



Lesson 22

JACOB PROSPERS AT LABAN'S HOUSE

Story Elements

- **TEXT:** Gen. 29:31-31:16
- **Setting:** circa 1900 B.C. in Haran
- **Main Characters:** God, Jacob, Rachel, Leah, and Laban
- **Plot:** Jacob's family and wealth grow while he works for his uncle Laban.
- **Key word(s):** " _____ exceedingly" (30:43)
- **Climax:** *Genesis 30:31 "And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock:"*

Wives and Children

- 1) (29:31) Having married two sisters, Jacob's new family is fraught with bitter jealousy and fierce rivalry. Leah is the " _____" wife while Rachel enjoys the lion's share of her husband's affection.
- 2) (29:32-30-24) This rivalry between Rachel and Leah is evinced by the names they chose for their children and by the fact that they enlisted their _____ (Bilhah and Zilpah respectively) to assist them in producing children for their husband.
- 3) Leah's children included:
 - a) Those she bore:
 - i) (29:32) **Reuben**, the firstborn. His name means "behold a _____!"
 - ii) (29:33) **Simeon**, which means " _____" – a reference to God's answering Leah's prayers for children.
 - iii) (29:34) **Levi**, which means " _____," was so named because Leah hoped this third son would cause Jacob to be joined with her in heart-felt love.
 - iv) (29:35) **Judah** means " _____."
 - v) (30:18) Years later, **Issachar** was born to Leah. His name means "a _____" and was a reference to Leah's feeling she had received her hire from the LORD for selling her mandrakes to Rachel and for giving her maidservant to Jacob.
 - vi) (30:20) **Zebulun** was next. His name means " _____" because Leah considered six sons a dowry from God.
 - vii) (30:21) The last of Leah's children to be mentioned is **Dinah**, which means " _____." Jacob had more daughters (37:35), but Dinah is mentioned here because she appears in a later story in chapter 34.
 - b) Those that Zilpah bore:
 - i) (30:11) **Gad**, which means " _____" – so named in expectation of yet more children.

- ii) (30:12) **Asher**, which means “_____.”
- 4) Rachel’s children include:
 - a) Those that Bilhah bore:
 - i) (30:6) **Dan**, which means “_____.” Rachel named him this to express her confidence that God was taking her side in judgment.
 - ii) (30:8) **Naphtali**, which means “my _____” – an expression of the Rachel’s relationship with her sister.
 - b) (30:22-24) Finally, after seven years of infertility, God blessed Rachel with a son. He was named “**Joseph**,” which means “he shall add” – a confident confession in God’s power to give to her another son (_____ would be born much later).

Sheep, Goats, and Cattle

- 5) (30:25-28) When Jacob’s additional _____ years (*cf.* 29:27) had been fulfilled, he asked for Laban’s blessing to return to Canaan. Instead, Laban asked Jacob to stay and work awhile longer. Laban hoped that Jacob’s continued presence would prolong his own financial growth spurt and keep his daughters nearby.
- 6) (30:29-43) Jacob agreed to stay, so long as he was allowed to keep all the multi-colored sheep, goats, and cattle yet to be born; Laban would keep all the solid colored animals.
 - a) Laban agreed to the plan, but first he separated the multi-colored animals from the main flock and put _____ days distance between the two. He did this to force Jacob into staying indefinitely (because he would stay poor).
 - b) But Jacob cleverly managed the breeding process to ensure that only the best animals were producing multi-colored offspring. His putting _____ sticks in the drinking troughs was more an act of faith in God’s promise than misplaced confidence in weird agricultural techniques.

Application

- 7) It is said that Jacob “hated” Leah – a term that means his love for Rachel was so surpassing that it made his feelings for Leah look _____. This is the same language Jesus used (Luke 14:26) to describe how our love for Christ should outshine the love we have for others. Matthew Henry notes, “Not that their persons must be in any degree hated, but our comfort and satisfaction in them must be lost and swallowed up in our love to Christ...”¹

Answer Key

“Key word(s): “increased” | 1) hated | 2) maidservants | 3) a) i) son; ii) hearing; iii) joined; iv) praise; v) hire; vi) dwelling; vii) judgment; b) i) troop; ii) happy | 4) a) i) judging; ii) wrestling; b) Benjamin | 5) seven | 6) a) three; b) peeled | 7) insignificant

¹ Henry, Matthew. [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#). Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.