



## The Book of Genesis

### Lesson Number 51



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=Literary 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'S ENCOUNTER WITH LABAN

Gen 30:22 "And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. <sup>23</sup> And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: <sup>24</sup> And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son. <sup>25</sup> And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. <sup>26</sup> Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee. <sup>27</sup> And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. <sup>28</sup> And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. <sup>29</sup> And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. <sup>30</sup> For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? <sup>31</sup> 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. <sup>32</sup> I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. <sup>33</sup> So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me. <sup>34</sup> And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. <sup>35</sup> And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons. <sup>36</sup> And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. <sup>37</sup> And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. <sup>38</sup> And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. <sup>39</sup> And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted. <sup>40</sup> And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstreaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle. <sup>41</sup> And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. <sup>42</sup> But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. <sup>43</sup> And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses." ..... (Genesis 30:22-43)

## INTRODUCTION

### CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ GIVE ME MY WIFE! (29:21)
- ▶ LABAN GIVES JACOB LEAH (29:22-24)
- ▶ BEHOLD, IT WAS LEAH (29:25-26)
- ▶ SERVE ME YET SEVEN OTHER YEARS (29:27-30)
- ▶ THE LORD SAW LEAH WAS HATED (29:31)
- ▶ AND LEAH CONCEIVED (29:32)
- ▶ AND LEAH CONCEIVED AGAIN (29:33)
- ▶ THIS TIME (29:34-35)
- ▶ CONCLUSION

#### A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

God remembers Rachel, and opens her womb.

Again we see the working of the Lord in building the nation of Israel. **When the nation is built, there will not be a single person or group of persons that will be able to say they were the cause of the creation.** This is the consistent manner in which the Lord works, causing things to happen so no flesh can glory in His presence (1 Cor 1:29).

- ➔ This was true of Adam obtaining a wife (Gen 2:21-22), and another son being born to him to take the place of Abel (Gen 4:25).
- ➔ It was God's decision that accounted for Noah and his family

surviving the flood (Gen 6:8; 7:1; 8:1,15).

- ➔ Abraham owed his total involvement in the purpose of God to God's own work: God called him (Gen 12:3), brought him out (Gen 15:7), caused him to prosper (Gen 24:35), gave him the victory over his enemies (Gen 14:20); and enabled him to have Isaac through Sarah (Heb 11:12), etc.
- ➔ Isaac was the result of the promise of God, born because of God's promise (Gen 17:21; Gal 4:28). Although his wife was barren, God enabled her to bear two children, one of which was elected by God (Rom 9:11-13).

*another son."*

Jacob then requests Laban to send him away with his wives and children to his own country. Laban balks at the request, saying he knows God has prospered him because of Jacob's presence. He asks Jacob to stay, and to again name his wages. Jacob agrees to stay if he can walk through the flocks and separate *"all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats."* These, he said *"shall be my hire."*

When the last tally is taken, any animal that was with Jacob, yet did not meet these specifications, would be

**Jacob then took action to ensure he would legitimately obtain large flocks. Laban's servants charged Jacob with theft, and Laban pursued Jacob.**

- ➔ Now Jacob is prominent in God's purpose because of His enablement and choice (Rom 9:13). He has Joseph through Rachel, who formerly was barren.

Joseph is born, and Rachel prophesies, *"The Lord shall add to me*

considered stolen by him. Laban agreed to this arrangement, and Jacob separated his flocks from the rest of Laban's flocks by a distance of three days journey. Jacob then took action to ensure he would legitimately obtain large flocks. Laban's servants charged Jacob with theft, and Laban pursued Jacob.

## GOD REMEMBERED RACHEL

Gen 30:22 *"And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. <sup>23</sup> And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach . . ."*

#### GOD REMEMBERED

*"And God remembered Rachel. . ."*

When the Scriptures says *"God remembered,"* it does not mean He ever forgot. The Spirit makes known to the

children of God, *"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister"* (Heb 6:10). **God does not**

Rachel gives birth to Joseph, and Jacob asks Laban to send him away to his own country. Laban then asks him to stay, and a peculiar agreement is struck. – Given O. Blakely

forget His promises, or the ones to whom they have been made. To wayward Israel; He said, *"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me"* (Isa 49:15-16).

Joseph when he was hated by his brethren, thrown into a pit, sold to a band of Midianites, falsely charged by Pharaoh's wife, and imprisoned for about thirteen years. But that was only *"Until the time that his word came: the word of the LORD tried him. The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of*

REMEMBRANCES

- GOD REMEMBERS NOAH AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE FLOOD. *"And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged."* (Gen 8:1)
- GOD REMEMBERS ABRAHAM WHEN SODOM IS ABOUT TO BE DESTROYED. *"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt."* (Gen 19:29)
- GOD REMEMBERS RACHEL AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF BARRENNESS. *"And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb."* (Gen 30:22)
- GOD REMEMBERS HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB AFTER ISRAEL HAS BEEN IN BONDAGE FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS. *"And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob."* (Ex 2:24)
- GOD TELLS ISRAEL WHEN HE WILL REMEMBER HIS COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC, AND JACOB. *"Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land."* (Lev 26:42)
- GOD REMEMBERS WHAT AMALEK DID TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. *"Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt."* (1 Sam 15:2)
- GOD REMEMBERS THE BETTER TIMES OF ISRAEL. *"Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land*

**When the expression "God remembered" is found, the meaning is that He again focuses His attention on something or someone. It is not that He had ever forgotten what is now remembered.**

When the expression *"God remembered"* is found, the meaning is that He again focuses His attention on something or someone. It is not that He had ever forgotten what is now remembered. Rather, He had not concentrated on the matter, but now will work to intervene, visit, bless, defend, enable, and protect. This is God's manner of working.

**The Example of Noah**

When Noah was born, his father Lamech *"And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed"* (Gen 5:29). For the four hundred and eighty years, it may have appeared as though God had forgotten Noah. Nothing more is said of him during that period – a time when the world was waxing worse and worse, until God determined to "destroy all flesh." It was at that time that *"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord"* (Gen 6:8). It was then that God called him, commissioning him to build an ark in which he and his family would be saved from an impending global flood. **God had remembered Noah, and would now focus his attention upon him for good.**

**The Example of Joseph**

God may appear to have forgotten

*all his substance: To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom."* (Psa 105:19-22). It was at that time that God remembered Joseph, focusing his attention upon him.

**The Example of Moses**

Moses was born during a time when the male children were being slaughtered by order of the Pharaoh of Egypt. When he was born, he *"was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment"* (Heb 11:23). For the next forty years, it appeared as though God had forgotten him. He was raised in Pharaoh's house, remaining isolated from his enslaved people. However, after a series of events which appeared to make things all the worse, and the passing of forty long years in the wilderness, *"the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed"* (Ex 3:2). Through that angel, the Lord informed Moses that he had been chosen to lead Israel out of Egyptian bondage (Ex 3:3-4:17). What had happened? **The Lord had remembered Moses, and would now focus his attention on him.**

**A RECORD OF SOME OF THE LORD'S**

that was not sown." (Jer 2:2)

- GOD REMINDS ISRAEL THAT HE REMEMBERS ALL THEIR WICKEDNESS. "And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face." (Hosea 7:2)

Each of these remembrances was a prelude to some form of Divine intervention, whether by judgment or blessing. Saying that God remembers is a kind of anthropomorphism – "AN INTERPRETATION OF WHAT IS NOT HUMAN OR PERSONAL IN TERMS OF HUMAN OR PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS." MERRIAM-WEBSTER This same sort of thing is done when Scriptures refer to God of terms that belong to men. Thus we read of God's "face," GEN 19:13 "eyes," GENESIS 6:8 "ears," NUMBERS 11:13 "mouth," DEUT 8:3 "hand," EX 9:3 "feet," EX 24:10 "arm," ISAIAH 53:1 etc.

This is a facet of what can be viewed as God humbling Himself to have associations with men. As it is written, "Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" (Psa 113:5-6). The NIV reads, "stoops down." When God speaks of Himself as remembering, He is stooping down so we can obtain a better understanding of Him. The ultimate example of this is when the Word "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil 2:7-8).

#### GOD HEARKENED TO HER

"...and God hearkened to her..."

Other versions read, "listened to her," NKJV "gave heed to her," NASB "heard her," GENEVA "answered her prayer," GWN "paid attention to her," NET and "answered her pleading." AMPLIFIED

There is a sense in which nothing that is said is hidden from the Lord. Thus, when the children of Israel murmured, "the Lord heard it" (Num

11:1). When certain objected to Moses being the spokesman for God, "the Lord heard it" (Num 12:2). James wrote to some pretentious Christians who had cheated their workers, "Behold, the hire

Rachel's prayer!

Her barrenness was a kind of test that she eventually passed. She did not reconcile herself to being barren, but

**I am still impressed significantly by the way the patriarchs, their servants, and their wives reasoned. When the Lord acted in their behalf, they saw it and responded appropriately.**

of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth" [hosts] (James 5:4).

No one can afford to imagine they can speak a word, whether good or bad, of which the Lord is not aware. We might refer to that as a general hearing.

Here, the hearing of the Lord is used in a special sense.

Previously, God "hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived" (Gen 30:17). His hearing moved Him to do something about the circumstance.

#### Reasoning on This Hearing

John reasoned with us on this matter of the Lord hearing us. He confirms that it involves Him responding to what hears, and not simply being aware that something was said. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14-15).

Thus, the fact that God heard Rachel is confirmation that He will do something about her condition.

#### AND OPENED HER WOMB

". . . and opened her womb."

Indeed, God did act when He heard

sought the Lord on the matter. Her prayers were heard – following the birth of ten sons by other women in the house – all fathered by her husband!

#### GOD HATH TAKEN AWAY MY REPROACH

"And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach . . ."

I am still impressed significantly by the way the patriarchs, their servants, and their wives reasoned. When the Lord acted in their behalf, they saw it and responded appropriately.

➤ When she gave birth to Isaac, Sarah said, "God hath made me to laugh." (Gen 21:6).

➤ When Abraham's servant came to the house in which he could find a wife for Isaac, he told them: "the LORD hath blessed my master greatly" (Gen 24:35).

➤ Abraham's servant referred to the prospective wife of Isaac as "the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my master's son" (Gen 24:44).

➤ When testifying concerning his trip to Laban's house, Abraham's servant said, "the Lord hath prospered my way" (Gen 24:56).

➤ When Isaac found a place in Canaan he confessed, "For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall

**When our prayers are answered, it is in order to acknowledge that it is the working of the Lord – even if the circumstances suggest otherwise.**

*be fruitful in the land*" (Gen 26:22).

- ➔ When Leah first conceived she said, *"Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction"* (Gen 29:32).
- ➔ When Leah conceived again she said, *"Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore*

*given me this son also*" (Gen 29:33).

- ➔ When Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid conceived, Rachel said, *"God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son"* (Gen 30:6).
- ➔ When Leah conceived her fifth son she said, *"God hath given me my*

*hire*" (Gen 30:18).

- ➔ When Leah bore her sixth son she said, *"God hath endued me with a good dowry"* (Gen 30:20).

- ➔ Now that Rachel bares a son, she says, *"God hath taken away my reproach"* (Gen 30:23).

**A WORD OF EXHORTATION**

When our prayers are answered, it is in order to acknowledge that it is the working of the Lord – even if the circumstances suggest otherwise. **It is totally out of order for the responses of those who are in Christ Jesus to be less than those who lived prior to the Word becoming flesh!** God must be given credit for what He alone does.

**SHE CALLED HIS NAME JOSEPH**

*" 24 . . . And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son."*

**SHE CALLED HIS NAME JOSEPH**

*". . . And she called his name Joseph; and said. . ."*

The name "Joseph" means, "INCREASE, ADDITION," HITCHCOCK "IN CREASER," EASTON "HE WILL INCREASE." SMITH

The clause that follows declares that the increase Rachel expected was that of another son. Sarah only had one son. Rebekah had two, but one was rejected. **Rachel would have two, with both being accepted in a special way, as Scripture will attest** (Gen 48:12-22; 49:26).

Beginning here, the name "Joseph" is mentioned in the book of Genesis alone one hundred and thirty-eight times. **Beginning with the thirty-seventh chapter, through chapter fifty, he is the prominent individual in Genesis.** He is mentioned three hundred and seventy times in the whole of Scripture. And it all begins right here.

**THE LORD SHALL ADD**

*". . . The LORD shall add to me*

*another son."*

Rachel sensed that the blessing of the Lord was large. By faith she reasoned the Lord would add another on to her quiver, which He did. **However, she made no attempt to obtain mandrakes in order for this conception.** She reasoned from a blessing to a blessing, which is the appropriate way for a believer to think.

**A Refreshing Manner of Thought**

of this kind of thinking include the following expressions:

- ➔ *"From strength to strength"* (Psa 84:7).
- ➔ *"From faith to faith"* (Rom 1:17).
- ➔ *"From glory to glory"* (2 Cor 3:18).
- ➔ *"Free from sin" in order to be "servants to God"* (Rom 6:22).

**One of the deadliest modes of thought perpetrated by Babylon the Great is the "Now I've got it" mentality. A certain thing is held out to the people – like the baptism of the Holy Ghost, or speaking in tongues, or gaining victory over a particular sin. When the benefit has been realized, there is a temptation to think this is the pinnacle of spiritual experience.**

For the child of God, here is a refreshing way to think: **from one blessing to another blessing.** Examples

- ➔ *"Dead to the law" in order to be "married" to Christ* (Rom 7:4).

- ➔ The “*effectual working of every part*” in order to the “*increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love*” (Eph 4:15).
- ➔ The Lord has redeemed “*from all iniquity*” in order that He might “*purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*” (Tit 2:14).
- ➔ Begotten by God in order to have a living hope (1 Pet 1:3).

This is the manner of God’s working with His people. **One of the deadliest modes of thought perpetrated by Babylon the Great is the “Now I’ve got it” mentality.** A certain thing is held out to the people – like the baptism of

the Holy Ghost, or speaking in tongues, or gaining victory over a particular sin. When the benefit has been realized, there is a temptation to think this is the pinnacle of spiritual experience. **When this idea is accepted, pressing toward the mark begins to wane, and seeking the things that are above is no longer seen as a requirement.** Suddenly there is a diminishment of the awareness that we are in a frail tabernacle of clay, are still eagerly sought by our adversary the devil, and remain in a world that is evil and is exercising evil influences upon us. It is as though the individual settled down in a kind of spiritual rocking chair to complete his life in the lap of ease. The idea of “*more*” fades away, and mediocrity is birthed – that dreaded hindrance to spiritual growth and

maturity.

**The child of God must learn to reason like Rachel: “*The Lord shall add to me!*”** As long as we are in this world there is no point at which we can say, “It cannot get any better than this,” or “I have reached the highest point now.”

**The child of God must learn how to respond appropriately to the blessing of the Lord.** To be sure, there are unusual benefits to be realized. However, when they come, they must not be viewed as though nothing equally great, or even greater, could ever occur. As long as we are in this tabernacle of clay, the words “*better*” and “*more*” will never become obsolete. Of that, you may be sure.

## SEND ME AWAY

“<sup>25</sup> *And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.* <sup>26</sup> *Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.*”

### SEND ME AWAY

“*And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place and to my country . . .*”

Although he had prospered much in the house and country of Laban, this is not where he was intended to spend his life. His “*own place*” and “*country*”

was Canaan, and that is where he wanted to be.

Jacob did not reproach Laban by saying this is not where he desired to be. He rather said he wanted to return to his own place and country.

### For Those in Christ Jesus

It is much the same for those in Christ Jesus. **They have a preference for heaven – the “*better country*”** (Heb 11:16). Paul stated it this way, “*For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you*” (Phil 1:23-24). **He did not say, “I hate living in the world!” “I cannot stand it here any longer.” “Life has**

simply been too hard for me.”

While it is not proper to approach this matter from a strictly “ought to,” or legalistic point of view, some cursory observations are in order.

**Because we are living in a dying universe, a defiled world, and a mortal body, life can deal some hard blows to us.** No one can cause such occurrences to be pleasant, or to be viewed as preferable. Yet, our responses to them must be dictated by faith and hope, not human analysis. Flesh will cry out, “Why did this happen to me?” Or, “I had rather be dead than to go through this!” Or, as Solomon retorted, “*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*” (Eccl 1:2; 12:8). However, rather than being absorbed with the hurt of such experiences, **they can be viewed in a manner than makes for insight and comfort, not to mention thanksgiving.** Some examples should suffice.

- ➔ **JOB.** When Job suffered extraordinary sufferings, he responded, “*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him.*” (Job 13:15)

**Although he had prospered much in the house and country of Laban, this is not where he was intended to spend his life. His “own place” and “country” was Canaan, and that is where he wanted to be.**

- ➔ **HANNAH.** When Hannah was in bitterness of soul because of her barrenness, she *“prayed unto the Lord and wept sore”* (1 Sam 1:10).
- ➔ **DAVID.** When the waves of death compassed David, and the floods of ungodly men made him afraid, he said, *“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears”* (2 Sam 22:7).
- ➔ **NEHEMIAH.** When Nehemiah was managing the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, Sanballat and Tobiah caused him much trouble, seeking to put him in fear. The man of God turned to the Lord and said, *“My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear”* (Neh 6:14).
- ➔ **THE EARLY CHURCH.** When the early church was viciously opposed, their leaders beaten, and threats made against them, *“they lifted up their voice to God with one accord”* (Acts 4:24).
- ➔ **PAUL.** When experiencing a grievous *“thorn in the flesh,”* Paul reasoned, *“And lest I should be exalted above measure,”* and *“for this thing I besought the Lord thrice.”* When the Lord told him His grace was sufficient, and they he would have to live with the thorn, Paul responded, *“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me”* (2 Cor 12:9).
- ➔ **PAUL.** When Paul was in bondage, incarcerated for the cause of Christ, he reasoned, *“For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ”* (Phil 1:19).

**You may remember that Israel was noted for murmuring and complaining when things were not going well for them** (Ex 15:24; 16:2-9; 16:12; 17:3;

Num 14:2,27,29,36; 16:11,41; 17:5,10; Deut 1:27; Psa 106:25). That consistent response was not viewed favorably by the Lord.

The response of the Lord to those murmurings is enough to teach us this is not a wise course – even though it is so easy for the flesh to murmur. His response indicates that the Lord takes murmuring personally. *“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against Me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against Me”* (Num 14:27).

**During Job’s trial, he did not murmur or complain.** He did desire to have access to God to inquire why he was having the painful experiences. *“Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments”* (Job 23:3-4). Later, when the Lord responded to Job, here is what he said, and how Job replied to Him. *“Shall he*

*that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further”* (Job 40:2-5).

If you are tempted to murmur and complain, or even to question the manner in which the Lord is managing your life, it is good to ponder Job. I speak as one who is familiar with suffering.

**GIVE ME MY WIVES AND MY CHILDREN**

*“Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go . . .”*

This certainly is not an unreasonable request. Jacob had labored for fourteen years for Rachel, and had willingly accepted Leah, even though she was not his preference. Now, his debt had been paid, and it was only proper that he be released and sent away with the blessing of Laban.

**THOU KNOWEST MY SERVICE**

*“ . . . for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.”* Other versions read, *“You know how much work I have done for you,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“you know very well the service I have given you,”* <sup>NRSV</sup> *“You know very well how faithfully I have served you,”* <sup>CJB</sup> *“You know how hard I have worked for you,”* <sup>CSB</sup> *“You are well aware how long I have worked for you,”* <sup>NJB</sup> and *“you know how fully I have paid for them with my service to you.”* <sup>LIVING</sup>

**It is unfortunate that in the industrial and retail business world professing “Christians” do not generally have a good reputation. It is even worse in the “church world,” with thousands of congregations having a burgeoning membership that does little or nothing for the congregation.**

**Even though Jacob’s tenure in the service of Laban was attended by some rather grievous and imposed circumstances, yet he had been a good workman and servant.** So good, in fact, that he could draw Laban’s attention to the manner of his work. He had not been a sluggard, but had rather been excellent in his service. **Although Laban had brought many disadvantages to Jacob, Jacob had brought none to him.** He had been a good and faithful servant.

**A Lesson to be Learned**

It is unfortunate that in the

industrial and retail business world professing “Christians” do not generally have a good reputation. It is even worse in the “church world,” with thousands of congregations having a burgeoning membership that does little or nothing for the congregation. **Even though labor and toil has been imposed upon men because of sin (Gen 3:19), a considerable percentage of humanity does not do well laboring at all.**

Work is an area where God can receive glory, a good reputation can be obtained, the power of sin neutralized, and other people advantaged. **Those in**

**Christ should be the very best employees, with there being nothing in their labors that causes undue concern, or tarnishes the name of the Lord.** Men may not honor such work, but God will. Work and responsibility are areas in which the people of God should shine.

There is no procedure set in motion to ensure that every child of God works in an acceptable manner. The Lord has not established policemen to ensure that all of His children do well in working. However, general details have been given to all workman, and they are themselves responsible for

carrying them out. *“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons”* (Col 3:22-25).

**Jacob is an ancient example of someone who worked in this manner – without the benefit of redemption.**

## I HAVE LEARNED BY EXPERIENCE

*“<sup>27</sup> And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.<sup>28</sup> And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.”*

Laban cannot deny that Jacob has been an excellent servant, even bringing certain advantages to him.

### I PRAY THEE TO TARRY

*“And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry . . .”* Other versions read, *“Please stay,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“if it pleases you, stay with me,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“If you will let me say so, do not go away,”* <sup>BEB</sup> *“Do me this favor,”* <sup>CEB</sup> *“If you regard me favorably, then please listen,”* <sup>CJB</sup> and *“Please don’t leave me.”* <sup>LIVING</sup>

he has to say. He will present what he feels to be a powerful argument, imagining that it will offset his injustice toward Jacob. **Although he gives some indication that he has recognized God has blessed Jacob, he does not consider that God is over the very matter he is attempting to negotiate.** That is one of the marks of the ungodly. They can sometimes look backward and make some profession of having seen God at work. But they cannot bring him into the present moment. That is involved in this statement, made concerning the wicked: *“God is not in all his thoughts”* (Psa 10:4).

### I HAVE LEARNED BY EXPERIENCE

*“ . . .for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed*

I have compiled a near-total list of the renderings of this phrase.

- ➔ “I have divined” <sup>ASV/NASB/ERV/NAU</sup>
- ➔ “I have learned by divination” <sup>NIV/NRSV/RSV/CSB/ESV/NET/NJB/TNK/GNB</sup>
- ➔ “I have seen by the signs” <sup>BEB</sup>
- ➔ “I’ve discovered by a divine sign” <sup>CEB</sup>
- ➔ “I have discovered” <sup>DARBY</sup>
- ➔ “I have perceived” <sup>GENEVA</sup>
- ➔ “I have learned from the signs” <sup>GWN</sup>
- ➔ “I have observed the signs” <sup>JPS</sup>
- ➔ “I have learned through divination” <sup>ASV/NASB/ERV/NAU/NAB/ISV</sup>
- ➔ “I have learnt by divination” <sup>NJB</sup>
- ➔ “I have become wealthy” <sup>NLT</sup>
- ➔ “I have observed diligently” <sup>YLT</sup>
- ➔ “For a fortune-teller that I consulted told me” <sup>LIVING</sup>
- ➔ “Before you could I foretell” <sup>ABP</sup>
- ➔ “I would augur [one held to foretell events by] well,” <sup>Septuagint/Brenton</sup>

**Although he gives some indication that he has recognized God has blessed Jacob, he does not consider that God is over the very matter he is attempting to negotiate.**

*me for thy sake. . .”*

Laban is pleading for Jacob to hear him out, carefully listening to what

Because of the wide variety of representations in the various versions,



- ➔ "I'm sure" <sup>CEV</sup>
- ➔ "I know" <sup>ERV</sup>
- ➔ "I have seen omens" <sup>LITV</sup>
- ➔ "I have learned through divine inquiry" <sup>MESSAGE</sup>
- ➔ "I have learned by experience *and* from the omens in divination." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

There you have twenty different views of the text – all developed by purported scholars in the original language, with historical and lexical aids ad-infinitum at their disposal. **Even to a simpleton, it ought to be apparent that consistency is lacking in all of these resources.**

Briefly summarized, these views present the following possibilities of the source of Laban's conclusion.

- ➔ That he personally, using divination, arrived at the stated conclusion.
  - ➔ That he consulted with some other diviner to reach it.
  - ➔ That his conclusion was reached by observing signs.
  - ➔ That he reached his conclusion by a special sign.
  - ➔ That his wealth was the sign.
  - ➔ That he made a special inquiry into divination.
  - ➔ That he arrived at his conclusion simply by observing Jacob's circumstances ("by experience," "discovered," "observed diligently," "I'm sure," "I know").
- I do not believe there is sufficient evidence to justify representing Laban as having consulted with a diviner, or using divination.** That view is based upon a possible interpretation of a certain word, which interpretation is based upon its traditional use by the Hebrews. I will proceed with the

### VARIOUS COMMENTATORS

"HAVING LEARNT BY FOURTEEN YEARS' ACQUAINTANCE WITH JACOB TO KNOW THE VALUE OF A GOOD SHEPHERD." <sup>PULPIT COMMENTARY</sup>

"BY THE OBSERVATIONS MADE IN THE FOURTEEN YEARS PAST." <sup>JOHN GILL</sup>

"TO ME THE TRUE INTERPRETATION SEEMS TO BE, AS IF HE HAD SAID, THAT THE BLESSING OF GOD WAS AS PERCEPTIBLE TO HIM, AS IF IT HAD BEEN ATTESTED BY PROPHECY, OR FOUND OUT BY AUGURY." <sup>JOHN CALVIN</sup>

"I HAVE BEEN AN ATTENTIVE OBSERVER. THE RESULT OF HIS OBSERVATION IS EXPRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING WORDS." <sup>ALBERT BARNES</sup>

"I HAVE DILIGENTLY CONSIDERED THE WHOLE OF THY CONDUCT, AND MARKED THE INCREASE OF MY PROPERTY." <sup>ADAM CLARKE</sup>

"LABAN'S LEARNING: I HAVE LEARNED BY EXPERIENCE. NOTE, THERE IS MANY A PROFITABLE GOOD LESSON TO BE LEARNED BY EXPERIENCE. WE ARE VERY UNAPT SCHOLARS IF WE HAVE NOT LEARNED BY EXPERIENCE THE EVIL OF SIN, THE TREACHERY OF OUR OWN HEARTS, THE VANITY OF THE WORLD, THE GOODNESS OF GOD, THE GAINS OF GODLINESS, AND THE LIKE." <sup>MATTHEW HENRY</sup>

persuasion that Laban was convinced by what he witnessed in Jacob's life, and by the impact it had upon his own personal status.

**Laban had beheld an increase in his own possessions that could not be accounted for by the normal operations of his household.** He rightly confessed to Jacob, *"the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake."* Other versions read, *"on your account,"* <sup>NASB</sup> *"because of you,"* <sup>NIV</sup> *"the many blessings I've been enjoying are all because of your being here,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> and *"at thy coming in."* <sup>BRENTON</sup>

**Laban knew by personal experience that his circumstances were decidedly better after Jacob had spent fourteen years with him as a servant.**

### A Principle in Salvation

This principle of being blessed because of another is woven throughout the fabric of salvation. For example, God has forgiven us **"for Christ's sake"** (Eph 4:32). He has accepted us because we have loved His Son, and believed He came out from God (John 16:27). It is wholly because of our willing identity with Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, that we have been accepted by Him. We are *"saved by His life"* (Rom 5:10). It is a blessed day when any person can say of Jesus, *"I have learned by experience that the*

*LORD hath blessed me for [Jesus'] sake."*

For some of us, it took quite a while to arrive at this joyful conclusion. **This was owing to the slant of the teaching to which we were subjected.**

### Learning by Experience

Experience, it seems, is not the easiest teacher. Until the senses are *"exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Heb 5:14), learning by experience is not the optimum form of learning. Learning by experience also postulates some grasp of the truth that is learned, for **if a person does not have some understanding of the thing that is to be learned, he will have no way of identifying whether or not he has learned it.**

In the case of Laban, he had already made an association between Jacob and the God of Jacob. Further, he had a concept of increase coming from God, having heard the witness of Abraham's servant (Gen 24:25). In a very real sense, what he had witnessed matched the words he had been told about the God of Abraham.

### APPOINT ME THY WAGES

*"And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it."* Other version read, *"name me your wages,"* <sup>NKJV</sup> *"Say then what your payment is to be,"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"so name your price,"* <sup>CEB</sup> *"State the wages I owe you,"* <sup>NAB</sup> *"Tell me how much I owe you,"* <sup>NLT</sup> *"Define thy hire to me,"* <sup>YLT</sup> *"How much of a raise do you need to get you to stay,"* <sup>LIVING</sup> *"You draw your wage from me,"* <sup>ABP</sup> *"Tell what I should pay you,"* <sup>ERV</sup> *"Set your wages on me,"* <sup>LITV</sup> and *"State your salary."* <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

This is much the same thing that Laban said when Jacob first agreed to work for him: *"And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be?"* (Gen 29:15). Jacob had said he would work seven years for Rachel. Laban did not stand by his agreement as he should have, but had Jacob work fourteen years for Rachel, even though

he did deliver Rachel to Jacob after seven years (Gen 29:28).

### An Unusual Precedent

Here is an unusual precedent: naming your own wages. It is similar to bartering for something, or negotiating a price for something to be purchased: "What shall I do for you?"

There are at least two instances in Scripture when the Lord Jesus asked someone what they wanted Him to do for them. One request was granted, and one was not.

➔ **BLIND BARTIMAEUS.** Bartimaeus was a blind beggar that sat on a roadside where Jesus was passing by. Finding out that the one passing by was Jesus, he cried out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:47). After Jesus had stopped and called him to Himself, He asked, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Bartimaeus "said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight" (Mark 10:51). It is written that he received his request: "And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" (Mark 10:52).

➔ On another occasion, the mother of James and John came to Jesus with a request. Jesus asked her, "What wilt thou?" and she responded, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy

**We are learn from this that Jesus always works within the framework of the will of God. No matter who asks, He will not contradict the will of the Father, or the purpose that He has put into effect.**

kingdom" (Mat 20:21). The request was denied: "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matt 20:23).

**We are learn from this that Jesus always works within the framework of the will of God.** No matter who asks, He will not contradict the will of the Father, or the purpose that He has put into effect. There is absolute consistency in this Divine response.

**However, Jesus did instruct us about requests that are sure to be answered – a Divine "I will do it," so to speak.** He promised, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in My

name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14).

But, what does it mean to ask something in the name of Christ? Is it the mere recitation of a formula in which the phrase "in the name of Jesus" is mentioned? We do not have to linger long in answering this question, for every prayer in which these are found has not been answered, which every one who prays well knows.

It appears to me that the meaning is this: **Whoever prays the kind of prayer that Jesus would pray in such circumstances; whoever has His Mind and His objectives, and prays because of Him rather than simply because of himself – that person's prayer will be answered!**

Stated yet another way, and in the words of John the beloved: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1 John 5:14-15). Now, there is something to think about!

## YOU HAD LITTLE AND NOW YOU HAVE MUCH

"<sup>29</sup> And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. <sup>30</sup> For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming . . ."

Jacob will now present the reasoning that has moved him to make

this request. It is extensive and Laban will recognize it is the truth.

### THOU KNOWEST

"And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed

thee since my coming . . ." Other versions read, "the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned,"<sup>NASB</sup> "wherever I have been,"<sup>NIV</sup> "the Lord has given you a blessing in everything I have done"<sup>BBE</sup> "The LORD blessed you wherever I took your livestock"<sup>CEB</sup> "The LORD has blessed you because of me"<sup>CSB</sup> "Jehovah has blessed thee from the time I came"<sup>DARBY</sup> and "Jehovah has

blessed you from everything I do!" <sup>LIVING</sup>

What a bold affirmation! Yet, it was true, and Laban knew that was the case. He had confessed he had learned by experience that the Lord had blessed him for Jacob's sake—i.e. if it had not been for Jacob, his flocks would have

found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass **from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house**

my table continually"(2 Sam 9:1-7).

➔ SOLOMON. Solomon, although he possessed unparalleled wisdom under the sun, angered God (1 Kgs 11:19), and rent the kingdom from his hand. Notwithstanding, for David's sake, God did not do it while Solomon remained alive. "Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. **Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son**" (1 Kgs 11:11-12)

➔ THE TRIBE OF JUDAH. In the days of the kings, Judah iniquity broke out within Judah. Yet, for the sake of David, God would not destroy it. "Yet **the LORD would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him alway a light, and to his children**" (2 Kgs 8:19).

➔ THE WORLD DURING A TIME OF GREAT TRIBULATION. Jesus spoke of a time of great tribulation and distress that would be global in nature. It would be so fierce that it would seem all the world was going to perish. Yet, in consideration of the elect, God would shorten the time of that tribulation. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: **but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened**" (Matt 24:22). "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: **but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days**" (Mark 13:20).

➔ THE SAVED ONES. The premier example of being blessed because of someone else, is the salvation of men. It is written, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**" (Eph 4:32).

**Were we able to see behind the scenes, we would see that the welfare, protection, and seeming success of many is not really owing to their own efforts.**

remained small.

Whatever anyone may think of Jacob, it had better be harmonious with this inspired declaration. God had such a high regard for Jacob, that he blessed Laban because of him. It was not Laban's life that caused him to prosper. It was not his agricultural acumen, or his diligence, or the idealness of his circumstances. **His increase was traced to the presence and work of a single man – Jacob.**

There have been several men who could trace their success to someone other than themselves.

➔ ISAAC. The rich blessing poured out upon Isaac was because of Abraham. "And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed **for my servant Abraham's sake.**" (Gen 26:24)

➔ POTIPHAR. Everything that Potiphar had in his house and in the field was made to prosper because of Joseph. "And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. **And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph**

**for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field"** (Gen 39:2-5)

➔ PHARAOH. In the days of Joseph, God revealed to Pharaoh that a period of unusual harvest was coming, followed by a grievous famine. Through Jacob, God revealed to Pharaoh what needed to be done, and Egypt survived the famine with an abundance of grain – all because of Joseph. "And the seven years of dearth began to come, **according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do**" (Gen 41:54-55).

➔ MEPHIBOSHETH. Here was the son of Jonathan, lame in his feet, and with nothing to qualify him for a place at king David's table. Yet, for the sake of his father, David took him in. "And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness **for Jonathan's sake?** . . . "And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely show thee kindness **for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at**

Were we able to see behind the scenes, we would see that the welfare, protection, and seeming success of many is not really owing to their own efforts. Many have been blessed and given certain advantages because of those who went before them. Paul spoke marriages being legitimate, and of children being sanctified by the believer in the house: *"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy"* (1 Cor 7:14).

It is no surprise, therefore, that Laban's possessions were increased because of Jacob, and Jacob was not ashamed to bear witness of it.

#### A KINGDOM MANNER



Increase is the manner of the Kingdom of God. Wherever the Lord is working, and the people are in His favor, increase takes place.

➔ When God created all things, He set the manner of increase into motion. He said to Adam and Eve, *"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth"* (Gen 1:28).

➔ After the flood, when the earth had

a new beginning, the Lord said to Noah and his sons, *"Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth"* (Gen 9:1).

➔ When God called Abraham He promised, *"And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing"* (Gen 12:2).

➔ To the fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God promised multiplication and increase (Gen 13:16; 26:4; 28:3).

➔ During their stay in Egypt, Israel *"increased abundantly, and multiplied"* (Ex 1:7).

➔ Under the Law, based upon the obedience of the people, *"increase"* was promised (Deut 6:3; 7:13).

➔ Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah's *"government and peace"* would *"increase"* without end (Isa 9:7).

➔ John the Baptist said of Jesus, *"He must increase"* (John 3:30).

➔ In the work of the Lord, it is written that *"God giveth the increase"* (1 Cor 3:7).

➔ Those in Christ are told, *"Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness"* (2 Cor 9:10).

➔ God's purpose and expectation of the church is *"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).

➔ The will of God for those in Christ is that they would *"walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God"* (Col 1:10).

➔ The intended result of a properly functioning church is that *"all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God"* (Col 2:19).

➔ In the Divine economy it is in order to pray, *"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you"* (1 Thess 3:12).

➔ God's people are admonished to *"increase more and more"* (1 Thess 4:10).

Individuals and churches that are unproductive, stagnant, and not increasing are clearly out of the will of God. Nothing about God's working with those He favors allows for such a status. There is no blessing that makes up for a lack of increase. There is no favored status that allows for a lack of increase. Where the hand of the Lord is favorably extended to the people there is always increase. Throughout the Old Covenant, a lack of increase was declared to be the cause of Divine judgment, and sometimes rejection (Lev 26:20; Deut 18:38-40; Isa 5:24-25; 40:24; 62:8-9; Jer 12:13; Hos 9:16; Joel 1:10-11, 16-17; Amos 5:11; Micah 6:15; Zeph 1:13; Hag 1:6).

Perpetual spiritual infancy and barrenness indicates Divine judgment, and possible abandonment. It is always to be taken seriously.

## WHEN SHALL I PROVIDE FOR MINE OWN HOUSE?

*" . . . and now when shall I provide for mine own house also? . . ."*

Other versions read, *"when may I do something for my own household also?"*

NIV *"when will I be able to work for my own household too?"* CEB *"It is*

*reasonable therefore that I should now provide also for my own house*" <sup>DOUAY</sup>  
*"When can I do something for my own family?"* <sup>GWN</sup> *"now then, when shall I set up also my own house?"* <sup>LXE</sup> *"When can I start providing for my own family?"* <sup>NLT</sup>  
 and *"Isn't it about time that I do something for my own family?"* <sup>MESSAGE</sup>

This is certainly a reasonable question. Jacob has worked fourteen years for Laban, and all that he has received is two wives – one that was wanted, and one that was not wanted. **Now he has a sizeable family that includes eleven children, and it is the largest of any of the patriarchal families of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** Yet, to date, he has nothing else that he can call his own. The dwelling in which he resides is that of Laban, and the flocks for which he cares are Laban's as well.

**It was actually unjust that Laban should have conducted matters in this way – and that for one of his own relatives.**

Jacob makes no effort to deceive Laban. But is straightforward with him. **This confirms that he was not a deceiver, as men have erroneously represented him.** In keeping with a principle stated centuries later, a man should take care for his own, and especially those of his own household (1 Tim 5:8). Solomon also said, *"Drink waters out of **thine own** cistern, and running waters out of **thine own** well"* (Prov 5:15).

The conditions under which Jacob

**The conditions under which Jacob was laboring were clearly out of order – particularly since he had fulfilled all of the obligations to which he had agreed. It is now time to consider his obligations to his family. That is the only reasonable thing to do.**

was laboring were clearly out of order – particularly since he had fulfilled all of the obligations to which he had agreed. It is now time to consider his obligations to his family. That is the only reasonable thing to do.

**The Superiority of Christ In This Regard**

When it comes to households, there is one that is absolutely superior: *"the household of God"* (Eph 2:19), or *"the house of God"* (1 Tim 3:15). It is also referred to as *"the whole family in heaven and earth is named"* (Eph 3:15). This *"household"* is *"the church"* (1 Tim 3:15), and has been placed into the hands of the exalted Christ, who is its *"Head"* (Col 1:18).

**As all who abide in His house know, Jesus is a faithful Provider and Leader.** The members of His house are identified in Scripture: *"And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over His own house; **whose house are we, if we hold fast***

*the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end"* (Heb 3:5-6).

Jesus brings teaching to the house that is unparalleled (1 John 5:20). Together with the Father He administers grace, mercy, and peace (2 John 1:3). He is the One who ministers *"grace to help in the time of need"* (Heb 4:15-16). He brings both grace and truth in abundance (John 1:17; 1 Cor 1:4). He is the One who caused grace to reign unto eternal life (Rom 5:21). The saints being filled with the fruits of righteousness is something Jesus does (Phil 1:11). The rich supplying of all our need is a provision of Jesus (Phil 4:19). He is the One who doles out wisdom and knowledge (Col 2:3).

**Because of Jesus Christ, no member of His household lacks anything that is required for life and godliness** (2 Pet 1:3), or to prepare for the coming of the Lord and the day of judgment. How blessed it is to be a part of His household. How abundant is the goodness experienced there.

**WHAT SHALL I GIVE THEE?**

<sup>31a</sup> **And he said, What shall I give thee? . . .** Other versions read, *"What am I to give you?"* <sup>BBE</sup> *"What will I pay you?"* <sup>CEB</sup> *"How much am I to pay you?"* <sup>NJB</sup> *"What wages do you want?"* <sup>NLT</sup> *"What do I have to give you?"* <sup>ISV</sup>

Probably with some twinge of conscience, Laban appears to allow Jacob to set his own wage – something

he had done with him at the first (Gen 19:15). However, in that arrangement Laban had proved untrustworthy, and an agreement to work for Rachel for seven years was changed into a tenure of fourteen years.

**The wisdom of Jacob will now surface, as compared to craftiness and subtlety –vices with which the**

**undiscerning have charged him.** In view of what God has revealed about Jacob, such religious folly is inexcusable. Such erroneous reasoning should be summarily rejected.

Rather than the Spirit moving Moses to write of Jacob's subtlety, he unveils the wisdom of Jacob, and how God honored the arrangements he made.

## THOU SHALT NOT GIVE ME ANYTHING

<sup>31b</sup> . . . *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.* <sup>32</sup> *I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. . . .*

### THOU SHALT GIVE ME NOTHING

*“ . . . And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing . . . ”* Other versions read, *“Don’t give me anything,”* NIV *“Thou shalt not give me aught”* ASV *“Don’t pay me anything”* CEB *“Nothing”* CJB *“You don’t need to give me anything”* CSB *“I require nothing”* DRA and *“Thou shalt give me nothing at all”* GNV

Here is a very thoughtful word. **Jacob will take nothing that clearly belongs to Laban.** He has confessed that Laban has been blessed because of him – yet those goods belong to Laban, and Jacob will not take any of them. **He will not agree to any settled wage, but will place his dependence upon God.** In the next chapter Jacob will confess that it was God who had led him in this decision: *“And said unto them, I see your father’s countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me”* (Gen 31:5).

**The meaning of Jacob’s statement is that he will not allow himself or Laban to set his wages. He will leave the future in the hands of the Lord, and settle for the increase that He gives.**

The meaning of Jacob’s statement is that he will not allow himself or Laban to set his wages. He will leave the future in the hands of the Lord, and

settle for the increase that He gives.

### DO THIS THING FOR ME

*“ . . . if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock. I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. . . . ”*

Jacob proposes that he goes through all of Laban’s flocks and separate certain of them, sequestering them in a special place.

- Speckled and spotted cattle.
- Brown sheep.
- spotted and speckled goats.

**These were all animals that differed from the normal, having discreet markings and of a different color – the exceptions to the rule.** These would no doubt be considered of inferior quality, and therefore the proposal appeared to be in Laban’s favor. And, indeed, if the Living God was not in the picture, this would be the case.

### A Principle Not Revealed Until Later

Here Jacob chose to operate by a principle that would not be revealed unto centuries later. *“But God hath*

*chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty”* (1 Cor 1:27). The extent to which

Jacob knew this is not known. However, it appears to me that in some way he was made aware of this fact, perhaps intuitively, and chose to depend upon the working of God, which he knew by experience, was **not** always within the restrictive confines of nature and human wisdom.

### FAITH RECKONS ON GOD WORKING IN STRICT ACCORD WITH HIS NATURE

**Faith always reckons on the Lord working in strict accord with His nature – particularly as it has been revealed in His promises and revelations.** While it is true that the following examples were written centuries after the time of our text, they reveal the unchangeable nature of God. In God’s dealing with the patriarch, God worked in strict accord with His own nature – as revealed in the texts that follow. By faith Jacob sensed the truth these affirm, and therefore chose to rely upon God for his increase.

- *“And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”* (Psa 9:10)
- *“LORD, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt prepare their heart, Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.”* (Psa 10:17)
- *“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”* (Psa 37:4)
- *“And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”* (Psa 50:15)
- *“Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.”* (Psa 91:14-15)
- *“If ye shall ask any thing in my*

name, I will do it." (John 14:14)

→ "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." (1 John 3:22)

→ "And this is the confidence that we

have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (1 John 5:14-15)

These affirmations are clear, and are to be wholeheartedly embraced by

those who are in Christ Jesus. There is no justifiable reason for doubting them or refusing to live in view of them.

Jacob will now set up a circumstance in which the Lord can work, apparently depending on that work to take place.

## MY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL ANSWER FOR ME

**"<sup>33</sup> So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me."**

### MY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL ANSWER FOR ME

"So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come . . ." Other versions read, "So my honesty will answer for me later," <sup>NASB</sup> "my honesty will testify for me in the future," <sup>NIV</sup> "And so you will be able to put my honor to the test," <sup>BBE</sup> "I will be completely honest with you," <sup>CEB</sup> "And I will let my integrity," <sup>CJB</sup> "My integrity will testify for me later on," <sup>NET</sup> and "my fair dealing will be evident and answer for me." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Jacob here sets forth his uprightness as compared with that of Laban. When agreeing concerning laboring seven years for Rachel, Laban did not stand by his agreement. When the time came to stand by the agreement, Laban brought Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel, and did not even tell him he had done so. Then, he offered a local custom as his justification, which he had not mentioned for the seven previous years. Then he demanded seven more years of labor for the right of having Rachel for his wife.

With all of that as a context, Jacob affirms that his righteousness, uprightness, or integrity, will speak for itself. He will not have to explain

anything, and add something to what he has said. There will be no hidden

Jacob. It should be obvious that this had nothing to do with establishing the

**With all of that as a context, Jacob affirms that his righteousness, uprightness, or integrity, will speak for itself. He will not have to explain anything, and add something to what he has said.**

agendas or secret strategies. Provision will be made for a thorough testing of Jacob's integrity.

### WHEN IT SHALL COME FOR MY HIRE

" . . . when it shall come for my hire before thy face . . ." Other versions read, "when the subject of my wages comes before you," <sup>NKJV</sup> "whenever you check on the wages you have paid me," <sup>NIV</sup> "in time to come," <sup>BBE</sup> "when you come to check on our agreement," <sup>CEB</sup> "And my justice shall answer for me tomorrow," <sup>DOUAY</sup> "on the morrow," <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> "the day next," <sup>ABP</sup> "on the morrow," <sup>BRENTON</sup> and "So later when the matter of my wages is brought before you." <sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Some of the versions misrepresent the text by saying Jacob would be vindicated the next day ("tomorrow," <sup>DOUAY</sup> "on the morrow," <sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> "On the morrow" <sup>BRENTON</sup>).

The text later affirms that Laban himself did the initial separation, not

uprightness of Jacob. The day of reckoning came much later, and is recorded in the next chapter.

### THE ACID TEST

" . . . every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me." Other versions read, "Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen," <sup>NASB</sup> "Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered stolen," <sup>NIV</sup> "if you ever find any white goats or sheep in my flock, you will know that I have stolen them from you!" <sup>LIVING</sup>

The test of Jacob's integrity was straightforward. If, at the conclusion of the due time, there were any animals among Jacob's flock that did not meet the specification of spotted and spotted goats, and dark lambs, it would be

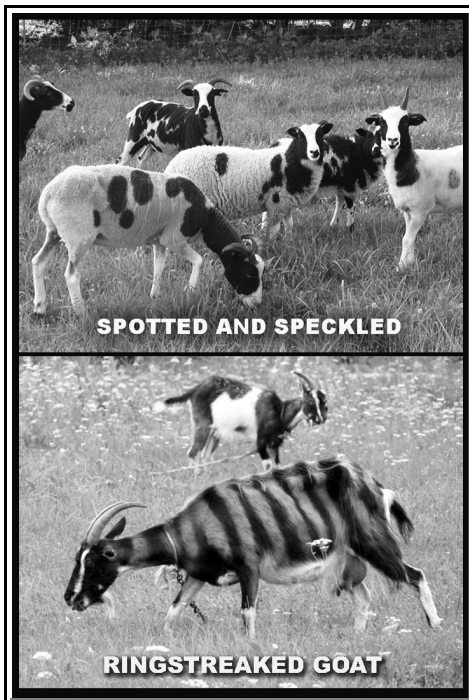
evident that Jacob had stolen some of Laban's flock, which he himself will separate after this agreement. There is

no other way that any unqualified animal could find its way into Jacob's

flock. Thus, the parameters of the agreement were firmly established.

## ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD

*"<sup>34</sup> And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. <sup>35</sup> And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons."*



### ACCORDING TO THY WORD

*"And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. . ."* Other versions read, *"Oh, that it were according to your word!"*<sup>NKJV</sup> *"Good, let it be according to your word,"*<sup>NASB</sup> *"Let it be as you have said,"*<sup>NIV</sup> *"I like well what thou demandest,"*<sup>DOUAY</sup> *"We'll do as you've said"*<sup>GWN</sup> *"I agree to that."*<sup>CEV</sup>

The agreement has been struck. All of the abnormally colored cattle, goats, and sheep, will be separated

from Laban's flock: "spotted and speckled," "ringstreaked," every goat that "had some white" in it, and all dark-colored sheep.

So far as Laban was concerned, these were the unusual animals of his flocks, and probably in the vast minority. They were the exceptions to the rule. Therefore, the terms specified by Jacob appeared to give him the edge. Of course, if this is the way Laban thought, it was without the God Of heaven being in the picture— i.e. the God who controls nature. Centuries later God spoke to Israel about the population of their flocks. *"Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle"* (Deut 7:14).

### HE REMOVED THAT DAY

*" . . . And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep . . ."*

To make sure the agreement was met, and probably being suspicious that Jacob was like himself, Laban himself separated the animals. It was their appearance that was the determining factor – in particular, their non-standard color.

### GAVE THEM INTO THE HAND OF HIS SONS

*" . . . and gave them into the hand of his sons."* The reference is to Laban's sons, for the sons of Jacob were not old enough to keep sheep. Reuben, the oldest son is estimated to have been between seven and ten years of age. I am not sure how accurate that estimate is, because Reuben is the one

who found mandrakes in the field, and gave them to his mother (Gen 30:14-15). Rachel referred to those mandrakes as "my son's mandrakes" (Gen 30:15). However, even if he was in his teens, the rest of the brothers do not appear to have been old enough to care for sheep. Years later, when Joseph was feeding his father's flocks, he was seventeen (Gen 37:2).

At any rate, it seems clear enough to me, that Laban's son's were the ones to whom he delivered the separated flocks. The flocks were probably relatively few in number, being the exception rather than the rule.

### A Type fo be Seen

Among the flocks of men, there is also a distinction that enables a separation. **The people of God are clearly distinct from other people.** This was even true of Israel. When they corrupted themselves by mingling with other nations the Lord said, *"They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation."* (Deut 32:5).

In Christ Jesus, the "spot" of the children is their love for one another – and that is something that can in some way be seen. Jesus said, *"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another"* (John 13:35). That love involves preference (Rom 12:10), fellowship (Acts 2:42), and doing good especially to them (Gal 6:10). It is a love than can be perceived by outward circumstances and behavior. If this were not case, no worldly person would be able to know that the saints of God have a love for one another. Another means of detection is a holy life.



## THREE DAYS JOURNEY BETWEEN THEM

*“<sup>36</sup> And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob . . .”*

### THREE DAY'S JOURNEY

*“And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob . . .”* Considering that a days' journey was 15-18 miles, this would be a distance of from forty-five to fifty-four miles. Considering that it probably was calculated by how long it took to move the flocks, it would probably be closer to the forty-five mile figure. By way of comparison in our part of the country, it would be a distance from Joplin to twenty-five miles this side of

Springfield.

By doing this, Laban thought to reduce the possibility of Jacob taking additional animals from his flock, and merging them with the flocks belonging to him, and being kept by Laban's sons.

### AND JACOB FED THE REST OF LABAN'S FLOCKS

*“ . . . and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.”* Other versions read, *“while Jacob continued to tend the rest of the flocks,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“Jacob was pasturing the rest of Laban's flock,”*<sup>NSRV</sup> *“Jacob tended the cattle of Laban that were*

*left behind,”*<sup>SEPTUAGINT</sup> and *“Jacob was then left in care of the rest of Laban's flock.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Now Jacob was at the greatest seeming disadvantage. The flocks that would eventually be his were three days journey away, and he was responsible for keeping the rest of Laban's flocks, which were of considerable size. **From Laban's viewpoint, this would enable him, through the faithful and diligent efforts of Jacob, to increase both the size and quality of his own flocks.** However, this did not take the God of Jacob into consideration.

## A UNIQUE STRATEGY

*“<sup>37</sup> And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. <sup>38</sup> And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. <sup>39</sup> And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted.”*

### JACOB TOOK HIM RODS

*“And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. . .”* Other versions read, *“fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“rod of fresh poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut, and doth peel in them white peelings, making bare the white that is on the rods,”*<sup>YLT</sup> and *“fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees and peeled white streaks in them, exposing*

*the white in the rods.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

To “*pill*” means to peel the bark away, so that the white flesh of the branch becomes visible. Thus the rod took on the appearance of the some of the “*ringstreaked*” animals Jacob had separated for himself.

### HE SET THE RODS

*“And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. . .”* Other versions read, *“Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink,”*<sup>NIV</sup> and *“he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink.”*<sup>AMPLIFIED</sup>

Thus Jacob reasoned that when the flocks came to be watered, they would be in heat, conceiving and bringing forth animals bearing a resemblance to the flocks he had several miles away. This would be done because they had been looking at the rods Jacob had placed before them.

It might appear this was a heathenistic way of doing things, but that is not the case. **Moses makes clear in the next chapter that God is the one who directed Jacob to do this.**

### AND THE FLOCKS CONCEIVED

*“And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted.”*

Confirming that this whole incident was under Divine direction, the flocks produced animals that would, by firm agreement, become the possession of Jacob.

The next chapter makes clear that this was orchestrated by the God of heaven. **“Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled. And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all**

*that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out*

*from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred” (Gen 31:9-13). The idea is that now Jacob had obtained possessions for his family, he was to*

return to the land of his nativity – Canaan, the land of promise. God had orchestrated these events.

## HE PUT HIS OWN FLOCKS BY THEMSELVES

*“<sup>40</sup> And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstreaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.”*

### JACOB DID SEPARATE

*“And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstreaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban . . .”*

**Remember, Jacob is managing Laban's flock.** But he is doing so with a mind to now providing for his own house. As the flocks begin to increase, he separated the ones that, by agreement, belonged to him.

**See what a wise shepherd Jacob was. He worked for another person, but he was not a hireling.** He saw to it that Laban's sheep were properly cared for. He had an excellent grasp of the quality of that flock, and worked within that framework of knowledge. You might

say he knew his sheep (John 10:27).

### HE PUT HIS OWN FLOCKS BY THEMSELVES

*“ . . . and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.”*

**Jacob would not mingle his flock with that of Laban. They must be separated.**

It has always been God's manner to separate and divide.

➔ In the beginning he *“divided the light from the darkness”* (Gen 1:4).

➔ He made a firmament that divided the waters above from the waters beneath (Gen 1:7).

➔ The nations were divided on the earth after the flood (Gen 10:32).

➔ Israel was noted for being a people separated from all other nations (Ex

33:16; Lev 20:24; Deut 4:34).

➔ Israel was to be separated from uncleanness (Lev 5:31).

➔ The sons of Levi were separated from the rest of the people to serve God (Num 16:8-9).

➔ Those in Christ Jesus are commanded, *“Be ye separate”* (2 Cor 6:17).

➔ In the end, the wheat shall be separated from the tares – *“the children of the Kingdom”* from *“the children of the wicked one”* (Matt 13:30,38, 41).

Throughout Scripture, God separates what He has determined to be His own. This includes the land of Canaan, the city of Jerusalem, the children of Israel, the Levitical priesthood, and His children through Christ Jesus, who is the Head of His house.

## STRONGER AND FEEBLER SEPARATED

*“<sup>41</sup> And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.<sup>42</sup> But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.<sup>43</sup> And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.”*

### JACOB LAID THE RODS

*“And it came to pass, whensoever*

*the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.*

**Notice that Jacob's eye was on the stronger cattle.** They are the ones before whose eyes he strategically placed the rods. He is now keeping the flock of Laban with his own household in mind, which he has clearly told Jacob he will be doing. In this perception and action, he is proving a strong flock for himself.

### BUT WHEN THE CATTLE WERE FEEBLE

*“But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. . .”*

**Notice how Jacob knows the flock, like Jesus knows His sheep.** When he sees the more feeble cattle coming to drink, he does not employ his -rod-strategy. He does not want weak and feeble animals in his flock, and thus takes measures to ensure that does not happen.

**THE MAN INCREASED**

*“ . . . And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.”*

Through his father Isaac, God had promised Jacob he would increase and be multiplied (Gen 28:3). Now, after many trying years, this begins to take

place.

**A TYPE TO BE SEEN**

The work that is to be done in culturing the flock of God is much like that of Jacob. It is to get the stronger ones together, and separate them from the feeble, or those who remain carnal. The feeble can be removed in two different ways. First, upon discovering

they are feeble, to remove them. Second, to feed and nourish them so they are moved from the feeble status into one of strength. This is the New Covenant way of doing things. **Those who willingly remain feeble will eventually be repulsed by an assembly devoted to the due preparation of the flock of God.** The people of God are to expect and allow this happen.

**Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/8/13. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The fifty-second lesson will cover verses 1 through 25 of chapter thirty-one: “JACOB LEAVES LABAN AND LABAN PURSUES HIM, #1.” Laban’s sons say Jacob has taken away their father’s goods, and Laban’s countenance changed. The Lord then told Jacob to return to the land of his fathers, and He would be with him. Jacob calls his wives and tells them the circumstances, also relating to them a dream that he had. His wives told him to do what God had told him to do. Laban hears that Jacob had left, and pursued after him. 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.**

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