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GLENLOCK BIBLE CAMP

PREVAILING WITH GOD - A STUDY OF JACOB

Speaker: Bro. John Martin

Study #4

Jacob and Laban

Reading: Genesis 29

My beloved brethren and sisters and young people.

Well, we left Jacob in our last study at Beth-el with that remarkable vision, which was no small simulation to him, b&s and young people, at a time when he sorely needed it. As we mentioned before, it has never been the principles of our Heavenly Father to reveal Himself to people, unless in dire circumstances they desperately need that help. And at this particular time, Jacob needed that help as never before; he was to need it even more later on in his life, but now journeying on to a strange country, having left his father and his mother, who had exercised that tremendous control over him and to whom he gave so much affection, he would have felt alone in the world, of course, which he thought was wild and in opposition to him, because of Esau's hatred, and having come to Beth-el he had that wonderful vision of comfort. And Yahweh stood right alongside of his pillow, as it were, and the angels of God ascended and descended upon that pillow, and he took that stone and anointed it, which in my view, b&s, was an indication that he saw that stone as the central piece in the theme which was before him, with the angels of God concentrating upon that stone and Yahweh standing alongside of it, and he saw that as the Stone of Israel. And as we mentioned before, the angels were not ascending and descending particularly on Jacob, the record states they were ascending and descending upon it; whether that means the staircase or the stone, may be a matter of dispute in the record of Genesis, but it's put beyond all disputes when the Lord Jesus Christ says, 'you shall see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man; and He certainly wasn't the ladder, He wasn't the ladder upon which the angels were going up and down upon Him, HE WAS THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD ON THE EARTH, and to my mind, that seals the interpretation of Genesis 28, that that Stone was Christ!

And so Jacob stimulated by that vision, seeing it was the foundation stone of God's house, anoints it, he makes a vow to God, that when God has blessed him, (he didn't doubt that, b&s) when God had blessed him, when God had performed His part, Jacob was going to react to God, spontaneously, in deep gratitude and to give unto Him a

tenth, which was acknowledging before God Almighty, that everything that Jacob had gotten, and all the blessings which had accrued to him, were on account of God and God alone!

And it is in that spirit that he moves away from Beth-el, and the first words of chapter 29 are words, b&s, which indicate his renewed vigour in the truth. 'And Jacob went on his journey' (have a look at the margin, Jacob lifted up his feet) and here is one of those Hebrew phrases which is very emphatic and intense; it doesn't occur elsewhere, it's as if Jacob had been dragging his feet, b&s, and now he arises from Beth-el and he lifted up his feet and in a spirit of renewed enthusiasm for God, he journeyed on towards the people of the east. And that's the spirit with which chapter 29 opens! It's remarkable how that that spirit was dampened when he got to Haran by the first thing he saw. And you know, b&s, as I've said before, we all believe the bible's inspired, but you can't help but be impressed with the record of the truth, when you come to this record and you see the way that God has written it and placed it there, all so neatly and beautifully in order; and you have a picture of this man, he rises up from Beth-el which is an awesome place, truly he was fearful because he had seen those wonderful things. He didn't truly understand them and admitted, 'I knew not that Yahweh was here', but nonetheless, it was a stimulating thing to him, he lifts up his feet and off he goes to the people of the east.

Who were the people of the east? 'Ben-qedem', of course, is the Hebrew word, 'the sons of the east' (Strong's-1121+6924); it's a term which embraces a wide lot of people, b&s, particularly those east and north-east of the river Jordan. It also applies to the people of Saudi-Arabia, but basically, the term 'the people of the east' denoted that group of people whose customs and whose language was akin to the children of Israel. If that were not the case, then how was it that Jacob was able to walk into the regions of Haran and he understands certain customs they have? there is no language barriers and so on, so when you go through the record you'll find that phrase 'Ben-qedem', the people of the east, denotes those people who had similar customs and a similar language as the Hebrews themselves. They were, of course, from the same race of people, the Shemites, and they were lying on the east of the Jordan and the north-east of Jordan, and it is into that region that Jacob goes!

And you know, I can see him arriving in Haran, and I can see the reaction, the first reaction that Jacob gives, and in this little scene that's depicted here, it's as it were, God is giving us a cameo of the difference between these people, despite their similarities, there was a difference. And that difference is highlighted by the first little scene that's presented. So Jacob comes obviously, I suppose, weary from his journey, full of probably hope and yet trepidation, he's looking for relations, he doesn't know where he's going to find them; when he finds out he's right among them he gives a burst of enthusiastic activity and then breaks down and cries, indicating, of course, his extreme anxiety at this moment. He was at a very high tension point! But the thing that confronted him when he got there-he arrives at Haran and he sees 3 flocks of sheep; and they're all sort of lying down and so are the shepherds, they're all there by the well and there's a great stone on the well's mouth. And he gazes at that scene (and you

know the record itself as you read it, it sort of tells you that he got surprised, 'Lo, there were 3 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. 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'. Jacob was amazed! he looked at that and he was absolutely astounded; so he goes up to the fellows and he says in verse 7, 'Look, it's noon, it's right in the middle of the day; you can't have these sheep lying around here like that. Get on with the job! Water the sheep and get on and feed them'. And even this reaction of Jacob is quite, well I suppose in a sense, audacious isn't it? He doesn't know the people but this is his spontaneous reaction; he was bred up in a different stock than this; that wasn't the life of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This was the contrast, b&s, between the shepherds of this country and the shepherds of his country; 'Look, what are you doing here? oh, well, there's a big stone on the well's mouth. Yes, well unless we all get here and we all get together, all together boys, 1, 2, 3! and off goes the stone! And so they stopped there in the middle of the day waiting for the crowd to take that stone off, and Jacob did it on his own! And we have Jacob sometimes presented to us, b&s, by a stark contrast to Esau, (and I haven't done that) but some of the commentators would have us believe that Jacob was a little milk sop! Well, believe me, he was worth at least, a half dozen of these shepherds!

Now that's the scene that's presented as Jacob comes into Haran; now any wonder that in the 30th chapter of Genesis and verse 30 we read this that Jacob could make this claim when he said to Laban, 'For it was little which thou had before I came, and it is now increased into a multitude; and Yahweh hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also'. No wonder, b&s, truly, of course, it was through the blessings of God; but how easy though for Jacob to prosper in those circumstances, truly it was little that thou had before I came, but look what you've got now! No wonder, and I can tell you that when Jacob got into the stewardship of this man, that man's household improved over night; there would be none of this sitting around in the middle of the day out in the open field with sheep just lying there asleep, and the shepherds asleep with them. None of that, b&s, this man was brought up differently in the truth than that! and that was the first scene presented to our eyes, when Jacob comes into the world of Laban. That's the scene that's presented to us, it's also, b&s, highly instructive of the wonderful activity and bringing up that Jacob had, that he should be amazed by that scene!

What do you read concerning the patriarchs? You go back (not now) but in your leisure, go back to the 26th chapter of Genesis and see what they did about wells of water. Now let's face it, a well of water in those days, to dig a hole was quite a job, that's why they had so many rows about them! and so what did Abraham do? He dug a well in the ground that was the Philistines; it was quite well made in the tradition of wells, because it was difficult to dig them! So when they couldn't force their opinion, I suppose, when it was beyond their principles, the patriarchs said, 'you can have that one', and went and digged another one! and when they'd dug one there, b&s, up by Shechem, dedicated to Jacob's memory that's a remarkable well! and I suppose of all the historical sites in the Land, it's one of the most authentic because there's nothing quite like it in the area.

'Jacob's well', and you look through the hole (about this round) and it goes down 75 feet, and there's a great rushing stream down there in the wet season. And everybody partook of that well, and that would have taken some energy to dig! No wonder this fellow who was brought up in that sort of life with the patriarchs digging those wells, b&s, tending his flock like a good shepherd, not sitting around idly in the middle of the day wasting time; no wonder that man brought into Laban's household, an invigorating spirit and Laban didn't want to let him go. He clung to him with chains, because that man was worth 10 of these! And that's the spirit that Jacob brought into the land of Syria.

And of course, Laban was not slow to see that! And so when he comes into the land, and sees that scene as I said, we have set before us a remarkable contrast between the responsibility that Jacob had accepted under the stewardship, and under his father's supervision, to the responsibility that these people were able to accept. 'And while he yet spake, we read in verse 9, 'Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them'. And there was the extent of Laban's wealth at this time, and there was the extent of responsibility that he found out, that she kept them. Not, b&s, that it was not common for women in those days to keep the sheep, as a matter of fact, it's remarkable, quite remarkable, that Moses came down to the household of Jethro and found almost an identical scene. Where there was a well of water where the daughter of Jethro came to feed Jethro's flock and because there was a gathering of the shepherds at one time there, they, of course, being women, they were pushed into the back and had to wait last until Moses came and helped them out, and watered their flock as Jacob watered this flock. But it just shows, b&s, the circumstances that Laban was in, and it shows what Jacob would have meant to him, when you find Jacob coming back to the Land of Israel with his multitude of people, camels and sheep, and he sent his sheep out; you don't find them under the stewardship of a woman, you find them with his sons. And you find a great deal of responsibility taken by the men of the household, and Jacob's household prospered; they were a different breed, b&s, to these people! And, of course, there's a great lesson in that, the lesson of shepherds, the lesson of the shepherd in the scriptures, a wonderful lesson. There's a wonderful lesson for us, in our daily vocations in life; no Christadelphian today should have any problem prospering in this world. Degrees or no degrees! they should have no problem whatever; in the first place our young men should be able to see clearer than others, because everybody else has got hair in their eyes! and in the second place, the young women who go there with some honour and dignity and modesty into the place, would be snatched up and be valued today! because we're living in a typical Syria, where there's indolence and laziness and a spirit of rebellion; nobody should have any problem prospering just living the truth, we should prosper! And Jacob prospered, not because, b&s, he thought himself better than the others, but because he had been brought up differently. He said 'it was little before I got here, but look at it now' and Laban recognized that, if he could recognize nothing else, he saw his bank account going up! Quick smart he saw that, and he clung to that boy, but, of course, he couldn't keep him; the Land drew him back! That was the final thing that God told him, 'get back to the Land of your fathers; this situation was no good for Jacob, that, b&s, is no good for anybody; 'get back to the Land of your fathers, he was told finally, and so here he comes!

And Rachel comes to water her father's sheep. Look at verse 10, we read here and notice the burst of enthusiasm! He's told that Rachel's coming, she's the daughter 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!' And that's the thing that was enthusing him, b&s, this man had a tremendous regard for his mother; his mother's brother and can you imagine how Rachel was watching him! He sees Rachel coming, this is the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, this is the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, and charges over and swoosh! and off went the stone. Wow! no problems whatever! and you know, this was characteristic of Jacob, he was like that, and you know, b&s, there's this principle here, but in the age to come Israel will be like that. The nation of Israel, even today, the nation of Israel would stand the other nations on their heads, they would! Experts come from all over the world to Israel because of the programs they have there for reclaiming the land, irrigation and so forth. They're launching an appeal in South Australia in the next few weeks, for an reclamation program for the deserts of the Negev, and they're going to make the desert blossom like the rose! And they do! why? because they are a people with a dedication, call them what you like, proud, boastful, they know all that, but they love their Land, they're not like an Australian, they love their Land and they love their people! and there's a spirit there that you don't find anywhere else that I've ever been! And this is the difference, and Jacob will contribute, he will contribute finally to the world's well-being; he will see the world fed, his people will become the centre of the kingdom.

Why was it? Here's Jacob watering the flocks of a Gentile! and it was typical of him because look, Jesus came to Samaria and who was there? The woman of Samaria and she said to Jesus, 'Art thou greater than our father Jacob who gave us this well?' which she said watered his flocks and everyone else's who wanted to partake of it. So Jacob was memorialized at Shechem for providing for all people, by a remarkable well. This was the spirit of the man and this will be the spirit of the man and his people in the kingdom of God, when all nations will go up to Jerusalem (and not only spiritual Israel) but natural Israel, b&s, will leave the world, because they will be inspired by God Almighty; and there is the characteristic activity of a true Israelite! I believe that principle and there's a lot to be learnt by Jacob's action on that occasion!

You know, it's rather wonderful that you have this action of Jacob, rolling that stone off that well, by the inspiration of the remembrance of his mother, and in particular, that it was his mother's brother; what he didn't realize, b&s, was that Laban was his mother's brother in every sense of the word. And he was going to use upon Jacob that guile that his mother was so adept at doing, but with a far different motive. And Jacob was going to suffer poetic justice, that every step of the road would have taught him, that he had to depend upon his God, and furthermore, he had to correct in his life, a fault that was there. Not that God wanted him to be inactive, no siree! God would not have wished for Rebekah and Jacob to stand back, for example, when the blessing was taken by Esau and do nothing; He would not have blessed them doing nothing, God does not

want inactivity as we'll show later on in our study. God will not bless us unless we work, but it depends upon what we do and with what motive we do it! Jacob and Rebekah, b&s, worked, they deceived and they did it because they thought with all their love of the truth, that the situation was so extreme, that God really needed their help, otherwise everything would go wrong. That was the fault they had, not their motives, not their love of the truth, not their faith, the fault with them was, a Judaistic principle which says, 'unless I help God, He'll never get me into the kingdom'. That was the problem and here was his mother's brother, and he was going to learn by 40 bitter years of experience, that Laban was his mother's brother.

And so, this is our introduction of Jacob to Laban. Now we come down to verse 12, 'And Jacob told Rachel he was her father's brother' (the word 'brother' by the way is used of 'near kinsmen') he wasn't her father's brother, of course, he was her father's nephew but he mentions this because he was her father's near kinsman, 'and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father. 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'. He told Laban all these things, and at this stage, b&s, I want to introduce you to Laban the Syrian. The type of man that ran and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house, and you could well and truly imagine, with what avid attention Laban would have listened to all these things. All what things? Well, of course, Jacob would have told him all his previous experiences including (and Laban's ears would have pricked up like a rabbits) including the fact that he was the heir to the fortune of Abraham! Because 76 years earlier, Laban had heard of the fortune of Abraham; when Eliezer had gone up there, the servant of Abraham to get Rebekah, he had told Laban, 'my master, Abraham, hath cattle and goods and sheep and menservants and maidservants and oxen; my master has riches and wealth', and here's the heir to all that!

Now this is the mercenary character of Laban. You know, everywhere that you meet Laban, one thing dominates him; the mighty dollar! He can hardly think of anything else, b&s, he's mentioned in the scriptures but do you know, the first time we meet him it's rather interesting! Have a look at the first recorded incident of him, typical, let's have a read of his character. This is the character of Laban, Genesis 24, here's an introduction to Laban, when Abraham's servant went to get the wife for Isaac, in verse 29, the first thing we note concerning Laban is the first thing that he noted. 'And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban, which means 'white'; and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earrings and the bracelets upon his sister' (that's the first thing he noticed, and that's the first recorded incident we have of him) the first thing that hit him, was earrings and bracelets! Impressive! when he saw the earrings and bracelets upon his sister's hands (he could even identify whose they were, he remembered them distinctly) 'And when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of Yahweh; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels'. Oh, come in thou blessed of the LORD (oh, look at those earrings) well, you laugh, but look, that's his character! Honestly, come to the 29th chapter look at this, you can't get away from it, b&s, look it's impossible! This man just had a one tracked

mind, gracious me! verse 14 we read, 'Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh: And he abode with him the space of a month' (so he gave him a month's free board and lodging; such generosity!) Laban said unto Jacob, because thou art my brother, shouldst thou therefore serve me for nought?' (Jacob didn't say anything about service, never said a word about it) because you're my brother you shouldn't SERVE me for nought, with the emphasis on 'serve'; and if you don't think the emphasis is on 'serve', look how many times it comes out! Verse 27, 'Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve me seven years more'.

Chapter 30, b&s, verses 27 and 28, 'Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that Yahweh hath blessed me for thy sake. He said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it'. Service, service, service! everywhere you go, this is all Laban can think about; and do you think that's right? do you think we're getting a correct impression? Well, I'll tell you, that's the impression that Jeremiah got, do you know that? that's the impression that Jeremiah got because in his 30th chapter, b&s, in a long prophecy in which there is incident after incident of Jacob's life, this is what we read, the impression that Jeremiah got when Jacob came back from the land of Haran, and he took that as being typical of Israel's return from the Gentiles, this is what we read! Jeremiah 30 and verse 8, so the impression that we're getting of Laban, Jeremiah got it as well, verse 7 for connection, 'Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's troubles; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith Yahweh of armies that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him', or as the Hebrew has it and the RSV, 'and strangers shall no more make a servant of him'. And so you see, he was to break the bonds of Esau off his neck and says God, 'I will burst thy bonds'; who's bonds? the bonds of the Gentiles which in the case of Jacob, was epitomized by the service he gave Laban. And so Jeremiah saw him serving strangers with the emphasis on the word 'serve' and that's the word you'll always find in the mouth of Laban; he could think of nothing else.

And you know, Jacob wasn't the only one that suffered from Laban. A miser, b&s, is a curse on everybody! Thrift is a virtue, but I've seen thrift a little bit more than thrift; you know, it annoys me! we can teach our children to be thrifty and anybody that does it is a fool; but ah, some people think money's round to go round but I believe it's flat to stack! Look, if you see a man who's got his first shilling and it's been in his company 40 years, he's a curse to himself; instead of money serving him, b&s, he serves it and becomes a slave to it. And it's a despicable thing to see! to me it is, it just grates on me because it dominates that man, as Paul said. Paul never said that money is the root of all evil, he never said that! He said, the love of money is the root of all evil! You can have a man and he could be a millionaire, he could be a rich man; David was a rich man, Abraham was a rich man, it never dominated them! Laban was a poor man and he could think of nothing else but dollars, and this was his mind, and he made that man serve; but as I said, he did not make Jacob suffer, his own daughters protested about his leanness. In Genesis chapter 31 and verse 16, this is the character of the man that God gave Jacob to test him, and try him and prove him and to perfect him! And in Genesis chapter 31,

this is the complaint of Jacob's own wives, the daughters of Laban himself, verse 14, 'And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money'. Now that's the sort of character he was, now, it was customary, of course, for a man to give a dowry (this was the custom of the times) he gave a dowry for the bride. There are scriptural references to that affect, that was the custom and there was nothing wrong with that; Laban was entitled to give them that dowry, but the idea of the dowry was not to pay for the woman, that wasn't the idea at all! It wasn't to pay for the woman to the father, the idea was for the man to express to the father that he valued the woman, not to pay for her, in that sense! But these two had been sold, not as brides, therefore Jacob's dowry given to Laban was looked upon as honouring to them; Laban sold them at a price which made them slaves! That's what he did, 7 years, that's an enormous price for a woman! 7 years! Let's face it, 7 years and that's what he sold them for; now they weren't sold because that wasn't a service whereby he honoured that woman, that was absolute extortion! And not only that, b&s, but it was the custom, not only for the husband to pay that dowry as a value he put upon his bride, it was the custom of the father that when the wife left the home, to give her her portion of the inheritance! **THEY GOT NOTHING!** and he had devoured it; and that's the character we've got before us.

Take Genesis 31 and 39, when Jacob was serving him so well, and there's no doubt he thought he did because he was an outstanding shepherd by those standards; In 31:39 Jacob makes this complaint, he says, 'That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night'. Now here's the character of a man, look at him, he's got these lazy shepherds sitting out in the field at midday waiting for someone to roll the stone off it, and here's Jacob he's prepared to go out at night. He's night and day up there, he's tending these flocks, he's giving his whole exertion to him, and one gets stolen and Laban says, '3 dollars 50'. My word, everything's paid for and everywhere you go, this is his character!

Look at verse 41, 'Thus have I been 20 years in thy house, says Jacob, I served thee (again that word) 14 years for thy two daughters, and 6 years for thy cattle'. You might say, 'Well, what's wrong with that? Well, I'll tell you what's wrong with that; when he had served 14 years for those daughters, and he came to Laban and said, I want to go home! Do you know what Laban said to him? 'Oh, don't go Jacob; I've learned by experience, oh, I've learned by experience that Yahweh has blessed me for your sake' and then he charged him 6 years for his own cattle. In other words, what Jacob was doing serving 14 years, all that service in which the cattle, of course, had increased; there was far less lost in lambing season and other seasons when Jacob as the expert shepherd of Israel would lead them and the others could care less, he had preserved that flock and it had grown. He had weeded out the weaklings, they were strong animals; Laban now was a fairly wealthy man, and for the 14 years Jacob got two women, Laban got everything else. And Jacob says, 'Look, I better go home, but I can't just take two women and children, I've got to have something. I've got to have something, I have to have some security! Well, Laban says, stay a month! 6 more years

after just plainly admitting to him that everything he had he owed to Jacob. And you know, b&s, when he chased him back to Galeed, when Jacob's left and he chased him back to Galeed, he had the height to stand there at Galeed and say to Jacob that he had stolen his cattle! That's a fact! you've stolen my cattle; and the terms of the bargain, well, talk about the terms of the bargain! You know Jacob asked for this because he said he'd serve six years for the cattle; now Jacob had had enough, he was fed-up with this fellow and so he was learning, b&s, he was learning! So you know what he did, he put his trust in God, so he decided to accept that 6 years service; and they struck a bargain! And Laban almost fell over himself in accepting the terms because he couldn't believe his ears!

Look at verse 31 of chapter 30, 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: I will pass through all thy flock today, 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'. You can imagine Laban listening to this; Jacob says I'll go through and take all these speckled and spotted, and ring-streaked and he's thinking, 'oh, he's going to take all the crooked and that will be my hire!' And Laban said, verse 34, 'Behold, I would it might be according to thy word'. He couldn't wait to accept those terms, he couldn't believe his ears; what an idiot he thought, because, b&s, you go through the custom of the day, they didn't breed that sort of cattle. They use to mate a lot of the cattle, of course, and the sheep were white and the goats they were nearly all brown; rarely would you find a speckled and a ring-streaked, he nearly fell over himself accepting the terms. BUT you'd think the man would have some principles, saying, 'look, its really not a fair sort of a bargain; but look what he did! In verse 35, 'He removed that day the he goats that were ring-streaked and spotted, and all the she goats (in other words, the breeding stock 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. And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks'.

So he made the bargain, he grabbed it with two hands, and then he had the audacity to weed out of that flock all the breeding stock that was marked, and he made sure there was 72 hours journey between the two flocks, so that there would be no breeding of that legal kind. What a mind! he's got a mind like a cash register; I've never seen anything like it, and that's the man that Jacob had to deal with, b&s, and that's the lesson that God was putting him under, his mother's brother! That's your mother's brother, your mother is a wonderful woman but she's a Syrian, and in you is Syrian blood. Well, they're just Syrian, learn Jacob! and Jacob was learning because that bargain he struck with Laban was a bargain of faith, b&s, it was a bargain of faith.

Now you would have thought that was as far he could go! NO it wasn't; look at the next chapter. Jacob tells his wives, 'your father hath deceived me and changed my wages 10 times'. Now the word 'ten', of course, he doesn't mean literally 10 times, the number 10 is used in the aggregate (chapter 31:7-8), what he's saying is that he'd changed them time and time again, 'but God suffered him not to hurt me. If he said thus, The speckled

shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ring-streaked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ring-streaked'. Now Jacob's presenting it from the positive angle isn't he? showing what God did for him; but, of course, you can put it the other way around. Put it from the negative angle, all he said was that Laban changed his wages 10 times, then he goes on to show the blessings of God; but you put it the other way around, you can say that, Laban after a period of time they're all baring ring-streaked; hey, Jacob come here, I've been thinking about this contract. I think we ought to alter a word or two in here, what about speckled? all the cattle bare speckled. A problem! ah, Jacob look here, what about the spotted? and over and over again he's changing those wages in a contract which was weighted in his favour! Now that's the sort of man that Jacob was dealing with, b&s!

And you know what? Ill-will grew up between them, what was the question? Look at chapter 31 verses 1 and 2, 'He heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, it was not toward him as before'. And there's a typical Jonesy, your next door neighbour, and you buy a new car and it's better than his, and the friendship which you thought you had, was as good as the chrome plate on your car! And when that's better than his, he cannot stand the sight of you; that was 'my bone and my flesh' that was the man that I brought in and embraced him and kissed him and said, 'I'll give you a month's free board and lodging'. And the thing that divided them, b&s, the thing that will always cause trouble with people like that, is that cursed thing called 'money!' I hate the sight of it, and for your information, my wife is the cashier in my house, I won't handle it! because I hate the sight of it, but I get plenty of it anyway! I just will not occupy myself with money matters, I will not because it's the curse of humanity. And there it is, and it brought ill-will between the man who embraced him and kissed him and said, 'bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh' (until your bankbook's bigger than mine, and I hate the sight of you) now that's the attitude of mind adopted by that Syrian; he was, b&s, a dreadful character, there's no doubt about that!

And when Jacob finally wanted to leave, we come back to chapter 30 and verse 27, and he wouldn't have him leave, why? because of course, for a mercenary reason. 'Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that Yahweh hath blessed me for thy sake'. What an incredible outlook that was! you know, to put up a veneer of respectability and religion over the top of that greed, b&s, and that deceit; let's face it, it wasn't simply deceit, it was base ingratitude, base ingratitude to a man who had lifted him to a level that he had never been before. A stranger at that, that came with a staff in his hand, and a man that when he made bargains always weighed it heavily in his favour. You would have thought that some where along the line, his heart would have been touched even a heart like that!

You'd have thought he would have moved him, couldn't move him; and above all other weaknesses that Laban had, b&s, as I mentioned before, the greatest weakness he had even above his mercenary nature, was the fact that he didn't hold the truth in its purity, he never held the truth in its purity. And we learn that by the very words 'learned by

experience', because the word 'learned by experience' is one Hebrew word 'nachash' (Strong's-5172) and that's a bad word. It's the same word from whence the word 'serpent' comes from and it means to 'hiss or whisper', and Laban's term is a term which means 'I've learned by enchantment' that Yahweh hath blessed me; and he was mixing up the good fortune that he had with the blessings of God! And if that wasn't proof enough that Laban was a bad character, what about the fact that Rachel took out of his house, household gods. And if that's not proof enough you come to chapter 31, when they parted, and when Jacob and Laban finally parted, b&s, at a the heap of witness, Galeed, you find in verse 47, Laban called it by a name that I can't pronounce, but Jacob called it Galeed; it meant the same thing but Laban was using a Chaldean language, and Jacob was using a Hebrew language. There was the difference between the two men, and when they finally parted, this is what Laban said in verse 51; he said to Jacob, 'Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm. The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their fathers judge betwixt us. And Jacob swear by the fear of his father Isaac'. Now you look at that!

Now what happens was this! Here were two men finally parting and here's the difference that lay between them; far more fundamental than the difference over money, this is going deeper than that! And you see, b&s, you here are witnessing the fact that Laban did not hold the truth in its purity, in its absolute purity. because you see, a family came from Ur of the Chaldees, and they came to Haran, and there was a halt at Haran. And from Haran, Abraham was told to get out of that house, and he went further into the Land of Canaan; so they all left Ur of the Chaldees and they all recognized that Abraham was their father (that is Laban and Jacob did). But from Abraham they diverged, so you find that Laban says, 'the God of Abraham, the God of Nahor' and Jacob says 'the God of Abraham and he didn't say the God of Isaac; he didn't say that, he said the fear of Isaac. Why would he use a different term? because he didn't want to leave the impression in Laban's mind that they had the remotest connection when it came to the purity of the truth! So instead of saying the 'God of Abraham and the God of Isaac' he changed the word to the reverence of Isaac to show Laban, that from that point on they diverged. He may have had a God of Nahor but Jacob had one that Isaac revered and Laban did not! and that's the note on which they parted, and b&s, note this, immediately that they parted, and turned their back on each other, God's host appeared to Jacob and said, 'good on you! In that spirit you've done the right thing'.

Now there are Jacob and Laban, and that's the two men who came together, b&s, for the sake of teaching Jacob to wait upon his God continually! And he could have had no more harder taskmaster than Laban the Syrian. Jacob would have remembered him for many a long day, b&s, he was never to forget that lesson! his mother's brother. And when we come to the 35th chapter, I want to show you a remarkable incident, where he finally buries from fright beneath the tower and strength of God's strength, he buries from sight all the last remnants of that city of the Syrian; forgetting and leaving it behind once and forever, and depending upon God Almighty, he buries out of sight, the last remnants of that city in the land of Syria, the city of Haran, where he had learnt so much

bitterness and so much deceit, but which he deserved, b&s, in a sense. He deserved so much that he got, but he got more than he deserved because God was trying to teach him, and in God's goodness, God's graciousness, in God's long-suffering, in the words of Jacob, God's mercy which means His steadfast love, He subjected him for 40 years to that sort of thing, to a miserable man, that this Laban was. White? he was as black as night! and that was the character that Jacob had to put up with!

So much for Laban! Let's move to the record now, b&s, back in chapter 29, we had that little digression, when you're doing these character sketches you know, you've got to move from one place to another to get the complete picture; anybody who doesn't believe that Laban was mean, must be king Midas! Now we move through the record and we come now then to the 15th verse, and of course, he's going to serve Laban for a certain period of time. And here in the chapter we have the matter of his buying into the household of Laban, and of course, of paying for Rachel and Leah. Now, before we commence on this section, going say from verses 15 to verse 30 of chapter 29, I want to take you to a comment of a prophet, because very often, b&s, when we're studying the bible, we sort of search around sorting out all the detail, and finding out all the meanings of names and so on; unless we try and grasp first and foremost, as to what God is trying to impress upon us in this record, what is the lesson? Well, very often you know, the search comes to an abrupt end in one of the prophets, who just happens to go 'click' and he's dead on the spot; isn't that true? Hosea, you know says, 'in his immaturity he took his brother by the heel in the womb, but when he grew up he had power with God', that's the hallmark for Jacob, see it? Philip says that's all you have to do with it, is expand it! Isn't that true? Well, Hosea gives us an added little lesson, you come back to that 12th chapter, have a look at the way he comments upon this and you'll see the principles that are coming out here, the principles of discipline and it's always a great help to have one of the prophets give you the key to the door, it's easier to get in! And my word, this is a wonderful comment, it seems on the surface to be somewhat ambiguous, but for a time until you understand it. So we have in Hosea 12 this comment, we've already had recourse to this chapter, it's been a very wonderful chapter for us in the life of Jacob, in verse 12 we read, 'And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep'. Well, you might say that's merely a historical comment, oh, no it's not! it's more than a historical comment, it's the essence of the lesson! I want you to note first of all, the change of name, Jacob fled into Syria, but Israel served for a wife; but he didn't did he? because he was still Jacob, what's the point that Hosea is making?

Well, let's pick up the context and the lesson comes out, verse 8, 'Ephraim said, I am become rich (this is Laban), I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin', in other words, Ephraim is saying I'm a very rich chap, I'm a wonderful big tribe, I've got a lot of substance, I've got a lot of material in them, and I've got it all by genuine means! And what he's trying to say, b&s, is this, 'I've been blessed by (taped tuned) a very secondary play, a very secondary play and when a man of Jacob's position, even though he only came with a staff, heir to the promises made to Abraham, when he took himself a woman, it should have been looked upon as a gracious thing toward that woman; she was very fortunate! But the

mighty Israel served for a wife, says Hosea; and Ephraim is saying, 'I'm rich' now there's our lesson, isn't it? So he would have become mighty, not Jacob, but he who later became the mighty Israel, had to serve for a wife. Now you can understand some of the intensity of the scenes of Jacob, to which he was subjected, not to serve for one wife but to serve for two! And there's our lesson, so here's the lesson that Jacob must learn, and didn't he learn it the hard way?

Let's come back to our record in Genesis, oh, didn't he learn that lesson the hard way! And here we come to a very interesting record, (we're not going right through the record of Jacob's days in Padan-aram simply because I didn't study this, I didn't have time, but we'll do what we've done, b&s, and just to outline to you some of the experiences of Jacob in this household, and the lessons this man learnt). So we read in verse 16, 'That Laban had two daughters; the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel'; notice the emphasis on that! And that rings bells, doesn't it? because Jacob had just left a household which had been divided by elder and younger, and here are two women, one the elder and one the younger, one's called Leah, and the word 'Leah' means 'weary' (Strong's-3812) from a root word 'to become tired or to make disgusted' so I don't believe that was an index of her character, but nonetheless, sometime in her life, I suppose there were attributes which suggested to others that this may be an index to her character, that she was weary and tired so much so as to make life disgusting, that's what Leah's name is! Rachel's name means 'a ewe' (Strong's-7354) a female sheep, and, of course, it's rather consistent with her name, but she kept her father's flock. No doubt, she probably earned that name by the fact that she did tend the sheep, but at any rate, so much for their names.

What is interesting is the way the bible describes them, carefully describes them, verse 17, 'Leah was tender-eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured'. Now people say, the word 'tender' in the concordance is a word that means 'to be weak' (Strong's-7390) and therefore of commentators, I think Rotherham, renders that Leah was 'bleary-eyed', well, fair enough I suppose, he sees the term 'weak' indicative of the fact that she may have had red eyes and perhaps weak eyes, and may not have very pretty eyes; and nearly every commentator follows that line, but you want to be careful with these commentators (I don't use them at length, I refer to them some times, but the bible is a commentator; best thing is to have the bible interpret it itself, and the bible doesn't use the word always in that way, as a matter of fact it's used quite frequently for 'beauty'; because although the eye may be weak, because the idea of the weakness is not so much in being bleary or red-eyed but it's 'softness'; she, I believe, had soft eyes. And in Deuteronomy chapter 28 and Isaiah 47 for example, the same word rendered 'tender' in respect to women's eyes, shows that to be a manner of beauty so it's not a stark contrast between a bleary-eyed tired looking woman and the other one beautiful, but obviously, b&s, the record can only say, that the only thing that would appeal to anybody about Leah was her eyes, and it's far above the rest of her features, which were not obviously worthy of comment, otherwise the scriptures would have commented upon them.

But, when we come to Rachel, not one feature is described, we have a Hebrew

expression which tells us that she was magnificent from head to toe; she was beautiful and well-favoured, and in the Hebrew it is 'beautiful of form and beautiful of countenance'. So here we have two women, one has one aspect of her body, her eyes only were commended, the other one is beautiful from head to toe; she's beautiful of form, she's beautiful of countenance and she fascinated Jacob! And he made the identical mistake of his father Isaac, and he fell into that trap, b&s, he fell into that trap. And here was poetic justice beginning to turn, the wheels of God grind slowly but they grind exceedingly small, says the ancient proverb. And here was the beginnings of that trap, he was fascinated by that woman; and I'm not going to say very many good things, I'm not going to say any good things about Rachel, and I've had people already on my back about this! I challenge anyone to show me one incident in the life of Rachel that makes her virtuous. There's only one that I know of, and it's only a hint! but there is a score of notes that would indicate that this woman was selfish, vindictive, jealous, envious, unreasonable and an idolator to the very end of her life; and Jacob never could get over that! and all through his life, he tortured a better woman, by putting that woman behind her on every occasion, right down to the time they came down into the Land of Israel, he put that poor woman Leah, who poured her heart and soul out to him, and who was infinitely the better character, and the true wife of Jacob. He should have realized it by the lessons that God was teaching him, if Jacob had accepted the providence of God in his life, that according to Beth-el and stopped at Leah, he would have saved himself tragedy after tragedy after tragedy! But he didn't because he was as blind to Rachel as Isaac was to Esau! And he was deceived in the identical fashion, now wasn't that poetic justice? absolute poetic justice. You have a look at this, he was deceived by his mother's brother, and that was revealed in Jacob at Haran; and his mother had taught him how to work like a Syrian and he was deceived by one who was 'bone of bone, and flesh of flesh of his mother'. He was deceived because a lie was told about the elder and the younger and that's exactly what he had done. He had made the identical mistake of Isaac except in his case he had chose the younger because his mother had chose the younger. She was right in her choice, he was wrong! He was deceived because he was deceived in the night when he couldn't see, and he deceived his father who was blind. He was deceived, b&s, because Laban came with Leah who must have worked in complicity with Laban and so he was deceived by the father bringing the daughter, the elder, who deceived him about the younger, and he had deceived his father who had chosen the elder, by his mother bringing him who had chosen the younger; if that's not poetic justice, and when the whole thing had come out, Laban had the temerity to say to him, 'Why did you deceive me? He said, 'it must not be done in our country to give the younger before the elder' and it's not done in Jacob's country either! And that should have cut him to the heart! not that he was wrong, b&s, to usurp that position, his mother had had the prophecy; we're not criticizing that, what we are criticizing is the way he went about doing it.

And do you know what? and you might stagger at this, but I'm going to show you later on, Jacob apologized to Esau for what he did and acknowledged Esau as the firstborn, did you know that? Acknowledged him as the firstborn, not once but at least 6 times; at least 6 times he acknowledged he was the firstborn! only in the sense, however, of the firstborn according to this world's material goods and according to what was true and

right in the household of Israel, never did Jacob relinquish his hold upon the promises of God, or put Esau in that position. In things to come, his faith was the faith of Isaac and he never wavered from that, but he did acknowledge his role, and he did acknowledge that Esau was truly the firstborn and he did acknowledge that he was the fear of Esau, and he acknowledged that on no less than 6 occasions later on, as I will show you. And he did that because God was teaching him, b&s, that you can't do these things in a manner that God does not approve or leaving God out of it, without paying for it, and bringing you to a position where you must repent of that! and you must acknowledge that wrong and set your hope in God.

And so the story commences with these two girls! And so it was, of course, beautiful and well-favoured as Rachel was he wanted her, and when, of course, he loved Rachel so much he said, he said in verse 18, 'I will serve thee 7 years for Rachel thy younger daughter'. As I said it was the custom for a man to pay a dowry, b&s, and he had no money, he only came with his staff, all he could give was his service, and let's be fair to Laban, I say 'be fair' because Jacob was more than fair, he offered, Jacob offered the first 7 years.

But, of course, Laban used that as a springboard for the next time; all he said was 'let's renew the contract' which was really downright robbery, because he charged him 7 years, Jacob never complained about that, as a matter of fact, have a look at verse 20, 'And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her'. Now if you read that in the AV it says 'they went quickly' now I put this question to the young fellows who've got girls, 'is time flying chaps before you get married?' Well, I tell you what it didn't fly for me, and it doesn't fly for anybody; it's a very frustrating period of time as you approach marriage, particularly if you love your girlfriend, which I hope you all do, and your desire is to have a home with that woman and your desire is to take her to yourself and to set up a family; it's a wonderful step to take and I highly recommend it, but time does not fly. That's not what the record is saying! those were to be 7 slow years as he saw the beauty of that young woman ripen to maturity. Look, he said, 'the time, the time's up' so obviously it wasn't flying; what it means is this, he thought that the seven years was a little price to pay, that's what it means. As far as he was concerned, it was a bargain! that was Jacob's attitude towards Rachel, he'd set a bargain! obviously, in the AV it reads the other way, but obviously I think that's the meaning of it.

And so he thought he'd strike a bargain, and the time comes, of course, when they made the feast in verse 22, and as the custom has it in the book of Judges, you remember Samson went to the feast of 7 days the same as here, the custom has it that they went to this feast for 7 days, and on the third night, of course, the bridegroom received his bride, and the feast continues as a celebration of the marriage. Many people, of course, have stumbled over the reception, as one young brother said to me, 'they'd never deceive me!', and I said, 'well, they might not'. Well, it wouldn't be hard, b&s, with their custom, and they weren't working off 240 volts you know! The feast would be held, and when it said the woman was veiled, as the custom was, you remember Rebekah came to Isaac and she said, 'who's that man in the field? to Eliezer

and he said, 'that's Isaac' and she veiled herself. And the idea of the veil, if you go through the scriptures you'll find the record states and implies that the veil went from the top of the head right down to the ground. So the woman would have been shrouded completely as they are today in the Middle East, so if Rachel was beautiful of form and countenance, Jacob couldn't have discerned that! with the woman shrouded the way she was; and in the darkness of night, because it was night, 'It came to pass in the evening' we read in verse 23, he took Leah his daughter', well, people might say ah, but surely in the darkness even, he would know which girl he had? But you see, Leah is in complicity with this thing! and he's his mother's brother! and he would have been equal to the situation. And she would have been able to simulate Rachel's voice no doubt, and in the darkness of that night, b&s, it could have been.....

And in the morning it was Leah, and Jacob rises up and he says at the end of verse 25, 'why have you beguiled me?' That question could have been answered by himself, he didn't have to lie in that question, that question, b&s, could have been answered by himself but he didn't answer it because he was amazed that he would be treated in that fashion! Amazed, you know, Jacob for all his worth had some amazing weaknesses; even when he deceived Isaac, he said to his mother, 'if my father finds me out, it will seem that I'm a deceiver!' it will seem that I'm a deceiver, you see, in that position when people are dominated by a good motive, b&s, dominated by a good motive they overlook moral values. Now here he is with the same attitude of mind, 'why have you beguiled me?' Well, fair enough, Laban had no right to do what he did, but Jacob if he had understood the providence in his life, he would never have asked that question. He would probably have wiped the slate clean from Laban, and have said, 'I can't hold that against him; I wouldn't hold that against him, if he had realized, b&s, he would probably have shut his mouth and if he had gone on thinking a bit further, and allowed the lesson of Beth-el to come home to his mind, angels ascending and descending upon him, or upon the stone there, he would see that 'God would be with him in all his way', if he had known by the providence of God that the blessing, indeed, came to him even through deceit, he would have swallowed his feelings and would have said, 'well, for good or ill, I'm going to have that woman and that woman alone for my wife', and I believe he would have been blessed and a happy man, because finally, b&s, Leah was laid to rest in Machpelah by Jacob's own hand.

'Machpelah' (Strong's-4375+3717) means 'folded together' and there he says 'Abraham and Sarah were buried, there Isaac and Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah'. She was his true wife, no doubt about that whatever, but Jacob, not thinking, b&s, overcome by fleshly things, that that woman was beautiful of form, beautiful of countenance, her beauty was in his mouth; was lead on to accept the second woman, the third woman, the fourth woman and a house filled up with squabbling women, and lead into circumstances, look, we might laugh but I tell you what, what did Solomon say? 'it's better to dwell in a corner of the housetop than in a wide house with a brawling woman'. He had two and they each had on their side a maid, I'll tell you what, that would have been testing indeed for that man! extremely testing. And Rachel brought more bitterness and hatred into that house than all of them put together.

Now let's have a look at the character of these women, let's have a look, b&s, at the character of these two women, and I will show you why I'm saying what I'm saying concerning them! And so we find that Jacob is to fulfil Leah's week, and when he's fulfilled her week then he gets Rachel and they settle down together, happily married. I want you to turn to the 18th chapter of Leviticus, b&s, when the wise Law-giver, years after this incident was to make this comment, verse 18, what a wise comment this was in the Law of Moses, and how it was reminiscent of Jacob's experience, God told the children of Israel, 'Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time', and that's what Jacob did! And exactly what the Law of Moses said would happen, happened. And exploding in that house was a spirit of envy and jealousy. Now, b&s, I want briefly to go through the character of these two, and we have it compared at the end of the first six months, at the end of which, the margin of my bible says, is like Laban, his wife (I haven't got any more so we can only do that much).

So we come to this record and we find that Laban gave to Rachel and to Leah their handmaidens; now notice again, b&s, the character of Laban. He didn't give to Leah and Rachel handmaidens who were virgins; he gave to them his own handmaidens, a very bad practice! Rebekah was given a nurse when she left, probably the household was in better order then, but these two were given handmaidens, they were women that Laban himself had already had for himself. They were now in Jacob's household that he was to be married with, and one of them was to carry on further, where she was to become involved in an immoral act with his eldest son, Reuben, and to bring to Israel's heart, a heavy, heavy burden. And guess who's handmaiden she was? Wasn't Leah's, and there's justice in that I believe, it was Bilhah that carried on with Reuben, and she belonged to Rachel, and it was Rachel that introduced her into that household. Certainly, Leah showed a very poor stand when she followed that example, which she should never had done, it was Rachel that started that! And so we come, b&s, to the very pathetic record of Leah, who I believe, was a very wonderful woman and for these reasons; from verses 31 to 35, and this I believe, is one of the most moving sections of this story.

I want you to notice how it opens up, 'When Yahweh saw that Leah was hated', I want you to notice, b&s, immediately in the scriptural record, that it's Yahweh who cares for Leah, but when we come to Rachel in verse 6, she uses the term 'Elohim' as she does in verse 22 and as she does in verse 23, and even when God thought upon Rachel who had suffered for so long, it is 'Elohim' because she only saw that general term, whereas Leah's contact with Yahweh was closer; true it was that with the son that Rachel bore, she did use the name of Yahweh in verse 24, but not until Joseph was born, which was, b&s, (let's figure this out) 34 years later, 34 years later when she used the Yahweh name, but Leah immediately as seen in this record, as having on her side, the covenant God of Israel; whereas Rachel is associated only with Elohim, a general title for God, showing that her understanding, her attachment was not as great, nowhere near as great, and so, 'when Yahweh saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb: but Rachel was barren'. It was Yahweh who saw, and when it says that she was hated, she was loved less as we have in verse 30, 'he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also

Rachel more than Leah'. He couldn't have hated Leah, b&s, no man could hate a woman and have 7 children; they weren't people like that, he didn't hate her but he cut that woman and broke her heart, and in this record we have the record of a woman who had a struggle within herself concerning her affections and who was triumphant in a magnificent fashion; and if you don't thrill to this, you're not human! as you see this woman struggle above the feelings she had for her husband, because she knew, b&s, that if her husband's love was not to be won, she had One in the heavens greater than he, who's love was a steadfast love, and who would never waiver! And it was Yahweh who first loved her, and because He first loved her, Leah was lead to love Him, because when Yahweh saw that she was hated, He extended His love towards that woman and she responded to Him.

But she didn't respond to Him without a struggle; now you look at the first 4 sons of Leah, verse 32, 'And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben (see a son), for she said, Surely Yahweh hath looked upon my affliction (and in that she's right), and now therefore, my husband will love me'. Notice this, b&s, she has emotional feelings for her husband and Yahweh; there are two personalities in her life, so when she sees the boy she says, 'oh, see a son, because Yahweh hath seen my affliction and my husband will love me' (but he didn't). He didn't and so in the bitter disappointment that she had, she had another son, and she said, 'Because Yahweh hath heard that I was hated, He hath therefore given me this son also; and she called his name, Simeon'. Where is Jacob in that verse? He's not there, so Leah is bitter and disappointed in her heart. She didn't win her husband's love, b&s, I don't believe she won that, until finally I think she may have, by the very terms that Jacob himself uses, but she didn't win it, so she has another son, but instead of saying, 'I'm sure he'll love me', she accepted that disappointment and she accepted Simeon as a consolation from Yahweh. Now you may think I'm stretching this a little, but just wait, because this is the way the woman's mind was working. And so Simeon comes into the world, b&s, as a son which she received from Yahweh and dedicated that boy to him, and she had at that stage in her life, not mentioned Jacob's name, this was a son of consolation from God. There was a struggle of affection!

Now we come to verse 34 and we read, 'She conceived again and bare a son and said, Now (watch this) this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons, therefore was his name called Levi' (which means 'joined'). No mention of Yahweh now! Leah's back again, her emotions have swayed back in the other direction, her emotions are drawn towards Jacob, b&s, she loved the man! and she wanted him, she wanted his affections! there was a love towards Jacob, she was burning with desire towards him, she wanted that man as a husband. And so in her anxiety this boy Levi is born, but God is not mentioned and yet isn't it strange, b&s, that this one was to bear the priestly tribe who were going to be 'joined unto Yahweh' as the book of Numbers tells us, and yet they were torn asunder from Yahweh because they proved unfaithful to Him, and the boy was born without a thought of God! Isn't that remarkable? because Leah's emotions now are all towards her husband, but this time her husband was not joined unto her!

And so the fourth boy is born! 'And she conceived again, and bare a son: (now listen to this) 'and she said, (and I want to read to you from the Hebrew) 'now this time will I praise Yahweh', it's exactly the same as 'this time will my husband love me'. Now, b&s, just pause for a moment, here is a woman that's had 4 children, Reuben (see a son) she's bears him with affections for her husband and Yahweh, but she doesn't get the affections of her husband, so she has another son and she says, 'God heard me' she's a woman of prayer, but she says she accepts this boy from God not from Jacob. She says he's God's consolation to me. Along comes another son, now God is forgotten, she says, 'now my husband will be joined to me', now this time my husband will be joined to me', he wasn't; and heart aching as we can only imagine, she says, 'Yahweh looked upon my affliction'; wouldn't it have been a dreadful thing! ask the sisters how they would like to live in a house like that? we don't have laws like that, we live under a benedictive dispensation, we live under a dispensation where we believe in the creation, one man, one woman, but you think sisters, in a household like that, how great would be your affliction, how tremendously your affliction would come upon you! And here's a woman now, who could blame her when Levi comes along, thinking 3 boys; she was to say that later on when there were 6 of them, 'there are 6 for my husband to be joined to me now'.

Then Judah comes along, and with resolute determination she says 'now this time I will praise Yahweh', b&s, Judah, Judah, there's the line of Messiah! there's the one that both of them wanted, and who got it? Leah! And when did she get it? When, when? when she said, 'now this time' (never mind about my husband) and the first son that was born where the husband was completely excluded, Simeon, true, but now he's completely excluded in the sense that she said, 'now this time I will praise Yahweh' and that's the son through whom the seed came! How did he come? He came as a triumph of Leah's faith; it was a triumph of her faith, and immediately she stood from bearing. She was barren for a long period of time, that was her last child for some time, and you know, b&s, she was barren for so long that Jacob gave up living with her, did you know that? He no longer lived with her after a while as husband and wife, because in verse 15 of chapter 30 we read, 'Is it a small thing that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee tonight for thy son's mandrakes'. She had taken her husband, and you know, b&s, it was a tragedy that after the birth of Judah, a woman's faith triumphant, if only Jacob had looked into her eyes, if he had only seen the light of the body which is the eyes, and looked deep into those eyes, he would have seen a reflection of Almighty God, he would have seen Yahweh there! There was the boy through whom the seed came, the one that every woman in Israel wanted to bear, and there it was, an a triumph of her faith! And what does Judah's name mean? it means 'praise', what does Paul say in Romans chapter 2, commenting upon the name of Judah he said, 'whose praise is not of men but of God' verse 29, and that's exactly the spirit of Leah! Exactly the spirit of Leah, because she says, 'now this time (no Jacob) I will praise Yahweh, whose praise is not of men by of God' and if that's not a triumph of the woman's faith, I've never seen it!

And I'm moved by that because I can see, b&s, what a tremendous tragedy Jacob could have averted if he had accepted that woman! It would have hurt, it would have hurt to

see Rachel go aside, it would hurt deeply, but look at the domestic happiness he would have had, because, look, there's 4 boys born, not one mentioned; not one single hint, not a single hint in Leah's words of any reproach towards Rachel. Not one! Rachel doesn't enter into it! True she won her husband's affection, Rachel got all of it, but not one hint, but in the next chapter, there explodes into the household a vicious enviousness, that is absolutely sickening, absolutely vicious, and the two boys that come forth next are to belittle Leah and nobody else. And there's the first reason why we've ruled out Rachel as being the true wife of Jacob. She's not; and so we read, 'When Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die'. Now that, b&s, is a shocking attitude of mind. Give me children else I die; that was a request that was fulfilled, it was fulfilled in a manner that Rachel never foresaw, and when she said that Yahweh shall add to me another son, when she had Joseph and called his name 'the increaser', and said that Yahweh shall add to me another son, He did add to her another son, and she died in agony.

And Jeremiah took that up and said, 'there was natural Israel in all its waywardness, in all its idolatry, in all of its lack of appreciation to God, in all its bitterness against its brother, in everything that was wrong in Israel, there it was in that woman, and she died in agony, and she died in a very significant spot as we will see in a later study. And she exploded with this burst of passionate anger and envy and cruelty, 'give me children else I die', where's faith? where's reason in a statement like that? It's inexcusable, I don't care how long she was barren, that attitude of mind is inexcusable! And Jacob reminded her and said, 'do you think I'm God?' and he used 'Elohim' too, because he knew that was the God of Rachel, a general God. One she had a general understanding of, but not the deep understanding that Leah had who used the term 'Yahweh' all the way through. 'Am I in God's stead?' I can do nothing about it, so she says, 'Right, take Bilhah', now I say, look, they knew the history of Jacob's household back in Canaan; she knew what Hagar had experienced, Sarah took a tremendous risk when she brought Hagar into the household, b&s, because you know what happened! they take the handmaiden, but they're not a handmaid when they give them to their husbands, the woman's handmaid is elevated, not to position of first wife but at least to be understood as a wife, because that's how Bilhah was accepted, taken as a wife so she was elevated to that position. Rachel risked having that handmaiden 'lord it over her' as Hagar did to Sarah; she was prepared to take that risk, what for? because she wanted children and she loved children? because she wanted to bear the Messiah? because she wanted joy and affection? NO! for one dominating reason, because she detested Leah! and in the birth of her first two sons, she aimed those son's names at Leah like you'd aim a dart at a person's heart! That was her spirit, look, I can't spare Rachel in this record, because you look what she did.

She takes this woman, Bilhah, who was to later on, because she was introduced into these circumstances, and mark you, b&s, Reuben didn't lay with Bilhah because it was a whim or lust of flesh; it was at a very significant time that Reuben went in onto Bilhah. It was when Rachel died and Jacob had called Benjamin, the son of my right hand, and Reuben hearing that and realizing that it might possibly be that he might loss his

birthright because this man loved this mother better than his mother, he did what other people have done in the record, to usurp the father's providence by taking one of his wives. That's what Rachel introduced into the household of Jacob! Now we've got 3 wives, and so the practice was for the woman to bear children on behalf of another (and we haven't got time to go into all that) but the practice was for the father to take the child and to nurse it upon his knees, to pass it to the woman who would nurse it upon her knees, as accepting the child as their own; that's the meaning of the phrase 'to bear upon thy knees', that I might have children by her'. The actual Hebrew phrase in the margin is 'that he's built by her', because the word 'children' means 'a house', that I might build a house through her.

And when Bilhah conceived in verse 5, and bare Jacob a son, Rachel said, 'God hath vindicated me, He hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore she called his name 'Vindication or Judgment', now there's the type of woman we're dealing with. God had heard her voice, what had her voice said? 'Give me children else I die', true she may have prayed to God, but that's her voice in prayer. And what was the name of the son? 'I'm vindicated' I'M VINDICATED, with an attitude like that? What do you think God would do with that, b&s? what do you think Almighty God looking down upon that household, looking upon Leah whom He loved (we've already seen that) Leah have I loved, we could almost say, couldn't we? Here are echoes of Esau and Jacob, Leah have I loved and I've seen her affliction, what is Almighty God looking down there and seeing that vindictive vicious spirit towards the sister, and then having the child named, 'that I am vindicated by God'? Vindicated! nothing! who was Dan? Dan, b&s, became the tribe of apostacy! that tribe lead Israel into the worst apostacy it ever saw. It was in Dan, where the great man Jeroboam the son of Nebat, established his golden calves, one in Beth-el and one in Dan, and the people never went to Beth-el, they forsook Beth-el and all went and worshipped his golden calf in Dan! and that's a fitting end to that tribe, and what sort of tribe was Dan? They were an indolent, free-booting, ruffian sort of a tribe that when they went into the Land, they couldn't get their own inheritance because the people were too strong for them, so they charged around the Land finding a nation that was so weak that they couldn't defend themselves, belted them on the head and said, 'how wonderful are we!' and settled down in the Land in a place that God never gave them. They were a wandering, free-breeding, lustful, idolatrous sort of a tribe; even on their way up, b&s, into the Land, to go up north where God had never given them an inheritance, they stole from the house of Micah, the gods that he had, and took away his idolatrous priest, the grandson of Moses, and took him up there and established the great apostacy of Dan, and that's the boy that Rachel said, 'God hath vindicated me!' and looked with hateful glee against her sister.

And then she had another son, and in verse 8 we read, 'And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed', what an attitude of mind! Look in the margin we've got 'wrestlings of God', but that's not right, in actual fact the Hebrew word is an allied word to one of the titles of God, it means 'mighty wrestlings', because when she called the boy by his name, Naphtali, b&s, there was no remembrance of God in the matter. 'Naphtali' doesn't mean 'God's wrestlings' Naphtali literally means 'my wrestlings'. There's Rachel in the record of scripture, one by whom

she's vindicated, and one that she has wrestled with her sister; but I want you to notice, you know, you might wonder why I speak strongly of this matter, but look, b&s, I told you before, to read the bible carefully. Look, God is trying to tell us something! Jacob's learning a lesson; listen to the language of verse 8, 'And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed'. And Hosea says, 'that Jacob wrestled with the angel and had power with God, and prevailed', and he used almost that language. And what do we find? b&s, we find Rachel enmeshed and entwined with her sister, and by the way, the word 'wrestling' used for Rachel, and the word 'wrestling' used for Jacob, are entirely different; when Jacob wrestled with the angel, he clung to him. But this word 'wrestling' here is a bad word, it means 'to entwine' it's used in the sense, b&s, in an evil sense in Psalm 18, it's used by the term 'made unsavoury'. It's rendered by the word 'froward', Rachel was gloating in the fact that she was entwining Leah and strangling her to death, and she said, 'I prevailed'. I HAVE PREVAILED, and Jacob wrestled with an angel, b&s, AND GOD PREVAILED! Jacob and Rachel were not united in true marriage; that would prove the point, Rachel wrestled with her sister and won the fight and she prevailed. Jacob wrestled, lost the fight yet he prevailed, and there was the difference between that woman and Jacob, and she brought unhappiness into the household. Leah, not to her credit, follow Rachel's example with Zilpah!

As the record goes on to say, and Leah does not improve in that record from this point onwards, but she was bitterly provoked, b&s, bitterly provoked whereas she was in a grand position after having 4 sons from her own body, to repress that woman with a great reproach, and she did not do that! And so we have the record of truth before us, I want to conclude with a couple of references to show you how the record of scripture underlines what I said about Rachel. Turn to Genesis 35 and it was recorded against her, b&s, it was Leah who had born to her a great son, through whom the Christ would come. But in Genesis 35 we read in verse 16, 'And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour' there was but a little way to come to Ephrath, is that important? Come over to chapter 48, and see that Jacob tells the same story, and that he carefully repeats that; he carefully repeats that little piece of information, in chapter 48 and verse 7, 'And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem'. Now the record in two cases, b&s, goes at pains to tell us that when Rachel died, she died when there was but a little way: Gesenius when commenting upon that phrase, tells us that it's only used about 5 times in the bible, the Hebrew is very obscure, no one knows exactly what the term means, except it means 'a very, very short way'. It would have been just as easy and equally appropriate for the bible to say, that Rachel died in Bethlehem! it was only just outside the walls, why didn't it? because God is trying to tell us that when she brought forth that son, then Jacob's name, 'the son of my right hand' (the only boy named by his father) the only one of the twelve named by his father, the son of my right hand; when she brought forth that son, b&s, the record tells us that the son was brought forth by Rachel just short of Bethlehem. And the prophet Micah, which we are going to see in a magnificent sweep, when some of you with the study we had over December will

appreciate, and others will yet to have appreciate, in a magnificent sweep of his prophecy, teaches us that here was the fall of natural Israel in giving birth to 'the son of her sorrows' and then Micah went on to say, 'but thou Bethlehem-Ephrath out of thee shall He come forth unto Me who shall be ruler in Israel, therefore, He shall give them up until the time when she that travaileth hath brought forth'. And here was one travailing in hard labour and she just fell short of Bethlehem. And she was natural Israel, how do we know that? because Jeremiah says that, 'Rachel weeping for her children' and if that's not enough proof, Matthew takes it up and when Herod slew the children he saw 'the weeping mothers in Israel who were cursing their Christ saying, 'crucify crucify crucify Him', and he said, that's Rachel. Rachel weeping for her children because they were not, and that was not Israel in its best state, it was Israel in it's very very worst, and they crucified their Lord, they fell short of Bethlehem, never produced the seed, Leah did that! Fell short of Bethlehem, never even got to that city, Leah got to that city and passed it, went to Beer-sheba and finally, b&s, with Jacob's own hands Leah was enfolded with him in the cave of Macphelah! And they were truly man and wife!

If only Jacob had realized that in the first instance, what a great deal of suffering he would have saved himself, b&s, what a great tragedy he would have saved himself; and yet for all that, the discipline, the lessons, the education, the agony which God brought upon him which purified that character, would never have happened, would never have happened, but truly Jacob suffered, b&s, in the household of Laban, truly it was great relief as we shall see in our next study, as he made his way out of that place from Gilead onwards, and he moved from Galeed to Mahanaim (two camps) to Penuel (the faces of God) to Succoth (the place of booths) to Shechem (the burden-bearer) to Beth-el (the house of God) to Beer-sheba (the well of the covenant) to Hebron (fellowship with God). And as he moved from place to place, he grew greater and greater and greater, and Jacob became a mighty dominion, b&s, but he became so without Rachel. May the lessons of Jacob's life be so impressed upon, b&s, that we shall preserve at all costs, the domestic happiness which, no doubt, we all enjoy, as having chosen the wife of our youth and having seen in each other, a love for each other, because we both love each other and God, and brought into our house that triangle which Leah had, she loved her husband and Yahweh and if only her husband had loved her and they both had loved Yahweh as she loved Him and Jacob loved Him, what a house it would have been! But the tragedy, of course, came about because envy is the rottenness of the bones, says the Proverbs and jealousy is as cruel as the grave, says the Song of Solomon. And Rachel brought both of those things into that household. May we, b&s, learn the lessons of Jacob in the land of Syria!