



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 48



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT=Goodspeed (1923), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV=Literat Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV=Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

JACOB CHOOSES RACHEL

Gen 29:1 "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.² And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth.³ And thither were all the flocks gathered: 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 his place.⁴ And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we.⁵ And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him.⁶ And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.⁷ And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.⁸ And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.⁹ And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them.¹⁰ And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother.¹¹ And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.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.¹³ And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.¹⁴ And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.¹⁵ And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?¹⁶ And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.¹⁷ Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured.¹⁸ And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.¹⁹ And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me.²⁰ And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." (Genesis 29:1-20)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jacob arrives in the "land of the people of the east," where he finds a

well with three flocks of sheep "lying by it." He inquires where the men are from, and is told they were from Haran.

After asking if they knew of Laban, and learning that the men knew him, he confronts Rachel, Laban's daughter,

Jacob journeys, finally coming to a well where flocks were watered. Finding those who knew Laban, he also finds Rachel – Given O. Blakely

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coming with his sheep. Jacob waters her sheep, kissed Rachel, and wept for joy. He then meets Laban, who welcomes him into his home for one month. After that time, Laban insists that Jacob be paid for his assistance, and asks him to name his wages. Jacob offers to serve Laban for seven years, desiring to receive Rachel as his wife at the conclusion. Although Laban had two daughters, he consents to the arrangement, and Jacob labors seven years for Rachel. Although it was a lengthy period of time, the seven years “seemed unto him but a few days, for the love that he had for her.” Thus the saga of Jacob obtaining a wife begins.

OUR CONCEPT OF HISTORY IS SHAPED BY THE REVEALED WORKING OF THE LORD

A lot had been going on in the world during the times we are reviewing. **So far as the inspired record is concerned, all of those events are hidden in the genealogies of the people who were not chosen by God.** These included the generations of **Ham** (Gen 10:6-20), **Japheth** (Gen 10:2-5), **Ishmael** (Gen 25:13-16), Abraham’s six

sons through **Keturah** (Gen 25:1-4; 1 Chron 1:32-33), and **Esau** (Gen 36:5,15-19).

By the world’s standards, great nations came into existence that were noted for impressive cities, inventions, military exploits, dynasties, etc. **Yet, within the purpose of God, they had no significance whatsoever.** Below is a brief historical time-line commencing with Abraham and going through Jacob’s trip to Haran. **Information in italics represents significant circumstances and people in the eyes of the world that took place during that time.**

HISTORICAL TIME-LINE FROM ABRAHAM THROUGH JACOB’S TRIP TO HARAN

- 2500 BC. *Egyptians discover papyrus and ink for writing and build the first libraries; iron objects manufactured in the ancient near East*
- 2400 B.C. *Egyptians import gold from Africa*
- 2331 BC. *Semitic chieftain, Sargon, conquers Summer to become first “World conqueror”*
- 2300 BC. *Horses domesticated in Aristotle: chickens domesticated in Babylon: bows & arrows used in wars*
- 2166 BC. Abraham born
- 2160 BC. *Meryibre Khety I, 9th Egyptian Dynasty*
- 2134. *Mentuhotepl I, Intef I (9th Egyptian Synasty*
- 2100 BC. *Glass made by the Mesopotamians, ziggurats (like the tower of Babel) built in Mesopotamia; earliest discovered drug, ethyl alcohol, used to alleviate pain*
- 2091 BC. Abraham enters Canaan
- 2083 BC. *Wankare (10th Egyptian Dynasty)*
- 2069 BC. *Merykare (11th Egyptian Dynasty)*
- 2066 BC. Isaac born
- 2055 BC. *Mentuhotepl II (11th Egyptian Dynasty)*
- 2006 BC. Jacob & Esau born
- 2004 BC. *Mentuhotepl III (11th Egyptian Dynasty)*
- 2000 BC. *Native Americans immigrate to North America from northern Asia; stock breeding and irrigation used in China; Stonehenge, England, a center for religious worship is erected; bellows used in India, allowing for higher furnace temptures*
- 1992 BC. *Mentuhotepl IV (12th Egyptian Dynasty)*
- 1929 BC. Jacob flees to Haran

SOME CONCLUSIONS

While I do not wish to carry this matter too far, it seems to me that some brief conclusions are in order.

These days the expression “world-view” has become popular in religious circles. It is thrown about as though it represented a thought given by the inspiration of God.

DEFINITION OF “WORLD VIEW”

“A comprehensive world view (or WORLD VIEW) is the fundamental cognitive orientation of an individual or society encompassing the entirety of the individual or society’s knowledge and point-of-view, including natural philosophy; fundamental, existential, and normative postulates; or themes, values, emotions, and ethics.” WIKIPEDIA

“The way someone thinks about the world.” WEBSTER

“A person’s world view is the way they see and understand the world, especially regarding issues such as politics, philosophy, and religion.” COLLIN’S

The fatal error of the whole concept embodied in the term “WORLD VIEW” is that it combines areas of knowledge that cannot be homogenized. Such things as philosophy, existentialism (what can be verified by human senses), human postulates (affirmations), values, and emotions, as defined by men, **are not seen by believers as valid bodies of knowledge.** They fall into the category of “the imaginations of the thoughts” (Prov 1 Chron 28:9). The proper measurement is not what the believer thinks about those areas of thought. Rather, it is the place of God and His truth in those bodies of knowledge “falsely so called” 1 Tim 6:20).

The manner in which history is covered by the Scriptures confirms this to be the case. Great men and periods of human history, as defined by men, are not even mentioned in Scripture. If some event like the taxing of the whole world is mentioned, it is within the context of Christ’s birth (Lk 2:1). Although Socrates (460-399 BC), Plato (424-348 BC), and Aristotle (384-322) lived long before Jesus was born, there is not a single reference to them in Scripture. Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) is not mentioned by name in Scripture. He is referenced with the kingdom of Persia, which was one of the world empires decimated by the

Kingdom of God, as prophesied by Daniel (Dan 2:44-45; 8:21).

The point is that God holds men in account for what they think of Him, His works, and His deeds. That is the focus of Scripture. When God and His truth are properly seen and comprehended, it will shape how a person thinks and lives. The issue is

not what we think of this or that, **but what we accept or reject**; what we allow to influence us, and what we spurn.

This is lived out in Scripture. For example, in the records of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, no time is spent delineating what they thought of Egypt, or Syria, world rulers, or the things

related to them. Their eyes were focused on the Lord, and their lives were wrapped around His will. **That is the proper stance of life, and it is confirmed in every key person of Scripture to this point.** The details of the lives of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob offer resounding confirmation of this fact. Without exception, those details relate to the will of God.

JACOB WENT ON HIS JOURNEY

Gen 29:1 ***"Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east."***

WENT ON HIS JOURNEY

Gen 29:1 ***"Then Jacob went on his journey . . ."*** Other versions read, ***"continued on his journey,"*** NIV ***"got to his feet and set out,"*** CEB ***"resumed his journey,"*** CSB ***"hurried on,"*** NLT ***"lifteth up his feet, and goeth,"*** YLT ***"traveled on,"*** LIVING ***and "went [briskly and cheerfully] on his way."*** AMPLIFIED



Having received a revelation from God concerning his participation in the Abrahamic promise, Jacob continued on his journey to the house of Laban. **He had about 550 more miles to travel, and his faith, now refurbished, moved him along.** The language suggests he did so with zest and cheerfulness.

THE LAND OF THE PEOPLE OF THE EAST

" . . . and came into the land of the people of the east." Other versions read, ***"sons of the east,"*** NASB ***"the eastern peoples,"*** NIV ***"children of the east,"*** ASV ***"the easterners,"*** CEB ***"the eastern country,"*** CSB ***"the land of the Kedemites."*** NAB

The ***"land of the east"*** is where Abraham sent the sons of Keturah (Gen 25:6).

The ***"land of the people of the east"*** is generally understood to be Syria, which was in Mesopotamia, which was the land that Abraham left to go to Canaan (Acts 7:2).

There are two senses in which ***"the east"*** is used. First, it was the land toward the rising of the sun, which was a general means of identifying direction. Second, it was a location established by the location of Canaan – to the east of the promised land. **This is the more accurate use of the term – to the east of Canaan.**



It is the manner of the Spirit to

identify directions by the area in which God is working, or where He had placed His name, or centralized His work. Thus, in the very beginning, ***"the east"*** was identified by the location of Eden:—i.e. ***"East of Eden"*** (Gen 3:24; 4:16). Also, from whatever area a traveler came, he always went ***"up to Jerusalem"*** (1 Kgs 12:28; Ezra 7:13; Matt 20:17; Acts 11:2; 24:11; Gal 1:17), even though he may have been coming from the North, East, or West. Wherever a traveler was going when he left Jerusalem, he was said to be going ***"down from Jerusalem"*** (Mk 3:22; Lk 10:30; Acts 8:26; 25:7). The same was true of the Temple: people went ***"up to the Temple"*** (Lk 18:10; John 7:14; Acts 3:1).

A LESSON TO BE LEARNED

In this, there is a valuable lesson to be learned – a lesson that is hidden within the framework of sacred history. **The people of God must learn to measure, value, and consider things within the framework of the working of the Lord.** Things that are not acceptable are not within the proximity of the things of the Spirit. Also, to think on the things of God, the mind must be elevated, or brought to a higher level that the plains of this present evil world.

For those who are of tender heart, there is a sensitivity about things that are not directly associated with the Lord, and may even be in aggressive opposition to, and competition with the things of "the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:5). Exposure to such things is like journeying from

Canaan to Mesopotamia. In such a case, as with Jacob, there is a longing to get

back to Canaan. Those en route to the glory are anxious to get there, and

shape their lives by their pilgrimage to glory.

BEHOLD A WELL IN THE FIELD

"² And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. ³ And thither were all the flocks gathered: 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 his place."

THE WELL AND THE SHEEP

"And he looked, and behold a well in the field . . ." Other versions read, *"a well in the plain,"* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *"a well in the open country,"* ^{NAB} *"a well in the open,"* ^{TNK} *"a well in the plain,"* ^{ABP} and *"a well that had been dug out on the open range."* ^{ISV}

In Scripture, a lot has happened at a well.

- ➔ Hagar's eyes were opened to a well of water that spared her and her son from certain death (Gen 21:19). She named that well *"Beerlahairoi"* (Gen 16:14), which became a reference point for travelers (Gen 25:11).
- ➔ Abraham reproved Abimelech because his servants had taken away a well of water that belonged to him (Gen 21:25).
- ➔ Abraham made a covenant with Abimelech over a well (Gen 21:30).
- ➔ Abraham's servant found a wife for Isaac at a well (Gen 24:11-30).
- ➔ The herdmen of Gerar strove with Isaac over a well he had dug (Gen 26:19-20).
- ➔ Now Jacob will have a significant experience at a well.

The Type

Through Scripture wells,

particularly springing wells, are depicted as a type of salvation.

➔ *"Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."* (Isa 12:3)

➔ *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* (John 4:14)

Because they cannot refresh the saints of God, false prophets are described as *"wells without water"* (2 Pet 2:17).

Spiritual life must be sustained, and the saints of God must be refreshed – like sheep must be watered. As simple as that may appear, there remain a significant number of professing "Christians" who appear to be ignorant of that fact.

ALL THE FLOCKS WERE GATHERED

" . . . and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks . . ."

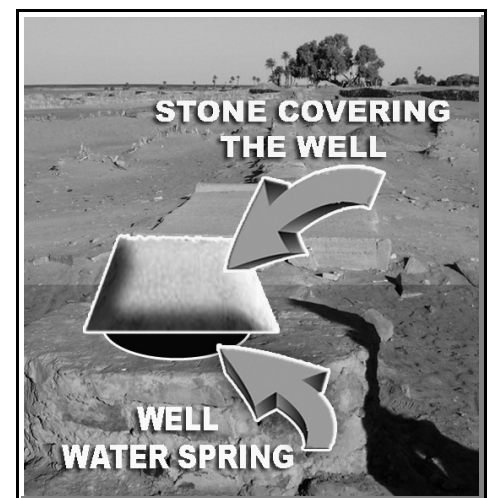
As Jacob approaches the well, he beholds three flocks of sheep lying by the well, *"for out of that well they watered the flocks."* In these remote areas, there were provisions to water flocks that ordinarily had no access to water. **It was therefore necessary to bring the sheep to the place where water was available.** In this text three flocks had already been brought to this well for watering.

THE STONE OVER THE WELL'S MOUTH

" . . . and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered: 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 his place."

This was evidently a wellspring, with water gushing out of it, versus a well from which water had to be drawn. So that the water would not be wasted, a large stone was placed on the well like a cap until such time as flocks were available to be watered.



A Type

There is a type here of spiritual watering, where the water of life may be appropriated. As with our text, the water gushes forth from a spring, referred to as *"the fountain of the water of life"* (Rev 21:6). Elsewhere such water is called *"living water"* (John 4:10,11). On one occasion, Jesus stood and cried out in Jerusalem, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water"* (John 7:37-38). **As with our text, the thirsty soul has to go where the water may be obtained. Ultimately, the distributor of the water is the Lord Jesus Christ.**

However, there is something unique about the water Jesus provides. Like a well, it is placed within the

believer, providing refreshment at all times. Jesus said to the woman at Jacob's well, *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life"* (John 4:14).

An Application

There is a sense in which the assembly of the saints, when *"the whole church be come together into one place"* (1 Cor 14:23), is when watering is done under the administration of Jesus, the Head of the church. In this case, however, the water come from the various members

that are connected to, and holding to, the Head (Col 2:19). The water flows through them, and the thirsty find great satisfaction in drinking.

That is the meaning of the texts in Ephesians and Colossians: *"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love"* (Eph 4:16). And again, *"And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God"* (Col 2:19).

It is of great concern to insightful believers that this kind of experience is so rare in the churches. The absence of such ministrations cannot be brushed aside in favor of an institutional emphasis.

It is not by coincidence that such parallels exist in the accounts of Scripture. Just as the world was created with redemption mind, **so the reported history of the people of God is designed to illustrate what takes place among the people of God.** While these parallels are not to be preached as doctrine, they work with sound doctrine to make the matters of the Kingdom more clear to the saints of God.

OF HARAN WE ARE

"⁴ And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. ⁵ And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. ⁶ And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep."

Jacob is not drawn away from his mission by what he sees. He will, **with his quest in mind**, make certain inquiries to be assured he is in the right place. This is something of what is involved in living, and moving, and having our being in God (Acts 17:28).

WHENCE BE YE?

"And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye?"

This question was asked of the shepherds who were caring for the flocks that were awaiting to be watered. Jacob apparently did not know his precise location, or if he was in the immediate proximity of Laban's home. He therefore asked where the men were from.

AND THEY SAID

" . . . And they said, Of Haran are we . . ."

Surely, the Lord had directed Jacob, just as he did Abraham's servant more than seventy years before (Gen 24). He is now in the vicinity of his destination.

" . . . And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well . . ." Other versions read, *"Is it well with him?"* ^{NASB} *"Are things going well with him?"* ^{CJB} *"Is he in health?"* ^{DOUAY} *"How is*

This is the place where Abraham tarried after he left Ur, awaiting instruction from the Lord. The patriarch had obtained much substance, and some souls (servants) as well while there

KNOW YE LABAN?

" . . . And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him . . ."

This is the place where Abraham tarried after he left Ur, awaiting instruction from the Lord. The patriarch had obtained much substance, and some souls (servants) as well while there (Gen 12:5). Laban is the brother of Isaac's mother, Rebecca, and he is still located where he was seven decades ago.

IS HE WELL?

he doing?" ^{GWN} *"Is he doing well?"* ^{NLT} *"Hath he peace?"* ^{YLT} *"How is he?"* ^{LIVING} *"Are things well with him?"* ^{MESSAGE}

The meaning of the word translated *"well"* is much the same as it is in English, covering the various facets of general well being: "COMPLETENESS, SOUNDNESS, WELFARE, PEACE . . . SAFETY, SOUNDNESS (IN BODY) . . . WELFARE, HEALTH, PROSPERITY . . . PEACE, QUIET, TRANQUILLITY, CONTENTMENT." ^{HEBREW} A single word that would include all of this would be *"peace"* – in this case, the absence of any form of agitation or uncomfortableness. As used in the east *"well"* stood for all kinds of felicity, or

happiness.

Life can be a burden, when trouble rains down like a deluge upon the individual. Hearing that all is well with Laban, Jacob will be able to address the matter at hand without any unnecessary distractions. **This would also serve as a confirmation to Jacob that God was truly with him.**

RACHEL COMETH WITH THE SHEEP
“ . . . and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep.”

Immediately the Lord works through the shepherds to alert Jacob to the fact that he has found the woman he sought. **He has arrived at the proper destination and at the proper time, and now he is assured this is the case.** The steps of a good man were, indeed, “ordered by the Lord” (Psa 37:23). Although it is not specifically stated that the Lord guided Jacob to this place, this is the manner of Divine working, as confirmed in the case of Abraham’s servant seeking a wife for Isaac (Gen 24:27,47). **Once Divine**

guidance has been affirmed and confirmed, it is not necessary to spell it out in every instance that it occurs. God has affirmed He prepares the heart (Prov 16:1), directs a man’s steps (Prov 16:9; 20:24), and that man cannot direct his own steps (Jer 10:23). He has confirmed this in the record of Abraham’s servant finding a wife for Isaac. It is not necessary for the same point to again be made here. This is simply the way the Lord works, particularly in the matter of fulfilling His own promises and commitments.

WE CANNOT UNTIL ALL THE FLOCKS BE GATHERED

“⁷ And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them.”⁸ And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well’s mouth; then we water the sheep.”

WATER YE THE SHEEP
“And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them . . .”

Both Abraham and Isaac had

shepherds remove the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep.

Some feel that Jacob said this because he anticipated the coming of Rachel, and wanted to be alone with her. I prefer to think of this as being said out of interest for the sheep.

WE CANNOT UNTIL THEY BE GATHERED
“ . . . And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well’s mouth; then we water the sheep.”

which all of the shepherds agreed – why, we are not sure. It may have been because the stone required more than one person to move it. However, this is not likely, because Jacob will move it by himself. It is more likely that there would be less waste of the water if the stone were moved but once, and all of the flocks were watered at the same time.

Something to Be Seen
There is a principle that can be seen in all of this. There are times when the sheep of God’s pasture (Psa 100:3) are given something from God when they are gathered together.

➔ On one occasion, the Israelites were journeying, and were thirsty, Moses said, “**Gather the people together, and I will give them water.**” (Num 21:16).

➔ When the Law was given, Moses recalled, the Lord said, “**Gather Me the people together, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children.**” (Deut 4:10).

➔ Before entering Canaan, Moses told the people they should gather together at the end of every seven years. He said, “**Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is**

flocks of sheep (Gen 21:27; 26:14), and Jacob would as well (Gen 46:30-34). **He had, then, a particular understanding of how to handle sheep.** He sees that there is a considerable length of day left, and that certain other duties will be required at the end of the day. He therefore suggests that the

The shepherds reply that there is a procedure that they follow. **They cannot remove the stone from the mouth of the well until all of the flocks are gathered.** Then all of the sheep will be watered from the well.

This was obviously something on

There is a principle that can be seen in all of this. There are times when the sheep of God’s pasture (Psa 100:3) are given something from God when they are gathered together.

within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law" (Deut 31:12).

➔ Paul wrote to the Corinthians of the resources available when they were gathered together: *"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, **when ye are gathered together**, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 5:4).*

➔ There was a time, Paul wrote, when *"the whole church be **come together** into one place" (1 Cor 14:23).*

➔ When the New Covenant commenced, the announcement of what had been wrought by Christ was not made until *"the multitude **came together**" (Acts 2:6).*

➔ The disciples in Troaz *"came together" on the first day of the week "to break bread" (Acts 20:7).*

There are some things provided for the church when they are assembled together. It is then that *"every joint" supplies "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part" (Eph 4:16), and "nourishment" is "ministered" knitting the brethren*

As tragic as it may be, there are those who pretend to be leaders in the church of God who spend little time preparing to feed, nourish, and refresh, the saints of God.

together to that they experience *"the increase of God" (Col 2:19).*

But what of those who keep the well capped when the saints are together, refusing to let the water of refreshing flow out? How serious is it for the *"flock of God"* not to be watered, refreshed, and fed? What of those who take it upon themselves to recruit sinners when the saints of God are before them? Is that a serious offence or not? What can be said of those who ignore the mandate of Jesus, *"Feed My lambs . . . Feed My sheep . . . Feed My sheep" (John 15-17).* What of those who ignore the word of Paul: *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).* And how will God regard those who refuse to give heed to the word of Peter, *"Feed the flock of God which is among you"*

(1 Pet 5:2).

As tragic as it may be, there are those who pretend to be leaders in the church of God who spend little time preparing to feed, nourish, and refresh, the saints of God. They are not grieving because of the ignorance and malnourishment of the saints of God, but only have their own careers and the worldly reputation of their congregations in mind. Therefore, *"the flock of God"* stagger about because of weakness, blundering about like blind men. **Will such insolence be excused by the Lord of glory? You may rest assured, it will not!** Jesus will hold people in strict account for what they have *"done" or "not done" to "one of the least of these My brethren" (Matt 25:40,45).* Any professed leader of the people of God who does not feed and nourish them is, at the very best, a *"wicked and slothful servant."* **Although such men are plentiful, their very presence is a transgression against God.**

RACHEL CAME WITH HER FATHER'S SHEEP

"⁹ And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. ¹⁰ And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother."

While this discussion was going on, God was working behind the scenes, orchestrating things for the fulfillment of His purpose. In New Covenant language, He was working all things *"together for good to them that*

love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28).

RACHEL CAME WITH HER FATHER'S SHEEP

"And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. . . "

The phrase *"while he yet spake"* is used several times in Scripture, and is designed to enable us to shift our thinking from circumstance to the working of the Lord.

➔ On the Mount of Transfiguration, when Peter was suggesting the

building of three tabernacles, *"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." (Matt 17:5).*

➔ On the eve of Jesus' betrayal, when He was in the Garden with His disciples, He said, *"Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of*

the people." (Matt 26:46-47). Was at that point that the epoch of redemption particularly commenced.

➔ When Peter denied Christ, **"while he yet spake, the cock crew"** (Luke 22:60), reminding him of the word Jesus had spoken earlier to him (Lk 22:34).

Now, as though interrupting the dialog between Jacob and the shepherds, **"Rachel came with her father's sheep."** Her flock will be the fourth that is gathered at the well for watering. She is arriving at precisely the time ordained by the Lord, and His will be done at this time.

JACOB WATERED THE FLOCK OF LABAN

"And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother."

Notice that Laban is referred to as **"his [Jacob's] mother's brother"** three times in this verse. The shepherds had already told Jacob, **"Behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep"** (29:6). Thus, Jacob knows who he is confronting, and proceeds to immediately water the sheep she had brought.

This response differs from that of Abraham's servant, who had asked that



the sign of the proper women be that she watered his camels.

Now in an apparent display of great strength, Jacob singlehandedly **"rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother."** In their response to Jacob, the shepherds had insinuated that the removal of the stone required a collective effort: **"And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till **THEY roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep**"** (Gen 29:8). Now Jacob removes the stone and waters Laban's sheep. He does not volunteer to water the sheep of the other shepherds. They must water their own sheep. Jacob's business will be confined to his mission.

A PICTURE OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS

Here we have a most precise depiction of the ministry of Jesus. **When He began His ministry among the people, the well of the water of life was covered by the stone of religious tradition.** John the Baptist had led the people to the well, but was only preparing the way of the Lord. However, when Jesus commenced His ministry, He promptly removed the stone of tradition from the well, telling the people: **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised . . . To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears"** (Luke 4:19-21).

Throughout history theological stones have been placed on the **"wells of salvation,"** inhibiting the free flow of their refreshing waters. However, God has raised up holy man from time to time who have rolled the suppressing stones away so that the sheep of God's pasture may be watered.

Let there be no doubt about our Lord's commitment to the nourishment and refreshment of His people. Also, be assured that He will deal forthrightly and harshly with those who have stopped up His wells.

JACOB KISSED RACHEL AND WEPT

"¹¹ And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. 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 KISSED RACHEL

"And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. . ." Other versions read, **"Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep aloud,"**^{NIV} **"And weeping for joy, Jacob gave Rachel a kiss,"**^{BBE} **"Jacob then kissed Rachel and burst**

into tears"^{NJB} **"Then Jacob kissed Rachel and started crying!,"**^{LIVING} **"Jacob kissed Rachel. And yelling with his voice he wept,"**^{ABP} **and then kissed Rachel and started crying because he was so happy."**^{CEV}

This is only the second time in Scripture when one person is said to have **"kissed"** another. The first was when Isaac, thinking that Jacob was Esau, asked to come forward and kiss him, and **"he came near and kissed him"** (Gen 27:26-27).



Jacob journeys, finally coming to a well where flocks were watered. Finding those who knew Laban, he also finds Rachel – Given O. Blakely

THE CUSTOM OF KISSING

“ORIGINALLY THE ACT OF KISSING HAD A SYMBOLICAL CHARACTER, AS A NATURAL SPECIES OF LANGUAGE, EXPRESSIVE OF TENDER AFFECTION AND RESPECT. IT APPEARS FROM THE CASE OF LABAN AND JACOB (GENESIS 29:13) THAT THIS METHOD OF SALUTATION WAS EVEN THEN ESTABLISHED AND RECOGNIZED AS A MATTER OF COURSE. IN GENESIS 27:26, 27, A KISS IS A SIGN OF AFFECTION BETWEEN A PARENT AND CHILD; IN SONG OF SOLOMON 8:1, BETWEEN A LOVER AND HIS BRIDE. IT WAS ALSO, AS WITH SOME MODERN NATIONS, A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP AND REGARD BESTOWED WHEN FRIENDS OR RELATIONS MET OR SEPARATED (TOBIT 7:6; 10:12; LUKE 7:45; 15:20; ACTS 20:37; MATTHEW 26:48; 2 SAMUEL 20:9); THE SAME CUSTOM IS STILL USUAL IN THE EAST (TISCHENDORF, *REISE*, I, 255). THE CHURCH OF EPHEBUS WEPT SORE AT PAUL'S DEPARTURE, AND FELL ON HIS NECK AND KISSED HIM. WHEN ORPAH QUITTED NAOMI AND RUTH (RUTH 1:14), AFTER THE THREE HAD LIFTED UP THEIR VOICE AND WEPT, SHE "KISSED HER MOTHER-IN-LAW, BUT RUTH CLAVE UNTO HER."

This was not a “kiss” driven by lust, as has become popular in our day. It was rather a courteous way of greeting a person – something like a handshake in our time.

Having kissed Rachel, Jacob lifted up his voice and wept. The text does not say why he did this, but we can form a proper view of the matter. It was not doubt a joyful weeping, for

now it began to be evident that his trip had not been in vain. God had so directed his steps that he had arrived at the proper place, immediately learned of Laban, to whose house he was traveling, and had even met a prospective bride.

Behold the sensitivity of the man Jacob, who has unjustly been painted as a deceiver and self-centered man by false prophets. He does not weep in bitter disappointment like Esau, who had despised his birthright (Gen 27:38). Rather, the hand of the Lord has been upon him in this matter, and now it becomes apparent to him.

JACOB TOLD HER

“ . . . 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.”

Up to this point, Rachael apparently had no idea who Jacob was. We know this is the case because she does not report her confrontation with Jacob until after the Jacob informs her of his own identity.

He was her Father's Brother

Other versions read, “relative,” ^{KJV} “kinsman,” ^{NRSV} “relation,” ^{BBE} “related to her father,” ^{CEB} and “cousin.” ^{NLT}

Technically, Jacob was Laban's nephew. The word translated “brother” has the following lexical meaning:

“BROTHER . . . BROTHER OF SAME PARENTS . . . HALF-BROTHER (SAME FATHER) . . . RELATIVE, KINSHIP, SAME TRIBE.” ^{STRONG'S}

In this case, the word “brother” is not a term denoting a specific family. Rather, it speaks of the national relationship–i.e. relatives of Abraham. We use the term in the same way in Christ Jesus. All those in Christ are “brethren,” by virtue of their identity with God through Christ Jesus. Thus Jacob means that he was related to her father through Abraham, being a member of the larger family.

He was Rebekah's Son

Rebekah was Laban's sister. Thus Jacob informs Rachel of the of their common heritage, traceable back to Abraham and Nahor, great grandfather (Nahor begat Bethuel, and Bethuel begat Laban).

JACOB TELLS LABAN ALL THESE THINGS

“ ¹³ And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things.”

To the right is a picture of a 2003 coin minted in Israel. It depicts Jacob and Rachel, and their meeting at the well in the plain. Israel has done well to remember this epochal meeting.



This commenced a series of historical events and births that finally yielded the twelve tribes of Israel.

➡ The “twelve tribes” are mentioned

ten times: once in Genesis (Gen 49:28), three times in Exodus (Ex 24:4; 28:21; 39:14), Once in Ezekiel (Ezek 47:13), Once in Matthew (Matt 19:28), Once in Luke (Lk 22:30), Once in Acts (Acts 26:7), Once in James (James 1:1, and once in the Revelation (Rev 21:12).

➡ They are also referred to as “the whole house of Israel” five times (Lev 10:6; Jer 13:11; Ezek 37:11; 39:25; 45:6).

➡ One hundred and Fifty-two times they are referred to as “the house of Israel.”

➡ Forty-six times they are referred to as “the tribes of Israel.”

➡ One hundred and twenty-two times they are referred to as “the house of Israel.”

➡ Nineteen times they are referred to as “the people of Israel.”

➡ Six hundred and forty-four times they are referred to as “the children of Israel.”

➡ Two hundred and thirty times they are referred to as “the Jews.”

Here, then, is a body of people springing from Jacob, who are directly referenced as a body of people at least 1,158 times in Scripture – and the whole matter is beginning to develop at this well in the plain!

WHEN LABAN HEARD THE TIDINGS

"And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister's son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. . . ." Other versions read, "heard the report about Jacob, his sister's son," ^{NKJV} "heard the news about," ^{NASB} and "as soon as he heard of Jacob's arrival, he rushed out to meet him." ^{LIVING}

This is the record of Laban responding to the report of Rachel (Gen 29:12). Although it had been about ninety-seven years since Laban had seen Rebekah, he had not forgotten his sister [Isaac is now estimated to have been 137 years of age. He was forty when his servant visited Laban]. Laban

now hears tidings that *"his sister's son"* has arrived. We do not know if Laban ever knew about Rebekah having children. Yet, he conducted himself almost identically as he did with Abraham's servant (Gen 24:48).

HE TOLD LABAN ALL THESE THINGS

" . . . And he told Laban all these things." Other versions read, "And Jacob gave him news of everything," ^{BBE} "Jacob recounted to Laban everything that had happened," ^{CEB} "when he had heard the causes of his journey" ^{DOUAY} and "Jacob then repeated to Laban all these things." ^{NAB}

There are various views of what constituted *"all these things."*

- ➡ What he was told to attest his kinship. ^{CALVIN}
- ➡ The entire story of his life. ^{LANGE}
- ➡ Things related to the immediate context. ^{KEIL}

It seems to me that Jacob would have related all things associated with his mission. This would have included the blessings promised to Jacob and his seed, the blessings conferred upon him by Isaac, the counsel of his mother, a ⁿ d key things made known to him in his dream at Bethel. It had to be things that made very clear why he was there. His mission was uppermost in his heart and mind.

THOU ART MY BONE AND FLESH

" ¹⁴ And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month."

SURELY THOU ART MY BONE AND MY FLESH

"And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. . . ."

This is Laban's response to Jacob's report. The idea is that he was now fully convinced that Jacob was a blood relative – which was the obvious intent of Jacob's report. Laban now was convinced there was a legitimate tie between himself and Jacob, his sister's son.

This is the second time this kind of identity is mentioned in Scripture. The first was when God brought Eve to Adam. At that time he said, *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"* (Gen 2:23). Eve was legitimately and effectively part of himself. That is, they were, in a very real sense, *"one flesh."* As Adam himself said, *"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh"* (Gen 2:24). Jesus also confirmed that this was a proper description of

There is something of Jesus that is in the believer, like there was something of Adam in Eve

marriage (Matt 19:5-6).

The expression was also used on later occasions to denote a legitimate relationship.

- ➡ It was mentioned again when Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal said to his mother's brothers, *"I am your bone and your flesh"* (Judges 9:2).
- ➡ All the tribes of Israel once came to David and said, *"Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh"* (2 Sam 5:1).
- ➡ David sent a message to the elders of Israel; saying, *"ye are my bones and flesh"* (2 Sam 19:12).

The Type

This same type of language is employed to describe the identity of the saved with the Savior, Jesus Christ. It

is said of believers, *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones"* (Eph 5:30).

In salvation, through faith, a legitimate relationship is accomplished between the redeemed and the Redeemer; between the justified and the Justifier. It is not a metaphorical identity, but a very real one. **There is something of Jesus that is in the believer, like there was something of Adam in Eve.** Paul used this salient expression: *"we have the mind of Christ"* (1 Cor 2:16; Phil 2:5). All believers possess a *"new man"* that is described in this manner: *"the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness"* (Eph 4:24). And again, *"the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him"* (Col 3:10). These believers also have *"the*

It is most unfortunate, and a matter of great reproach, that so very little of Jesus is seen in the nominal church. Although theologies have been developed to make this a palatable situation, it remains contemptible, a reproach to Jesus, and a contradiction of Scripture.

Spirit of Christ" (Rom 8:9), partake of *"the sufferings of Christ"* (2 Cor 1:5), emit *"the savor of Christ"* (2 Cor 2:15), and partake of the *"fulness"* of Christ (John 1:16; Eph 4:13). Both *"the dying of the Lord Jesus"* and *"the life also of Jesus"* are *"manifest in our mortal body"* (2 Cor 4:10-11). We are, in a very real sense, *"made partakers of Christ"* (Heb 3:14).

When we speak of being *"in Christ"* (Rom 8:1; 1 Cor 1:2,30; 2 Cor 5:17), or Christ being *"in"* us (Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 13:5; Col 1:27), we are not speaking metaphorically, or in a

similitude. Our union with Christ is very real, constituting us *"one spirit"* with Him (1 Cor 6:17). This is the condition described by the phrase, *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones"* (Eph 5:30). It is just as real as the relation of Eve to Adam – *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"* (Gen 2:23).

It is most unfortunate, and a matter of great reproach, that so very little of Jesus is seen in the nominal church. Although theologies have been developed to make this a palatable situation, it remains contemptible, a

reproach to Jesus, and a contradiction of Scripture. A church – any church – that is fundamentally unlike Jesus, is a candidate for Divine judgment.

HE ABODE WITH HIM FOR A MONTH

" . . . And he abode with him the space of a month."

It is assumed from this, as well as the dialog that follows, that Jacob was productive during this month, serving the interests of Laban during that time. He did not spend his time in idleness, or things that would have caused unnecessary inconvenience for Laban; and certainly he did not impose upon, or take advantage of his hospitality. **This again confirms the nature of Jacob – that he was not a deceiver, as Esau, and his contemporary relatives during our time, charge.** He was rather considerate, thoughtful, sensitive, and industrious.

That was Jacob's real nature, and he was so recognized by Laban. It is unfortunate it is not seen more clearly.

WHAT SHALL THY WAGES BE?

"¹⁵ And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?"

BECAUSE THOU ART MY BROTHER

"And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought?" Other versions read, *"serve me for nothing?"* NKJV

Here is a consideration that is growing more and more rare in our time. **Ordinarily, a relative would be expected to work for nothing.** However, this is not how Laban sees the circumstance at the moment.

Keep in mind that *"brother"* does not refer to an immediate relative, but to one who is from the same general bloodline. For example, in the broadest sense, all humanity is related as

brethren in Adam, who is their common ancestor. In him they are made sinners, condemned, and die (Rom 5:15-19).

A Lesson in Brotherhood

➡ **THE BROTHERHOOD OF ADAM.** Thus, when we read *"all have sinned and come forth of the glory of God,"* we mean all of Adam's offspring.

➡ **THE BROTHERHOOD OF ABRAHAM.** All who are *"of faith,"* or possess faith, are *"the children of Abraham,"* and brothers to one another (Gal 3:7). This means that Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, etc, are our brothers.

➡ **THE BROTHERHOOD OF SATAN'S CHILDREN.** All of the *"tares,"* Jesus said, are *"the children of the wicked one,"* and thus brothers to one another (Matt 13:38). This means that a false prophet is a brother to Judas, and to Hitler.

➡ **THE BROTHERHOOD OF JESUS.** All of those in Christ Jesus, having been begotten of God, the same Progenitor, are brethren (1 John 5:1).

THE CONCEPT OF RELATIVES

This concept of relatives did exist independently of the Jewish nation (i.e.–Ishmael, Esau, etc), but it was, by inspiration, fully developed in the offspring of Abraham. **It was based upon there being such a thing as a race that was chosen by God.**

It is essential to see this, for it is developed even more fully in Christ Jesus. Whether men know it or not, every person in Christ Jesus is fraternally related to every other person who is in Christ. This reality is what undergirds certain statements by Jesus and the apostles. A few of them are here provided.

➔ **FAMILY LOVE.** *"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."* (John 13:34)

➔ **CONFIRMING KNOWLEDGE.** *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* (John 13:35)

➔ **DIVINE TUTELAGE.** *"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."* (1 Thess 4:9)

➔ **DIVINE OBJECTIVE.** *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."* (1 Pet 1:22)

➔ **HOLY RATIONALITY.** *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."* (1 John 4:11-12).

This, as with Abraham's offspring, is the result of being a chosen people – all traced back to a single source.

While this may appear very evident, it is not at all what has taken place in Christendom. When the words "brethren" or "brotherhood" (1 Pet 2:17) are used in contemporary church circles, the total family of God is **not** the point of reference. Brotherhoods are generally identified by denomination, or sect. Thus men refer to "our

brotherhood"—i.e. Baptist, Assembly of God, Christian Church, Church of Christ, Methodist, Lutheran, etc. Men have become used to these unique designations, preferring them to "children of God" (Gal 3:26), "sons of God" (1 John 3:1), "heirs of God" (Rom 8:17), etc.

Satan's house is not divided (Matt 12:25-26), you may be sure the house of Jesus is not. There is, in fact, "one fold" and "One Shepherd" (John 10:16).

WHAT SHALL THY WAGES BE?

" . . . tell me, what shall thy wages be?" Other versions read, "what

This, as with Abraham's offspring, is the result of being a chosen people – all traced back to a single source.

Let me be clear about this. **Those who have difficulty speaking of the brethren in this manner, have greater difficulty with the following.**

- ➔ One God and Father of all (Eph 4:6).
- ➔ One Mediator between God and man (1 Tim 2:5).
- ➔ One Shepherd (John 10:16).
- ➔ One Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 8:6).
- ➔ A common faith (Tit 1:4).
- ➔ A common salvation (Jude 1:3)

A unique God can not have a general people. The house of Jesus, having a single head, cannot be divided. Men may honor the religious divisions that are extant in Christendom, but God will not. Christ is not divided, and thus the imagined division of His people is nothing more than a corruption. If even

should your wages be?" ^{NKJV} "what is your payment to be?" ^{BBE} "Tell me what you would like to be paid," ^{CEB} "Tell me what wages you want." ^{NJB}

There is a natural consideration revealed here that sin takes away from those enslaved to it. Being made "in the image" and "after the similitude of God," men have certain propensities that are comely. Consideration is one of them. From time to time you will see otherwise wicked people who, like Laban, are considerate. They will not be ideal in this characteristic, as Laban will show, but there is enough of this trait present to confirm the Divine imagery in men (1 Cor 11:7; James 3:9). Further, such traits can by no means justify a man, or remove his sins.

Therefore, Laban here conducts himself in a mannerly and considerate way – although he will, in time, act quite differently. Seen from the higher perspective, this was God working all things together for Jacob's good.

LABAN HAD TWO DAUGHTERS

¹⁶ **And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.**
¹⁷ **Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored."**

Something to note here is that the human race had declined considerably

since sin entered into the world. Of the first progenitors it was said, "and he begat sons and daughters."

- ➔ Adam did this for eight hundred years (Gen 5:4).
- ➔ Seth did it for eight hundred and

seven years (Gen 5:7).

- ➔ Enos did it for eight hundred and fifteen years (Gen 5:10).
- ➔ Cainan did it for eight hundred and forty years" (Gen 5:13).

Jacob journeys, finally coming to a well where flocks were watered. Finding those who knew Laban, he also finds Rachel – Given O. Blakely

- ➔ Mahalaleel did it for eight hundred and thirty years (Gen 5:16).
- ➔ Jared did it for eight hundred years (Gen 5:19).
- ➔ Enoch did it for three hundred years (Gen 5:22).
- ➔ Methuselah did it for seven hundred and eighty-two years (Gen 5:26).
- ➔ Lamech did it for five hundred and ninety-nine years (Gen 5:30).
- ➔ Shem did it for five hundred years (Gen 11:11).
- ➔ Arphaxad did it for four hundred and three years (Gen 11:13).
- ➔ Salah did it for four hundred and three years (Gen 11:15).
- ➔ Eber did it for four hundred and thirty years (Gen 11:17).
- ➔ Peleg did it for two hundred and nine years (Gen 11:19).
- ➔ Reu did it for two hundred two hundred and seven years (Gen 11:21).
- ➔ Serug did it for two hundred years (Gen 11:23).
- ➔ Nahor did it for one hundred and nineteen years (Gen 11:25).

Now, confirming that the curse of mortality had taken effect, the life span has been reduced considerably, and the number of children has correspondingly dropped. The number of daughters that Laban begat is now mentioned. He was well over one hundred years of age at the time. So far as we know, Isaac only had two sons, while Abraham had eight.

LABAN HAD TWO DAUGHTERS

"And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel..."

It appears as though Laban had only two daughters, while Bethuel had only one (Rebekah). Whether or not this

was the case, I am not sure. However, so far as the purpose of God was concerned, I am sure there was only one daughter of Bethuel to be considered, and two daughters of Laban. That is how we are to think about the matter.

LEAH WAS TENDER-EYED

"... Leah was tender eyed ..."
Other versions read, *"eyes were delicate,"* NKJV *"eyes were weak,"* NASB *"weak eyes,"* NIV *"eyes were lovely,"* NRSV *"eyes were clouded,"* BBE *"ordinary eyes,"* CSB *"attractive eyes,"* GWN *"dull eyes,"* NAB *"no sparkle in Leah's eyes,"* NLT *"eyes were gentle,"* ERV *"rather plain,"* ISV *"nice eyes,"* MESSAGE and *"weak and dull looking,"* AMPLIFIED

Again, the various versions

- ➔ "Dull" NAB
- ➔ "No sparkle" NLT
- ➔ "Gentle" ERV
- ➔ "Rather plain" ISV
- ➔ "Nice" MESSAGE
- ➔ "Weak and dull looking" AMPLIFIED

The meaning of the Hebrew word ("rak") – translated *"tender"* – is not at all clear. It is used in Scripture seventeen times, and is translated in the English Bible as follows.

- ➔ Genesis 18:7: *"And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf*

Now, confirming that the curse of mortality had taken effect, the life span has been reduced considerably, and the number of children has correspondingly dropped.

present a rather distorted picture. I want to again emphasize that this contradicts the idea that the original language is the key to understanding the Bible. It is clear that in some sense there is either inconsistency in the texts themselves, or the understanding of the translators. Here are the various representations of the eyes of Leah.

- ➔ "Tender" KJV/ASV/DARBY/ERV/GENEVA/NET/RWB/WEB/YLT
- ➔ "Delicate" NKJV/CEB/CEB
- ➔ "Weak" NASB/NIV/RSV/CJB/ESV/JPS/SEPTUAGINT/NAS/NAU/NIB/TNK/ABP/BRENTON/LITV
- ➔ "Lovely" NRSV/NJB/LIVING/GNB
- ➔ "Clouded" BBE
- ➔ "Ordinary" CSB
- ➔ "Blair-eyed" DOUAY
- ➔ "Attractive" GWN

tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it." (Gen 18:7)

- ➔ *"Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored."* (Gen 29:17)
- ➔ *"And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die."* (Gen 33:13)
- ➔ *"And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."* (Deut 20:8)
- ➔ *"So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother,*

and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave." (Deut 28:54)

- ➡ "The **tender** and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil toward the husband of her bosom, and toward her son, and toward her daughter." (Deut 28:56)
- ➡ "And I am this day **weak**, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the LORD shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." (2 Sam 3:39).
- ➡ "And David said, Solomon my son is young and **tender**, and the house that is to be builded for the LORD must be exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death" (1 Chr 22:5).
- ➡ "Furthermore David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and **tender**, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the LORD God." (1 Chron 29:1).
- ➡ "And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and **tenderhearted**, and could not withstand them." (2 Chron 13:7).
- ➡ "Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak **soft** words unto thee?" (Job 41:3).
- ➡ "A **soft** answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger." (Prov 15:1).
- ➡ "By long forbearing is a prince persuaded, and a **soft** tongue

breaketh the bone." (Prov 25:15).

- ➡ "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground: there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans: for thou shalt no more be called **tender** and delicate." (Isa 47:1)
- ➡ "Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a **tender** one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent." (Ezek 17:22)
- ➡ "But if ye show the dream, and the interpretation thereof, ye shall receive of me gifts and rewards and **great** honor: therefore show me the dream, and the interpretation thereof." (Dan 2:6)
- ➡ "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This **great** image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible." (Dan 2:31)

I have gone through this rather laborious exercise to make a point. The **meaning** of this text cannot be confidently established by knowing the meaning of Hebrew words. I will view the context, using it to determine the sense of the word "**tender**."

First, I would, remind you that women of the East were generally veiled – as practice that continues to this day. If this was the case with Leah, only her eyes would be visible.

When Rebekah first confronted Isaac, "*she took a veil and covered herself*" (Gen 24:65). I am assuming that Leah and Rachel did the same thing.

In this text, a **comparison** is made between Leah and Rachel. I take it to mean that Leah's eyes were attractive, testifying of tenderness and sensitivity.

RACHEL WAS BEAUTIFUL AND WELL FAVORED

" . . . but Rachel was beautiful and well favored." Other versions read, "beautiful of form and appearance," ^{NKJV} "beautiful of form and face," ^{NASB} "lovely in form and beautiful," ^{NRSV} "fair in face and in form," ^{BBE} "had a beautiful figure and was look-looking," ^{CEB} "beautiful figure and beautiful features," ^{GWN} "beautiful in appearance, and exceedingly fair in countenance," ^{SEPTUAGINT} "beautiful and attractive." ^{AMPLIFIED}

The fact that her countenance could be observed in her face, can be accounted for by the fact that Rachel had been speaking with her father, Laban, in which case she probably removed her veil from a part of her face.

As to the definition of beauty during those times. Solomon describes a beautiful woman in terms that are generally not accepted in our society (Song 7:2). Having a "*beautiful form*" ^{NKJV}, or a "*beautiful figure*," ^{GWN} therefore might not have been what is accepted in our time.



I see both woman being perceived as attractive – Leah in her eyes, which

were especially attractive, and Rachel in her form and countenance, a beauty

that was, according to the flesh, more extensive.

JACOB SERVES SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL

"¹⁸ And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. ¹⁹ And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. ²⁰ And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."

JACOB LOVED RACHEL

"And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. . ."

Jacob Loved Rachel

Jacob was attracted to Rachel, and "loved her." That is, he had an affection for her, being drawn to her. Behind the scenes, however, God was working out His purpose, using His prerogatives, and making the choices. This is how it had to be, for the nation He had ordained was being formed – the nation through which the Savior

human decisions. At the most minute level, what God has purposed is accomplished by what God Himself does (Isa 14:24; 46:11; Rom 9:11; Eph 1:11).

I Will Serve Seven Years

For the privilege of having Rachel; as his wife, Jacob offers to work seven years for her. **There is no legitimate price that love will not pay!** There is a sense in which love knows no inconvenience, and does not reckon cost to be a burden.

ABIDE WITH ME

" . . . And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. . ."

Although Laban proved to be a vacillating man, at the moment, and in accordance with God's providence, it

determination level. It is ever true, *"The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way"* (Psa 37:23).

JACOB SERVED SEVEN YEARS FOR RACHEL

" . . . And Jacob served seven years for Rachel . . ."

There are twenty-three words that summarize seven years of Jacob's life! So far as the revelation is concerned, we do not know a single thing that happened during those seven years. Hosea summarizes those seven years in these words, *"And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep"* (Hosea 12:12).

Here again we see that God, in his revelation, covers only the things that are pertinent to His purpose. He does not allow us to get bogged down in the details of Jacob's life that do not contribute to our understanding of His purpose.

This is why it is wrong to get entangled in *"the affairs of this life"* (2 Tim 2:4). This by no means suggests that we ignore these affairs, pretending as though they were not there. Rather, we do not allow them to become our focus or stress. They are not what compel us to make the major decisions of our life.

I do not believe there is an acceptable level of understanding on this matter among professing Christians. As a general rule, and owing to flawed teaching on this matter, there appears to be little understanding of the following.

➡ **THE FUNDAMENTAL QUEST.** *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things*

For the privilege of having Rachel; as his wife, Jacob offers to work seven years for her. There is no legitimate price that love will not pay! There is a sense in which love knows no inconvenience, and does not reckon cost to be a burden.

would come into the world (Gen 12:3; 49:10; Isa 9:6-7; Rom 1:3; 9:5; 2 Tim 2:8; Rev 22:16).

The purpose of this record is to account for the rise and development of Israel, into which the Messiah would be born.

The promises of God are not fulfilled through a series of independent

makes perfect sense to Laban, at this time, to agree with Jacob's proposal.

Actually, this was God working all things together for the good of Jacob, whom He loved (Mal 1:2-3; Rom 9:13). How the people of God must learn that their lives are not governed by happenstance, mere coincidence, and human decisions. Whatever part such things play in life, it is not at the

shall be added unto you." (Matt 6:33)

- ➔ **ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES.** *"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."* (Matt 10:37)
- ➔ **PAYING THE PRICE.** *"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."* (Matt 10:38)
- ➔ **NOT ASSUMING.** *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."* (1 Cor 10:12)
- ➔ **IT IS ALL OR NOTHING.** *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."* (1 Cor 10:31)
- ➔ **WORDS AND DEEDS.** *"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* (Col 3:17)
- ➔ **PUTTING YOUR HEART INTO IT.** *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."* (Col 3:23)
- ➔ **AVOIDING ENTANGLEMENTS.** *"No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."* (2 Tim 2:4)

This is not an area where men are at liberty to create laws and special procedures. However, words like those above are to be taken seriously as men work out their own salvation with fear and trembling – a posture that is mandatory (Phil 2:12). God working with us both to do and to will of His own good pleasure is within the environment of working out our own salvation. It is simply wrong to expect God to work within you both to will and to do if you are not working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

THEY SEEMED BUT A FEW DAYS

" . . . and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to

The secret to a proper perspective of time is for the church, Christ's "bride," to have an increasing and consist love for her Bridegroom. That love is enhanced by familiarity with the Bridegroom, what He has done, what He is doing, and what will take place when the bride is joined to Him in the glory.

her."

Seven years can appear as a rather long time – unless there is a strong love that is compelling the labor. Considering the lunar year, which the Jews kept (360 days), Jacob labored for 2,520 days, or 60,480 hours, in order to appropriate his bride, Rachel. That is, as men would reckon, a rather lengthy time.

However, all through that time, Jacob was driven on by his love for Rachel, and the anticipation of her being his wife. That compelling love made 2,520 days seem like only a "few days." He was where he could see Rachel, perhaps speak frequently with her, and certainly think a lot about her. That made the time pass quickly, providing a context that neutralized the otherwise perspective of great length.

There are some things worth working and waiting for!

The Posture of the Pilgrim

While they are in the world, those in Christ are on a pilgrimage to their promised land. They are appropriately termed "*pilgrims and strangers*," and are solemnly admonished to "*abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul*" (1 Pet 2:11). It is essential that during this pilgrimage they avoid anything that makes it appear long and arduous. As soon as the journey is primarily associated with difficulty, time will become their enemy.

The secret to a proper perspective of time is for the church, Christ's "bride," to have an increasing and consist love for her Bridegroom. That love is enhanced by familiarity with the

Bridegroom, what He has done, what He is doing, and what will take place when the bride is joined to Him in the glory. **All of those things water the flowers of love, causing them, to grow, being strong and healthy.**

This is where edification, exhortation, and comfort are especially important – things that especially take place in the assembly of the saints (1 Cor 14:3; Rom 14:19; 1 Cor 14:12,26; Eph 4:12,16; 1 Thess 5:11).

As our love for the Savior increases, and anticipation grows, the days of our pilgrimage seem rather short. I can testify of my own experience in this matter. On December 26th, 2012, I shall complete seventy years of my pilgrimage in Christ Jesus. Particularly since 1952, they have seemed short. Prior to that, for a few years, they seemed rather lengthy owing to my own departure from the faith. During that short stint, life became a burden because of my attraction to this present evil world. However since then, the days have passed remarkably swiftly – and it is all because of my love for the Savior.

When one becomes entangled in the affairs of this life, however right it may appear at the time, ones love for Jesus wanes, and life begins to be a burden. Under those circumstances life does not appear brief, or as a few days. I covert deliverance from unwarranted distraction for all of God'S people.

A Perspective of Jesus

Jacob labored for seven years for Rachel. Jesus spent over thirty-three years in the world in order to appropriate His bride. The first thirty

years were in personal preparation – like the one month Jacob spent in Laban’s house. The last 3-3^{1/2} were spent in labor for the bride, culminating in laying down His life, in which He purchased the church for Himself (Acts

20:28). As Jesus went about *“doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil”* (Acts 10:36), the days seemed but a few for the love he had for His bride.

And now, Jesus has been waiting in the glory for over two thousand years – anticipating His marriage ,to His bride. They have no doubt passed swiftly because of His great love for *“the church”* (Eph 5:25).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 12/28/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The forty-ninth lesson will cover verses 21 through 35 of chapter twenty-nine: “JACOB LABORS FOR RACHEL.” Having labored seven years for Rachel, Jacob is given Leah instead, which substitute he did not discover until the next morning. Laban then told him he had to labor seven more years to receive Rachel. During this time Simeon and Judah were born of Leah. The meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.