does not **Guarantee** only good times and happy experiences; **but it does assure us of the forgiveness of sins,** **the hope of eternal life,** and **the presence of God in our everyday lives.**

Jacob Finds Laban. Gen 29:1-30;

**Jacob met Laban's daughter, Rachel,
at a well outside of Haran. (29:1-12)**

**He watered her flock and told her
that he was Rebekah's son.**

Laban welcomed Jacob into his household

Jacob's Journey to Mesopotamia. (Bethel to Haran.)



I Led Two Wives. Gen 29:1-30;

Introduction There is a story which has the ring of truth to it.
A classic car lover was looking for **a particular model** of car.

In the normal course of his scanning the newspaper, he saw an advert that seemed impossible to believe. Just the car he wanted was advertised, but for a mere £100. Knowing the car should have sold for thousands, he concluded that the car was either in a bits, or there was a misprint.

Finally his curiosity got the best of him and he called. A woman answered the phone and assured him that the car was in excellent shape and that there was no mistake about the price.

With **the scent of a bargain** in the air the car connoisseur **hurried over to investigate.**

I Led Two Wives. Gen 29:1-30;

To his delight the car proved to be everything the woman reported it to be. It was beautiful.

Of course he told her that he would take it - for £100. Twinges of guilt finally became so strong that the man had to confess to the woman,

“I have to tell you that this car is worth far more than £100. You should get much more than that for this car.”

**“Oh, I know that,” she replied,
“but you see my husband has left me
to run off with his secretary.”**

**“He sent me the log book for the car
and told me to sell it and send him the money.
That’s what I intend to do with the £100.”**

I Led Two Wives. Gen 29:1-30;

It is difficult to hear a story like this **without Savouring the taste of poetic justice that it contains.**

Most of us get that same feeling when we read Genesis 29. **Jacob, the double dealer, gets a double deal. Jacob, the deceiver, gets outwitted by his uncle Laban.**

We suppose that **Leah** was some kind of **defective model** of womanhood who should have been subject to a factory recall!

We are **amused** to find that **Jacob** has to spend the rest of his life stuck with her, although he finally does get to marry the girl he loves.

I Led Two Wives. Gen 29:1-30;

But we need to challenge much of our interpretation of this chapter, For it does NOT seem that our conclusions fit the facts, only our desire to watch Jacob get what he deserves.

There is that element, of course, but it is not the main theme of the story.

Let us approach this episode in the life of Jacob with a view to the gracious dealings of God in the life of this patriarch to be.

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

Jacob left Bethel with a lightness in his step and a new lease on life. Literally, the text here reads, “Then Jacob lifted up his feet . . .”

Before his encounter with God, he could only refer to his father’s God as “your God.” (27:20;) Now, Yahweh was Jacob’s God. (28:21).

He had seen the vision of the ladder from heaven and heard the promise of God of His presence, provision, and protection.

He had the assurance of his return to the land and the blessings of Abraham. (28:10 17;)

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

**There was a new sense of direction,
a new hope, and a new meaning to life.**

He was still going on to Haran, but God was with him.

“Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east. And he looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying here beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks.”

“Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large. When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well, and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well.”

(Genesis 29:1-3;)

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

As he approached Haran, **Jacob**
came upon a well which was in a field.

It was **a different well**, from that **one** to which
the servant of Abraham came. (Genesis 24:11;)

That well was **a spring located outside the city**
to which the women came to draw drinking water.
(24:11-13;)

The well to which Jacob came was one in a field
well away from the city, and it was more of
a cistern from which the cattle drank directly.

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

**This well was covered by a large stone,
which tended to keep it from
being polluted or filled with sand.**

Perhaps more importantly,
**it restricted the use of that well to particular times
and only to authorized persons.**

The shepherds, perhaps young lads,
sat about the well waiting for the time
when they could water their sheep.

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

Jacob engaged these shepherds in conversation:

And Jacob said to them,

“My brothers, **where are you from?**”

And they said, “**We are from Haran.**”

And he said to them, “**Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?**” And they said, “**We know him.**”

And he said to them, “**Is it well with him?**”

And they said, “**It is well, and behold, Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep.**”

(Genesis 29:4-6;)

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

Jacob wanted to learn how far he was from his destination. **The shepherds' response told him he was very near to Haran.**

His question about Laban's welfare was not academic. **He had a vital interest in the present state of affairs in Laban's family.**

To some degree, the success of his journey could be measured by the shepherds' reply.

To Jacob's relief Laban was doing well, and, more than this, he had a daughter who was to arrive at the well soon. It was best to wait for her to be directed to Laban's home.

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

In the meantime, Jacob inquired about a matter which struck him as quite unusual:

And he said, “Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. **Water the sheep, and go pasture them.**” But they said, “**We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep.**”
(Genesis 29:7-8;)

The sheep would not be gathered in for the night until much later, as it was still early in the day.

It made little sense to Jacob for these shepherds to be sitting about the well waiting until later to water their sheep **when they could water them now and take them back to pasture for several hours.**

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

The practical thing to do was to water the sheep now and not to wait until later.

The shepherds were not at all impressed by the question or to be informed as to the care of sheep. Indeed, his question may have seemed foolish to them.

Of course Jacob was right. Even these boys knew that sheep grew faster grazing on the grassland rather than standing about the well where the grass had long before been consumed.

However, the well was not, it seems, to be used at their convenience.

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

**A well was a valuable resource,
much as an oil well would be today.**

**As such, it had to belong to somebody,
and that person would decide how and when
the well was to be used, and probably at what price.**

**The agreement between
the well owner and the shepherds seems
to be that the well could be used once a day.**

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

The shepherds must first be gathered at the well with their flocks. Then the owner or his hired servants ("**they,**" **verse 8**) would roll the large stone away and the sheep could be watered, perhaps in the order that the flocks arrived.

This would explain why the shepherds and their flocks were there so early.

In this way, **what was most profitable** (this is what Jacob's question was getting at) **was not practical.**

But the owner's stipulations must be adhered to.

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

During the course of this conversation Rachel arrived. With this, Jacob had little interest in the shepherd boys, for she was a relative and a lovely young girl:

“While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father’s sheep, for she was a shepherdess.”

“And it came about, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother’s brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother’s brother, that Jacob went up, and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the flock of Laban his mother’s brother.”

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

**“Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept.
And Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father
and that he was Rebekah’s son,
and she ran and told her father.”
(Genesis 29:9-12;)**

**It is interesting the sequence of events
that occurred when Jacob and Rachel met.**

**We would have expected Jacob
to introduce himself first,
then to kiss her, and finally to water her sheep.
Just the reverse is reported.**

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

**First Jacob watered the sheep of Laban,
casting aside any consideration
of what he had been told by the shepherds.**

**Then he kissed her the first instance of “kissing cousins.”
Finally, he introduced himself as her relative.**

**In the New International Version the translators
attempt to correct this seeming lack of etiquette
by translating verse 13;**

“He had told Rachel that he was a relative . . .”

**Perhaps so, but not necessarily.
The text does not demand such a translation.**

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

If this order of events is correct,
Jacob cast all convention aside,
and **Rachel might have been somewhat**
swept off her feet by such a romantic gesture.

All of this, is reading considerably
between the lines. And **so the two have met.**

It may not have been “**love at first sight,**”
but it could have been.

The meeting of these two **sets the stage**
for the next phase of their relationship.

Jacob Serves Laban.

After a month, Laban offered to pay Jacob for his work. (29:15;)

Jacob said he would serve Laban 7 years in exchange for his daughter, Rachel.

The 7 years seemed very short to Jacob because of his love for Rachel.

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

When **Rachel ran home** with her report of **meeting Jacob**, **Laban** was **quick to respond**:

“So it came about, when **Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister’s son**, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him and **kissed him**, and brought him to his house.”

“Then **Jacob related to Laban** all these things. And **Laban said** to him, “**Surely you are my bone and my flesh.**” And he stayed with him a month.”
(Genesis 29:13-14;)

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Laban's greeting suggests no more than the fact that **he extended the normal hospitality** which should have been expected, **especially for a near relative.**

Jacob, we are told,
“related to Laban all these things.” (29:13;)
We might wonder what **“these things”** were?

We should reasonably expect that Jacob reported about his family and their health.

Primarily, **Laban would have wished to know about his sister Rebekah.**

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Jacob could also have **reported** the events which led to his journey to Paddan aram, **including the deception of his father.**

We would imagine that Jacob would also have mentioned that **he came to seek a wife.**

This report was sufficient for **Laban** to be **convinced** that **Jacob** was who he claimed to be and, therefore, **a near relation to him.**

This close proximity of relationship was not without its significance to Laban, later events will suggest this more convincingly.

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Jacob's month long stay with Laban had at least two results.

First, it brought Jacob and Rachel into close contact and helped to kindle a deep affection for each other. Jacob now had a reason to stay with Laban.

As for Laban, this month proved Jacob to be a most valuable worker.

While Jacob possessed nothing but the promise of future wealth and blessing, he was a good worker

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

He would make a fine son in law
and **could stay on to work** for Laban
in place of the traditional dowry.

This month brought **both Laban and Jacob**
to the conclusion that **a continuing relationship**
between them could be of mutual advantage.

Jacob was penniless in a day and an age
when **a woman would be entitled to a dowry.**
And so, he agreed to **work for his Uncle Laban**
for a period of seven years.

Those seven years seemed to him
but a few days because of his love for her.
(Genesis 29:20;)

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Then Laban said to Jacob, “Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?”
(Genesis 29:15;)

While Laban is not reported to have any sons at this point in time, he did have an older daughter, who was to play a crucial role in the events that were to follow:

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

So Jacob has arrived in Haran, meets up with his Uncle Laban. He also meets up with Uncle Laban's two daughters and he falls head over heels in love with the younger Rachael.

Apparently, Rachael was good looking. Jacob found her gorgeous. The Bible tells us that she was beautiful of form and face. Gen 29:17;

By contrast, we read that Leah's eyes were weak. (29:17;) Possibly it is NOT speaking of her lack of 20/20 vision or that she needed glasses. Nor is it another way to say someone is an "eye sore."

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Few women have been so misunderstood as Leah.
**Even her name does her a great disservice,
for it means “wild cow.”**

First, the word rendered “weak” (rak)
is never used in a demeaning way.

Never is the term used with reference to any defect.

For example, in Genesis 18:7; **Moses used this word,**
and there it is translated **“tender.”**

“Abraham also ran to the herd, and **took a tender
and choice calf,** and gave it to the servant;
and he hurried to prepare it.” (emphasis added)

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Moses used the word again in **Gen 33:13**;
with reference to the young children,
who were **too frail to be hurried**:

“But he said to him, ‘My lord knows that **the children are frail** and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die.’”

If we are to take the **word rak**, which is rendered “**weak**” in **29:17**;, in its normal sense, then, **we cannot think in terms of defect, but delicacy.**

In **contrast with Rachel**, who may have had fire or a **sparkle** in her eyes, **Leah had gentle eyes**

Jacob's Departure and His Dream. Gen 28:10-17;

We must also consider the meaning of the term **“eyes.”** Strange as it may seem, this word used for the physical organs of sight **often refers to much more than the physical eye.**

It also depicts one's character, just as the expression **“kidneys,”** **refers to human emotions and thoughts.**
(cf. Psalm 7:9; 16:7; 26:2; Revelation 2:23;)

In the Old Testament, then, we find these kinds of **references to the eyes:-**

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

“And you shall consume all the peoples whom the LORD your God will deliver to you; **your eye shall not pity them, neither shall you serve their gods, for that would be a snare to you.” (Deut 7:16;)**

Perhaps the most interesting use of the word “eye” is in two verses, both of which contain the word “eye” and the word “refined.” (Hebrew, rak):

“The man who is refined and very delicate among you shall be **hostile toward {lit. his eye shall be evil toward, margin, NASV} his brother and toward the wife he cherishes and toward the rest of his children who remain. (Deut 28:54;)**

Love at First Sight. Gen 29:1-12;

“The **refined and delicate woman** among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground for delicateness and refinement, shall be **hostile** toward {lit. **her eye shall be evil to ward**, margin, NASV} the husband she cherishes and toward her son and daughter.” (Deut 28:56;)

It is an established fact that the **eyes are used** in the Old and New Testament as “**showing mental qualities**” such as **arrogance, humility, mockery, and pity.**

This sense that **the eyes of Leah** are spoken of. In connection with the word **rak**, **we would conclude that the attitude of Leah was one of gentleness and tenderness.**

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Rachel seems to have had a more fiery and aggressive temperament. Regardless of whether or not this is the right conclusion, the idea of defect in Leah is highly suspect and without precedent in the scriptural use of these terms.

Rachel is characterized only by her physical attractiveness.

She was “beautiful of form and face.” (Gen 29:17;)

Moses may be drawing our attention to this fact because it was the major source of attraction for Jacob.

There seems to be, then, a significant contrast here between Rachel and Rebekah, Isaacs wife.

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Rebekah was selected for Isaac by Abraham's servant on the basis of divine guidance and because of **personal qualities** which assured him that she would be a fine wife for Isaac.

Rachel, on the other hand, was selected by Jacob for himself, but without any mention of her personal qualities, only a description of her beauty.

Rebekah's beauty was an additional plus, an **unexpected fringe benefit**; **Rachel's beauty** was **the essence** of her selection. **The red warning lights should already be flashing in our minds.**

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

It has been said that the reason most women would rather have beauty than brains is because most men can see better than they can think.

That was the situation in Jacob's case. He fell in love with Rachael on the spot and did not give Leah another look.

He entered into marital negotiations with her father to obtain her hand in marriage.

Seven Years Till Wedding Night. Gen 29:13-20;

Some suppose that at **77 years of age** Jacob could have cared less about waiting 7 years to marry.

The point of Gen 29:20; is that **Rachel was well worth the high price which Jacob had agreed to pay for her**, a price measured in years of service rather than £££.

Jacob's statement to Laban in the next verse strongly implies that **he was eager and anxious to consummate the marriage for which he had long waited.**

Jacob is Deceived.

After 7 years, Laban deceived Jacob and gave him Leah instead of Rachel. (29:23;)

After a week, Laban gave him Rachel also.

Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah.

He served Laban another 7 years for Rachel.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Then Jacob said to Laban,
“Give me my wife, for my time
is completed, that I may go in to her.” (Gen 29:21;)

It is difficult to read this verse without concluding
that there was a great deal of romantic passion
in that 77-year-old man.

His physical desire for Rachel is certainly to be expected.

Ironically, it is this physical appetite,
much like Isaac's desire for wild game. 25:28; 27:3-4;
that caused Jacob to act too hastily
and bind himself to a life long commitment.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

“And Laban gathered all the men of the place, and made a feast. Now it came about in the evening that he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her.

Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid.

So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban:-

“What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?”

(Genesis 29:22-25;)

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

It is with **great discretion that Moses** has **described this most delicate and intimate matter.**

Where **Hollywood** would have inserted pages of elaboration **Moses has given us a parenthetical statement about the maid which Laban gave his daughter.**

We must therefore deal with this subject in a manner which is consistent with the emphasis of the text and with standards of righteousness.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Weddings in that day involved celebration that make our weddings tame by comparison. We are accustomed to the wedding ceremony followed by a reception.

In that day, the reception could last from several days up to a week.

There was singing and there was celebration and there was honey mooning.

For seven years Jacob had waited for this day.

His eagerness is natural and normal.

At the feast Jacob may have had sufficient wine to somewhat dull his senses.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

The guests would be aware of his entrance into the tent (and the matrimonial bed where Leah waited) and also of his exit, thus indicating that the marriage had been consummated by the union of the bride and groom.

(cf. Judges 14:10 15:2; Psalm 19:5;)

The **same passion** which **dominated Jacob** as he chose his bride now ruled as he entered into that tent. It is hardly a wonder that Jacob should have made the mistake that he did.

When the next morning came, Jacob awoke.
What a beautiful day! What a wonderful night!
What an exciting future!

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

What a shock as the sunlight burst into the tent to reveal that **the woman in his arms was Leah, not Rachel!**

What irony that Jacob should repeat the **identical words of Pharaoh to Abraham. (12:18;)** and almost the same expression of **Abimelech to Abraham. (20:9;)** & **Abimelech to Isaac. (26:10;)**

“What is this you have done to me?”

While it is not recorded, it is easy to believe that Isaac also asked this of Jacob after his great deception.

**Jacob the trickster had been tricked.
Jacob the heel-grabber had been tripped up.**

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Laban had slipped in the wrong daughter in the makings of this three-way romantic triangle.

Laban was not taken back by Jacob's rebuke.

He had probably planned his response to this question long before this confrontation took place.

But Laban said, "It is not the practice in our place, to marry off the younger before the first born."

"Complete the bridal week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years."

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

**“And Jacob did so and completed her week,
and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.**

**Laban also gave his maid Bilhah
to his daughter Rachel as her maid.”**

**“So Jacob went in to Rachel also,
and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah,
and he served with Laban for another seven years.”**

(Genesis 29:26-30;)

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Fewer passages contain more lessons for living than this chapter. Let me suggest some of these under several headings.

The Consequences of Sin.

Previously we have noted that **one of the consequences of the sin** of Jacob's deceiving Isaac was his **physical and emotional separation from those he loved.**

A second consequence is the moral parallel to Newton's law of motion:
Every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

In our Lord's words,
"... all those who take up the sword shall perish by the sword." (Matthew 26:52;)

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Jacob chose to get ahead in life by means of deception. Jacob learned the sad lesson that those who seek to deceive shall be deceived

The tragedy of this chapter is that all that took place was unnecessary. All we need to do is to contrast the acquisition of Rachel with that of Rebekah.

The resources of Abraham made it possible for Isaac to have a wife in a very short period of time. (24:54ff;)

One reason for this was the fact that the servant had the dowry from the riches of Abraham, Isaac's father.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

One of the consequences of Jacob's sin was that he had to leave Canaan, to flee empty handed.

Since Jacob sinned, he was separated from the wealth of his father and had only the work of his own hands.

The fourteen years of Jacob's labour would have been unnecessary, had it not been for his deception of Isaac. Perhaps Isaac sent Jacob away without any of his wealth to teach him the value of hard work.

Or perhaps it was to force Jacob to stay away a long time by working for a wife. This we do not know, but it does seem that **this 14-year delay was unnecessary and purely **the result** of sin. **What a price to pay!****

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

The Grace of God! Some may view the events of this chapter as **God's getting even with Jacob.**

Others would merely interpret them as a kind of poetic justice which is true in a way.

But there is more, we can understand them as an evidence of the marvellous grace of God at work in the life of Jacob.

God did not allow these events to happen to punish Jacob but to instruct him.

Punishment has been born by our Saviour on the cross, but discipline is the corrective training which furthers us on the path leading to godliness.

(Hebrews 12;)

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Jacob learned the value of convention.

The agreement which regulated the use of the well.
(Gen 29:2-3, 7-8;) **Seemed to mean little to Jacob.**

In the excitement of meeting Rachel **he decided to use the well regardless of the rules for its use.** He may also have disregarded some conventions in the way that he **greeted Rachel.** (Gen 29:10-12;)

He certainly **chose to disregard the convention of marrying the first born first.**

Laban was not telling Jacob anything new but **reminding him of something that could not, and should not, be taken lightly or disregarded.**

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

In addition to all this, **Jacob experienced the grace of God in the delay of 14 plus years.**

It was **this delay** which contributed to the preservation of Jacob's life by **keeping him away from the anger of Esau, who had planned to kill him.**

Amazingly, **the grace of God** was manifested in this event **by the gift of Leah as a wife to Jacob.**

This is probably **the last thought to cross our minds,** but I believe that **it is worthy of consideration.**

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

First, we must acknowledge that,
in the providence of God (and in spite of the
deceptiveness of Laban), **Leah was Jacob's wife.**

Notice, it was Leah, not Rachel,
who became the mother of Judah, who was to be
the heir through whom the Messiah would come.
(Gen 49:8-12;)

Also it was Levi, a son of Leah,
who provided the priestly line in later years.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

It seems noteworthy that both **Leah** and her handmaid had at least **twice the number of children** as compared to **Rachel and her maid.**

(Gen 29:31; 30:24; 46:15,18,22,25;)

The firstborn was always to have a double portion; and so it would seem **Leah did,** so far as children are concerned.

One final factor remains which shows the superiority of **Leah to Rachel.**

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Rachel dies at an early age, yet she was the younger sister. When she died, she was buried on the way to Bethlehem. (35:19;)

When Leah died later, she was buried with Jacob in the cave at Machpelah. (49:31;)
Leah was not a blight to Jacob but a blessing.

There is no doubt but what Jacob was guided more by his hormones than any other factor.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

He did not pray about this matter, so far as we are told. He did not give any consideration to matters of character. He did not seek counsel.

In fact, he sought to overturn the customs of the day and the preferences of Laban.

We live in a very romantically-oriented day. We find ourselves cheering for Rachel and booing Leah.

God seems to have been on the other side.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

What is romantic is not always right, often it is wrong. Romanticism caused Jacob to use the well when and how he saw fit, regardless of the rules set by the owner.

Romanticism led Jacob to chose Rachel, not Leah.

Romanticism so controlled Jacob that under its spell he spent an entire night with the wrong woman.

We must beware of those decisions which are ruled only by our feelings or romantic impressions or selfish desires.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

Beauty:- Few things are as important to women today as beauty.

Perhaps nothing is more important to men today than beauty.

Rachel was a wonderfully-endowed woman.

There is nothing wrong with that.

Sarah was beautiful, and so was **Rebekah**.

But outward beauty must always be considered a secondary consideration.

Jacob looked at **Rachel's** exterior and investigated no further into her character.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

“Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain,
But a woman who fears the LORD,
she shall be praised.” (Proverbs 31:30;)

This same theme is prominent
in the New Testament.
(I Timothy 2:9-10; I Peter 3:1 6;)

Our society has placed a premium
on **glamour and beauty**. Much of our sense
of **self worth** is based upon
our outward attractiveness and “sex appeal.”

However, that is the wrong emphasis.
Our ultimate worth is that estimation which comes from God.

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:21-30;

**God was not impressed with Rachel's good looks.
God looked upon the heart and blessed Leah.**

**Her worth, while never fully realized
by her husband, was great in the eyes of God.**

**May all of us learn to be content with ourselves
as God made us, and may we find
our real worth in the realm of the spirit.**

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 men sees,
for man looks at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.”**

(I Samuel 16:7;) See also 1 Cor 4:7;

Shock at First Light. Gen 29:31-30::

As we read of Jacob's life during these years,
**we find ourselves wondering
what God is doing in his life.**

We read of his growing prosperity
and **we are not quite sure if it is God that
is blessing him** or if his success
is the **result of his own conniving and scheming.**

We read of **no ladders from heaven.**

We see **no altars being built.**

There are **no messages from the Almighty.**
It is almost as though **heaven has grown silent.**

The Battle of the Brides. Gen 29:21-30:24;;

A Study of Love, Sex, Marriage, and Children.

The story of **Jacob's marriage and family life** leaves a great deal to be desired.

In fact, our passage reads **much like a modern day soap opera.**

The story told is one of **competition between two women and their maids, which results in Jacob being shuttled from bedroom to bedroom, tent to tent.**

Modern day soap operas deal with a very similar kind of plot.

However, **God's "soap" is not intended to encourage us to think sinful thoughts or to commit illicit acts but rather to "clean up our own acts" and to live righteously before Him.**

The Battle of the Brides. Gen 29:21-30:24;;

Let us remember that **Jacob is**, at this point in time, **living outside the land of promise.**

While God has promised His presence, protection, and provision, He is also at work in Jacob's life to purge out many of the sinful patterns that have characterized him in the past.

Consequently, while God is with Jacob, all does not go well with him in these days.

The Battle of the Brides. Gen 29:21-30:24;;

Many of the consequences of his previous sins catch up with him. His choice of Rachel on primarily physical grounds and his insistence that he have her, even after he has married Leah, leads to a most distressing home and family life.

As we approach this passage, we need to be aware of the fact that Moses has not **arranged the events chronologically but topically.**

With only a little simple mathematics we can quickly see that **too many children are born** in these verses to have been born one after the other.

There must be some overlap in the births

The Battle of the Brides. Gen 29:21-30:24;;

It becomes apparent that in **the history of the births,**
the intention to arrange them according to
the mothers prevails over the chronological order.

So that it by no means follows, that **because the**
passage, 'when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob
no children,' occurs after **Leah had four sons.**

Therefore it was not till **after**
the birth of Leah's fourth child that
Rachel became aware of her own barrenness.

By arranging the births as he has, Moses
enables us to feel more intensely **the division**
and competition between Leah and Rachel.

The Battle of the Brides. Gen 29:21-30:24;;

We read these verses like someone watching a tennis match, we look first at the one contestant, then at the other, and so on.

That is just the way this account is written so that we might be able to identify with these two women, both of whom desperately want to be assured of Jacob's love and affection.

In her early years of child rearing we find Leah at the high point of her spiritual life. God's loving intervention in her life is evident to her, and she gratefully acknowledges it:

Leah Longs for Love. Gen 29:21-31:35;;

Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, **“Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.”** (Gen 29:31-32;)

What a pathetic predicament Leah is in. She is married to a man who never wanted her for a wife and who refuses to give her the love she desperately needs.

God lovingly reached out to Leah by giving her a much desired son, Reuben. Reuben means something like “see, a son.” (margin, NASV.)

It was a great joy for Leah to be able to provide Jacob with a man child, who would become his heir.

Leah Longs for Love. Gen 29:21-31:35;;

This child kindled Leah's hope of being loved by Jacob, whose love for Rachel was so strong that he hardly acknowledged Leah's existence.

The barrenness of Rachel at least drove Jacob to the tent of Leah to provide himself with sons who would prosper him.

Leah's hopes for a small portion of Jacob's affection were not realized, as is seen by her response to her second son's birth:

**Then she conceived again and bore a son and said,
"Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved,
He has therefore given me this son also."
So she named him Simeon. (Genesis 29:33;)**

Leah Longs for Love. Gen 29:21-31:35;;

No change in Jacob's attitudes or actions had been seen by Leah, and so when the second son was born she acknowledged the child as the tender response of a loving God Who knew the very thoughts of her heart.

The name Simeon, "he hears," gave testimony to Leah's awareness of the grace of her God.

With the birth of her third son, Leah's hope for Jacob's tenderness and affection was once again aroused:

She conceived again and bore a son and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore he was named Levi (Genesis 29:34;)

Leah Longs for Love. Gen 29:21-31:35;;

Two things have changed since the birth of Reuben, the firstborn. First, Leah has now provided Jacob with three sons, not just one.

The mere quantity of children she has borne should impress Jacob with her value to him, especially since Rachel had produced none.

Second, her hopes have become much more realistic. She no longer aspires to the high level of love which Jacob had for Rachel but merely for the attachment which any man should have for a wife who is so fruitful.

Leah Longs for Love. Gen 29:21-31:35;;

If we understand her words correctly,
the attachment which Leah desires
is not so much that of affection but of obligation.

How can Jacob not feel more kindly toward her
because of these sons she has given him?

While three sons did little to change Jacob's heart,
the birth of the fourth was the occasion
for **Leah's most devout expression of praise and**
thanksgiving toward the God Who had heard her prayers:

“Leah conceived again and bore a son and said,
“This time I will praise the LORD.”
Therefore she named him Judah.
Then she stopped bearing.” (Gen 29:35;)

Leah Longs for Love. Gen 29:21-31:35;;

Previously, **Leah had been grateful to God** for the children He had given, but uppermost in her thoughts was the effect this might have upon Jacob.

She sought his love so desperately.

The **pinnacle of Leah's piety** was that point at which she came to recognize that **to be loved and led by God** was a far greater thing than to be loved by any man.

While **Jacob's affection** was still something she greatly desired, **she was content with the abundant love of God.**

In Him she was abundantly blessed. **To Him** she would give praise. And thus it was that **the name Judah**, which, in effect, meant **"praise the Lord,"** was given the fourth son.

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

Praising God was easy for **Leah with four sons at her side;** however, seeing her sister's blessing only **aroused jealousy in Rachel:**

“Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.”

Then **Jacob's anger burned against Rachel,** and he said, **“Am I in the place of God who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?”** (Genesis 30:1-2;)

On this occasion **neither Rachel nor Jacob** responded in what could be called **a pious manner.**

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

Rachel, desperately jealous of Leah's fruitfulness,
demanded children of Jacob.

Rather than recognize her barrenness
as coming from the hand of God,
she sought to shift the blame to Jacob.

It was all his fault, she insisted.
Jacob did not respond well to this kind of demand.
Jacob's attitude is suspect.

His hot response seems far removed
from true **righteous** indignation.
I think it was much more one of outrage:

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

“Don't blame me for your barrenness, Rachel, blame God.” Her demand struck hard at Jacob's virility and male ego, so Jacob struck back just as fiercely.

The fact that he employed spiritual language and used God to rebuke her does not mean that his spirit was right in what he did. We often employ pious words to cut people to the quick.

Like Rachel, Rebekah had been barren, but Isaac's response was quite different from Jacob's.

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

Isaac prayed on behalf of Rebekah,
and on his behalf God gave his wife children
(Genesis 25:21;)

No such prayers are mentioned here,
nor are we told that God answered the prayers
of Jacob. **We are only told that God heard**
the petitions of the wives. (30:17,22;)

Elkanah gave Hannah special treatment
and tenderness because of her inability
to bear children, (I Samuel 1:5,8;)
but no such gentleness characterizes Jacob.

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

While we are told that **Jacob** had a **great love** for **Rachel** 29:18-20,30; it is **not very evident** at this **difficult time** in **Rachel's life**.

Her jealousy implies that she **lacks assurance** of **Jacob's love**. She fears not having children, and because of that **she makes a desperate proposal**:

And she said, "Here is **my maid Bilhah**, go in to her that she may bear on my knees, that **through her I too may have children.**"

So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife,
and **Jacob went in to her.**

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

Bilhah conceived and bore a son. Then **Rachel** said,

“**God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son.**”

Therefore **she named him Dan.** (Genesis 30:3-6;)

There are **definite similarities** between this proposal and **that of Sarai** in Genesis 16;

Each intended to adopt the child born from the union of her husband and her maid, but here the similarity stops.

Sarai made her proposal at a time when **Abram had no children.** (16:1;)
While **Jacob already had several sons through Leah** before **Rachel's proposal.**

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

While Sarai's proposal came from circumstances which seemed to demand desperate measures.

Rachel's demand stemmed from her own pride and jealousy. She must have children of her own, and she would take any steps necessary to get them.

The results were as Rachel had hoped, and her response to the birth of this boy sounded most spiritual.

One would think that Rachel had done a most wonderful and sacrificial thing in giving her maid to Jacob.

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

Her words were intended to give credit to God for all that she and He had accomplished together.

The name **Dan** meant "judged." She claimed that **God** had judged the matter of **her dispute** with her sister Leah and **had sided with her as proven by the birth of this child.**

Nowhere are we told that God opened the womb of **Bilhah**, however. After all, wasn't **the birth** of a child the **natural result** of such a union?

Humanly speaking, **God would have had to intervene into the normal course of affairs** to have prevented this birth, but **Rachel was anxious to claim God on her side.**

Rachel Fumes at Leah's Fertility. Gen 30:1-8;

The statement made by Rachel on the occasion of the birth of **Bilhah's second son** is more reflective, of her true spiritual state.

Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestling I have **wrestled with my sister** and I have indeed **prevailed.**" And she named him Naphtali. (Genesis 30:7-8;)

Rachel saw herself in a great struggle, not with God, but **with her sister.**

This she described as a wrestling match which she won.

Here God is neither mentioned nor praised. Rachel is preoccupied with the contest between herself and Leah, and she claims to have won.

Leah Learns a Lesson. Gen 30:9-13;

How far Leah falls from her grateful acceptance of God's blessings in previous verses.

Rachel, while undoubtedly wrong in proposing that Jacob sleep with Bilhah, at least can be understood to have been reacting to her barrenness; but Leah already has four sons of her own.

There was no need to give her maid Zilpah to Jacob for a wife. other than the fact that this was what Rachel had done.

**Leah and Rachel are in a head to head confrontation
If Rachel can employ her maid in this contest,
so can she.**

Leah Learns a Lesson. Gen 30:9-13;

When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took **her maid Zilpah** and **gave her to Jacob** as a wife. And **Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son.**

Then Leah said, "How fortunate!"

So she named him Gad.

And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.

Then Leah said, "Happy am I!

For women will call me happy."

So she named him Asher. (Gen 30:9-13;)

Leah's speech betrays her here.

Not once is God mentioned.

Leah Learns a Lesson. Gen 30:9-13;

In the fervent heat of this **battle between two wives**, **little thought is given to the ethics** of their actions, only to the expected results.

She who **previously** had viewed her children as **a gift from a gracious and caring God** now sees these sons as merely good fortune:-
“How lucky I am,” “How fortunate,” and “How happy am I.”

Religious devotion has been thrown to the wind.
For anyone keeping score, **Leah was ahead of Rachel 4 to 2**, but that was not enough.

Now she has added two more points to the scoreboard.
However, in the process of gaining ground on her sister she has forfeited the godliness she once demonstrated.

The Purchase of a Potion. Gen 30:14-21;

The focus of Leah's thinking has shifted from God's estimation of her actions to the praise she would be given by other women. (30:13;)

Reuben's innocent discovery of an ancient "love producing potion" provided the occasion for another confrontation and contest between Jacob's two wives:

"Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

The Purchase of a Potion. Gen 30:14-21;

“But Leah said to her, “Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son’s mandrakes also?”

So Rachel said, “Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.”

“When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said,

“You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son’s mandrakes.”

So he lay with her that night. And God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.

Then Leah said, “God has given me my wages, because I gave my maid to my husband.”

So she named him Issachar. (Gen 30:14-18;)

The Purchase of a Potion. Gen 30:14-21;

Mandrakes were berries found in that part of the world which were thought to stimulate the desire for **“love making”** and also to **enhance the chances of conception.**

Leah, was more interested in these berries for the former quality, **Rachel for the latter.**

While temporarily not bearing children, **Leah’s greatest need** was to **get Jacob** into her tent where nature could take its course.

Rachel, on the other hand, had **Jacob with her nearly every night,** but she seemed **unable to become pregnant.**

The Purchase of a Potion. Gen 30:14-21;

We may **tend to be amused** at the credulity of **these women** who supposed that such a love potion would be of any benefit.

However, **before we become too smug in our sophisticated and enlightened day,** remember that **millions, perhaps billions, are spent on cosmetics each year.**

Every day the tooth paste and the perfume commercials convince us that whiter teeth or cleaner breath or a more **“come hither”** perfume will do what nothing else can to **enhance our love life.**

So you see, **things have not really changed so much over the centuries after all.**

The Purchase of a Potion. Gen 30:14-21;

What a sad state of affairs Jacob's marriage had come to. He had so failed as a husband that his wife had to resort to a form of prostitution to purchase his services as her husband.

Rachel was so lacking in faith that she put her trust in mandrakes rather than the God who made them.

Rachel, it would appear, attempted to produce sons like Jacob sought to produce sheep, by the use of magical devices. (30:37-43;)

The Purchase of a Potion. Gen 30:14-21;

Finally, Leah is reported to give birth to a sixth son and also a daughter:-

Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun. And afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah. (Genesis 30:19-21;)

The report of Dinah’s birth is intended to introduce her to us in preparation for the tragic events of Genesis 34.

Other daughters were born, (46:15;), but she is the one who receives the greatest attention.

Sons of Jacob

Leah

Reuben

Simeon

Levi

Judah

Issachar

Zebulum

Zilpah

Gad

Asher

Rachel

Bilhah

Dan

Naphtali

Genesis 30:22-24;

**“Then God remembered Rachel,
and God listened to her
and opened her womb.
She conceived and bore a son,
and said,
"God has taken away
my reproach."
So she called his name Joseph.**



Rachel is Remembered. Gen 30:22-24;

After all of Rachel's devices and schemes have been exhausted, yet without any children from her own womb,

God grants her the desire of her heart:

“Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.”

And she named him Joseph, saying, “May the LORD give me another son.” (Genesis 30:22-23;)

Prayer does not immediately occur to Rachel as the solution to her stigma of barrenness, but it does seem to be her last resort. We often leave prayer in the category of “last ditch” action.

Rachel is Remembered. Gen 30:22-24;

The name “Joseph” is significant in two ways.

The Hebrew word ‘**ASAP**’ “has taken away,” has **reference to the removal of the barrenness which had so plagued Rachel.**

A similar sounding word, ‘**YOSEP**’ “may ... add,” expresses the further **hope of Rachel that she be given the privilege of having yet another son to present to her husband.**

Sons of Jacob

Leah

Reuben

Simeon

Levi

Judah

Issachar

Zebulum

Zilpah

Gad

Asher

Rachel

Joseph

Bilhah

Dan

Naphtali



Leah also bore a daughter, Dinah.
Therefore, within seven years,
God had blessed Jacob
with at least 12 children.
Leah had borne 7, Bilhah – 2,
Zilpah – 2,
and Rachel – 1 (Joseph).

Lessons we can learn.

It must have been nearly seven years after her marriage to Jacob that Rachel finally bore him a son.

There may be significance to this delay.

Jacob, due to his deception and deceit, was delayed in the process of getting a wife for himself.

Only after all these futile efforts were thwarted and shown to be without result does God open Rachel's womb, and that may be in answer to her prayers.

Rachel is yet to have another child, but he will come at the cost of her own life. (35:16ff;)

Lessons we can learn.

The implications of this text are so numerous that we can only mention some and suggest that we give them more thought.

The nation Israel, which first read this book from the pen of Moses, learned the wisdom of the Law, which forbade a man to marry a woman and her sister. (Lev 18:18;)

Furthermore, this account of the origin of the twelve tribes of Israel must have proved to be most humbling to the nation, for it was hardly a story which inspired national pride.

Lessons we can learn.

Perhaps **at the time of the exodus** and during the days of the conquest of the land the **people began to think too highly of themselves.** (Deuteronomy 6:10ff;)

They might falsely have concluded that God had blessed them because of their greatness and noble “roots.”

This story would serve to remind them that their “roots” were no basis for pride whatsoever.

Lessons we can learn.

They must **never trust in their heritage,**
as the Jews of Jesus' day did, (John 8:33,39;)
but trust in the God of their heritage.

This is why **God instructed them**
to recite their origins
at the presentation of the first fruits:

“And you shall answer and say before the LORD
your God, **My father was a wandering Aramean,**
and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there,
few in number; but there he became a great,
mighty and populous nation.” (Deuteronomy 26:5;)

Lessons we can learn.

We may be inclined to read this account of the struggles between Leah and Rachel and think of it as the “long ago” and the “far away” and thus of little application to us.

Such could not be farther from the truth.

There are differences between the culture of that day and our own, but, as someone observed, the only difference between the practice of Jacob in his day and that in our own is that he lived with his four wives simultaneously, while we live with ours consecutively.

We do with divorce what Jacob did with polygamy.

Lessons we can learn.

A distinct cultural turnover in values has occurred since that day as well.

Women of that era tended to determine their value on the basis of how many children they could produce for their husbands.

**This seems to under-lie the words of Leah:
“Happy am I! For women will call me happy ...”
(Genesis 30:13;)**

Nowadays, many women consider children a burden rather than a blessing.

Lessons we can learn.

Children are considered a hindrance to fulfillment rather than its means.

Consequently, birth control devices are thought to be the key to freedom, and abortion is a necessity for a woman's happiness.

Life's meaning should not be equated with either. Rachel and Leah were both in error by making a good gift from God (children) the ultimate touchstone of fulfillment and happiness.

Leah was far closer to the truth at the time of Judah's birth, for then she looked to God for her worth, meaning, and approval rather than to any man, including her husband.

Lessons we can learn.

A woman is special in the eyes of God and Valued as an individual with great potential to make a difference in the world she lives in.

Her personality and ability to achieve a great personal spiritual relationship with God is evidenced by how many women are faithful worshippers compared with men.

The **INFLUENCE** that a woman can have both on her husband her children and her friends can never be underestimated. 1Tim 2:15;

Lessons we can learn.

Many think today, a career will bring us fulfillment.

But no matter how hard we work

**We are often treated as just a number
and not truly valued,**

and can loose our jobs at the snap of a finger

**Sex, love, and family are meant to be
enjoyed within the confines of the will of God
and the Word of God**

and ought to be complete in fellowship with Him.

Lessons we can learn.

**While love without sex may be frustrating,
sex without love is stupidity.**

This is a lesson which we learn from Jacob.

**Surely those years with Rachel where sex
was not possible or permissible were frustrating.
(Gen 29:21;) But sex without love is just as bad.**

**Jacob engaged in sex with his wife Leah,
but there was no fulfillment in it.**

**In fact, it degenerated to mere prostitution
where Leah had to purchase his presence.**

Lessons we can learn.

Do not think that this kind of bargaining with sex occurred only in the distant past. In our present day sex is often a commodity which is bargained for various considerations.

That is mere prostitution.
Sex without love is tragedy.

Someone said that “whoever” created men and women and sex must have been a very poor engineer.

Men respond very quickly to physical stimuli; women do not. Men reach the peak of their sexual desire earlier in life; women, later.

Lessons we can learn.

Secular thinking would suppose that this is poor design and that man and woman should precisely correspond in these and other areas.

Yet these differences are by GOOD design. God made man and woman distinctly different.

So that the ultimate in physical pleasure can only be obtained by a deliberate and conscious love which makes sacrifices of itself for the pleasure of the other.

Without sacrifice, love making deteriorates into mere self seeking gratification at the expense of the other partner. Love and sex must go together.

Lessons we can learn.

Neither sex nor children can create love.

Leah would be quick to tell us that she learned **no amount of sex could ever earn the love of her husband.**

Even after six boys, she was still unloved. Love cannot be manufactured through sex.

Many prostitutes were driven to their profession by the feeling that **they were unloved.** All they had to give, **they supposed,** was their body.

Lessons we can learn.

There are **many marriages** where the couple had very serious marital problems, and **they decided to have children in order to hold the marriage together.**

This does not work either, for producing children does not produce love. Children are not creators of love but its consumer.

He, or she, who places sex on an extremely high level of priority becomes its slave.

Jacob's love for Rachel seems to be largely based upon her physical attractiveness. Jacob appears to have been guided more by his hormones than anything else.

Lessons we can learn.

**Our society informs men and boys
that their masculinity is largely
Indicated by the number of conquests
they can make among women.**

**The more they make,
the more of a man they are.
Jacob did rather well by these standards.**

Lessons we can learn.

Jacob circulated among his four wives frequently enough to produce a growing family, but **look at what happened to him in the process.**

He was not the master of his harem,
He was mastered by his harem.

He was pushed from bed to bed by his wives.
He was purchased for the night.

The passivity of Jacob in these verses is an indication of his **lack** of leadership. **He was a slave of sex and marriage, not its sovereign**

Genesis
28:10; to 30:24;
Jacobs flight and love.
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Next in the series:-
Genesis 30:25; Laban's New Deal.