

GENESIS 30

Written and compiled by Gary Kukis

Genesis 30:1–43

Jacob Sires More Children/An Agreement with Laban

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Document Navigation

[Preface and Quotations](#)

[Outline of Chapter](#)

[Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines](#)

[Doctrines Alluded to](#)

[Dictionary of Terms](#)

[Introduction and Text](#)

[Chapter Summary](#)

[Addendum](#)

[A Complete Translation](#)

Verse Navigation

[Genesis 30:1](#)

[Genesis 30:2](#)

[Genesis 30:3](#)

[Genesis 30:4–5](#)

[Genesis 30:6](#)

[Genesis 30:7–8](#)

[Genesis 30:9–11](#)

[Genesis 30:12–13](#)

[Genesis 30:14](#)

[Genesis 30:15](#)

[Genesis 30:16](#)

[Genesis 30:17–18](#)

[Genesis 30:19–21](#)

[Genesis 30:22–24](#)

[Genesis 30:25–26](#)

[Genesis 30:27–28](#)

[Genesis 30:29–30](#)

[Genesis 30:31–33](#)

[Genesis 30:34–36](#)

[Genesis 30:37–39](#)

[Genesis 30:40](#)

[Genesis 30:41–42](#)

[Genesis 30:43](#)

Links to each chapter of word-by-word, verse-by-verse studies: **Genesis Links** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) (that is what this document is). This incorporates 2 previous studies done in the book of Genesis. Since much of this material was thrown together without careful editing, there will be, from time to time, concepts and exegetical material which will be repeated, because there was no overall editing done once all of this material was combined.

This study makes reference to a wide-range of sources. There are quotations from doctrinal teachers, of course; but from Catholic commentaries and from other sources as well. Wherever I found relevant truth, I quoted from it or was inspired by it. Even though it is clear that some churches have a better understanding of God’s plan and Bible doctrine, that does not mean that there is no truth to be found anywhere else. So, from time to time, I will quote from John Calvin, even though I do not subscribe to 5-point Calvinism; I will quote from some Catholic

sources, even though there are significant problems with some Catholic doctrines. The intention is for this to be the most thorough and accurate study of Genesis available anywhere.

Also, **it is not necessary that you read the grey Hebrew exegesis tables**. They are set apart from the rest of the study so that you can easily skip over them (based upon the suggestion of a friend). However, if you ever doubt the translation of a word, phrase or a verse, these translation tables are then available to examine.

Preface: Genesis 30 can be broken down into two surfacely disparate sections: (1) The sons born to Jacob in Haran and (2) the labor agreement entered into between Laban (management) and Jacob (contract worker).

The first half of Genesis 30 is a continuation from chapter 29 of the sons (and daughter) born to Jacob (4 sons are born to Leah in Genesis 29; then 7 more sons and a daughter are born to Jacob in this chapter—at first glance, this appears to be the weirdest place to end and start a chapter). The latter half of Genesis 30 (vv. 25–43) outlines an agreement that Jacob and Laban came to regarding Jacob’s future wages; and both men try to cleverly improve on their part of the agreement. At first read, I wanted to just redo the chapters, and put the sons and daughters born to Jacob altogether—that seems to make sense, at first.

Interestingly enough, there is an odd continuity between these two seemingly disparate topics, defined by the first two verses. In fact, this entire chapter appears to be a carefully designed literary unit. Despite the disparity between the two halves of this chapter combined with the odd division between Genesis 29 and 30, this chapter actually makes up a thematic whole, something which is lost on virtually every commentator.

Thematically, we may understand this chapter to be: *Despite man’s schemes, God is still the Author of life.*

This chapter is often disparaged by critics of the Bible for two reasons: (1) Jacob marries more than one woman; and (2) Jacob apparently has some odd breeding theories which he puts into practice (these theories would not have been unusual for his day and time). Proponents of gay marriage point to Jacob’s polygamous marriage and conclude, “If he can marry more than one woman, then two men can marry.” Critics point to Jacob’s breeding schemes and say, “This is stupid and unscientific and it is in the Bible!” These objections will be met head-on and explained in the exegesis of this chapter.

*Bible Summary: Rachel's maid had sons for Jacob, then Leah's maid, then Leah. Finally Rachel had a son. Laban allowed Jacob flocks as wages to stay.*¹

L. M. Grant entitles this chapter: *The Struggle Between Rachel and Leah.*² This mostly describes the first half of this chapter.

Included herein is an exegesis from the Hebrew, 3 original translations, along with 90+ translations referenced, 3 sets of original notes from the exegesis, from Genesis & Basic Exegesis; and over 50 commentaries consulted and quoted from. 426 pages.

There are many **chapter commentaries** on the book of Genesis. This will be the most extensive examination of Genesis 30, where you will be able to examine in depth every word of the original text. Every attempt has been made to make this both a complete and self-contained study. Therefore, all references, vocabulary, and related concepts should be found within this extensive study. Easy access links to more in-depth studies of some vocabulary words, concepts and doctrines are also provided.

¹ From <http://www.biblesummary.info/genesis/30> accessed September 11, 2017.

² From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-30.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Quotations:

John Smith: *The best way to manipulate a man is to make him think he is manipulating you.*³

Bidpai: *Men are used as they use others.*⁴

Steve Kluger: *Ale: Are you manipulating me again?*
*T.C.: Try not to fall for it. I dare you.*⁵

Kukis: Life is built upon the actual choices that we make; not on the choices that we could have made.

Kukis: No matter what plans and schemes that man puts together, in the end, *life* is always God's prerogative.

Donald Trump from *Art of the Deal: The worst thing you can possibly do in a deal is seem desperate to make it. That makes the other guy smell blood, and then you're dead.*⁶

Donald Trump from *Art of the Deal: One of the problems when you become successful is that jealousy and envy inevitably follow. There are people—I categorize them as life's losers—who get their sense of accomplishment and achievement from trying to stop others.*⁷

Outline of Chapter 30:**Preface****Introduction**

vv.	1–24	Jacob Sires Eight More Children
vv.	1–8	Rachel has 2 sons through her maid Bilhah
vv.	9–13	Leah has 2 sons through her maid Zilpah
vv.	14–16	Mandrakes, an aphrodisiac, are discovered
vv.	17–21	Leah gives birth to 2 sons and a daughter
vv.	22–24	Rachel bears a son, Joseph
vv.	25–43	Jacob's New Deal with Laban
vv.	25–34	Jacob and Laban come to an agreement on wages
vv.	35–36	Laban tips the scales in his favor
vv.	37–43	Jacob tips the scales in his favor

Summary**Addendum****Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines:**

Preface
Preface

Preface
Quotations

³ From <http://www.wiseoldsayings.com/manipulation-quotes/> accessed September 16, 2017.

⁴ From <http://www.wiseoldsayings.com/manipulation-quotes/> accessed September 16, 2017.

⁵ From <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/manipulation> accessed September 16, 2017.

⁶ From <http://www.returnofkings.com/100396/11-best-quotes-from-donald-trumps-art-of-the-deal> accessed September 16, 2017.

⁷ From <https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1224415-trump-the-art-of-the-deal> accessed September 16, 2017.

Introduction	Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 30
Introduction	Lessons from a Dysfunctional Family (a graphic)
Introduction	Fundamental Questions About Genesis 30
Introduction	The Prequel of Genesis 30
Introduction	The Principals of Genesis 30
Introduction	The Places of Genesis 30
Introduction	Map of Jacob’s Journey
Introduction	By the Numbers
Introduction	The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 30
Introduction	Clarke’s Synopsis of Genesis 30
Introduction	Synopses of Genesis 30 (Various Commentators)
Introduction	A Synopsis of Genesis 30 from the Summarized Bible
Introduction	The Big Picture (Genesis 29–31)
Introduction	Book of Genesis Chapters 29 - 33 Summary (from Shmoop)
Introduction	Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 30 (from Dr. Bob Utley)
Introduction	Changes—additions and subtractions (for Genesis 30)
v. 1	Rachel: “I will die if I do not bear children” (Various Commentators)
v. 2	Genesis 30:2 (ESV) (a graphic)
v. 2	Jacob asks, “Am I in the place of God?” (Many Commentators)
v. 2	Wenstrom on Jacob’s Response to Rachel
v. 3	Rachel’s Solution of Using a Surrogate Mother (Various Commentators)
v. 3	Bearing a child upon Rachel’s knees (Various Commentators)
v. 3	Some Points of Genesis 30:3
v. 3	Did Rachel Manipulate Jacob?
v. 3	Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:1–3
v. 4	Birth Surrogacy in the Bible (Various Commentators)
v. 6	The Name of Dan (Various Commentators)
v. 5	Genesis 30:4–6 (a graphic)
v. 8	Rachel’s Struggles (or, <i>wrestlings</i>) (Various Commentators)
v. 8	Rachel proclaims, “I have prevailed” (Many Commentators)
v. 8	The Rivalry Between Rachel and Leah (Various Commentators)
v. 8	The Name of Naphtali (Various Commentators)
v. 8	Jack Ballinger’s Analysis of Genesis 30:1–8: Rachel the Instigator
v. 9	Leah decides to use her maid as a surrogate (Many Commentators)
v. 9	The Status of the Maidservants When Given to Jacob (Many Commentators)
v. 11	Genesis 30:11 What Good Fortune! (A graphic)
v. 11	The Meaning of <i>Gad</i> (Various Commentators)
v. 13	Genesis 30:13 “How happy I am” (a graphic)
v. 13	The Name of <i>Asher</i> (Various Commentators)
v. 13	More Children Are Born (a graphic)
v. 13	The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy
v. 13	Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:9–13
v. 13	Jack Ballinger’s Analysis of Genesis 30:9–13: Tit for Tat
v. 14	Mandrakes
v. 14	Mandrakes—Fertility Plant (a photograph)
v. 14	The non-Skeptical View of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)
v. 14	Wenstrom on Mandrakes
v. 14	Theories on the Identity of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)
v. 14	The Skeptical View of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)
v. 14	Concerning Mandrakes (Various Commentators)
v. 14	Genesis 30:14d (a graphic)

- v. 15 [Is the problem that Jacob just married too many women?](#) A discussion.
- v. 15 [A Man's Day – A Woman's Day emoji](#) (a graphic)
- v. 15 [A discussion of the relationship between Rachel and Leah](#)
- v. 15 [The Bargain for Mandrakes](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 16 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:14–16](#)
- v. 18 [Why did God give Leah a 5th son?](#) A discussion.
- v. 18 [The Meaning of *Issachar*](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 20 [The Meaning of *Zebulun*](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 21 [Men and women in the Bible; and women's liberation](#)
- v. 21 [The Name of *Dinah*](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 21 [Did Jacob have many daughters?](#)
- v. 21 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:17–21](#)
- v. 21 [Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:14–21: The Mandrake Caper](#)
- v. 22 ["God remembered Rachel"](#) (Several Commentators)
- v. 22 [A plethora of opinions re: God answering Rachel's prayers](#) (several commentators)
- v. 22 [Personalizing Genesis 30:22](#) (a graphic)
- v. 22 [Definition of an Anthropomorphism and an Anthropopathism](#)
- v. 23 [Genesis 30:23 God has taken away my disgrace](#) (a graphic)
- v. 23 [Rachel's spiritual growth; her unique raising of Joseph](#)
- v. 24 [Jacob's Children](#) (a graphic)
- v. 24 [The Meaning of *Joseph*](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 24 [The Birth Order of the Sons](#) (Commentators and Commentary)
- v. 24 [The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on Rachel and Leah](#)
- v. 24 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:22–24](#)
- v. 24 [Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:22–24: Birth of Joseph](#)
- v. 25 [Discussing how much credit ought to be given to Jacob when he wants to leave](#)
- v. 25 [Genesis 30:25](#) (a graphic)
- v. 25 [Giving Jacob too much credit when he says, "Send me away."](#) (A discussion)
- v. 25 [The Pulpit Commentary on Laban's point of view](#)
- v. 26 ["Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you"](#) (Commentators)
- v. 27 [Commentators on, "I have learned by divination..."](#)
- v. 27 [Laban Recognizes that God Has Blessed Him through Jacob](#) (Many Commentators)
- v. 28 [Laban to Jacob: "Name your salary..."](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 28 [Jacob told Laban that he wanted to return to his homeland](#) (a graphic)
- v. 28 [A New Deal can prolong our stay](#) (a graphic)
- v. 28 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:25–28](#)
- v. 30 ["You know how God has blessed me," claims Jacob](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 30 [Genesis 30:30a-c](#) (a graphic)
- v. 30 ["When will I attend to my own household?"](#) (A graphic)
- v. 30 [Jacob States His Case](#) (Several Commentators)
- v. 30 [Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:25–30: God Prospers Jacob at Laban's Expense](#)
- v. 32 [The Lambs and Goats which Jacob Lays Claim to](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 32 [Jacob's Goats](#) (a photo)
- v. 32 [The Deal which Jacob and Laban Struck](#) (a discussion)
- v. 32 [Jacob removes some of the sheep and goats](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 33 ["My righteousness will answer for me..."](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 33 [The Deal Struck Between Jacob and Laban—a Summary](#)
- v. 33 [Genesis 30:31–33 Jacob's Flocks Increase](#) (a graphic)
- v. 34 [Laban Agrees to the Deal](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 34 [Reviewing Genesis 30:25–34](#)
- v. 34 [Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:31–34: Jacob's Proposal For Wages Accepted](#)
- v. 34 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:29–34](#)

- v. 35 [Spotted Sheep](#) (a photo)
- v. 35 [Laban Removes Certain Sheep and Goats](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 36 [The Three-Day Journey](#) (Several Commentators)
- v. 36 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:35–36](#)
- v. 36 [Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:35–36: Laban Stacks the Deck!](#)
- v. 37 [Jacob's unscientific scheme](#)
- v. 37 [How did animals get their stripes?](#) (A graphic chart)
- v. 38 [Jacob's Sheep—Bible Journaling](#) (a graphic)
- v. 38 [The Mechanics of Jacob's Scheme](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 38 [Various Commentators Discuss Jacob's Breeding Scheme](#)
- v. 38 [Commentators Confused about Jacob's Breeding Scheme](#)
- v. 38 [Commentators who think God directed or was involved in Jacob's scheme](#)
- v. 38 [Wenstrom's Favorable Review of Jacob's Breeding Methods](#)
- v. 38 [What about Jacob's dream in Genesis 31?](#)
- v. 38 [God Did Not Appear to Jacob in a Dream Prior to this Breeding Incident](#)
- v. 38 [Jacob's Schemes and His Subsequent Wealth](#) (a discussion)
- v. 39 [Peeling of Rods](#) (a graphic)
- v. 39 [Jacob's Breeding Scheme and Science](#)
- v. 39 [Recessive Traits in Sheep and Goats](#) (a graphic)
- v. 40 [What about Jacob separating the flocks](#) (Several Commentators)
- v. 42 [Jacob breeding the strong of the flock](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 42 [Jacob's Plan to Influence Breeding Outcomes](#) (Various Commentators)
- v. 42 [Jacob, the Peeled Branches and the Bible](#)
- v. 42 [Jacob and Genetics](#)
- v. 42 [Lessons from Jacob's Genetic Experiments](#)
- v. 42 [The Mandrakes and Jacob's Breeding Scheme](#)
- v. 42 [Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:37–42: Jacob Engages in Selective Breeding](#)
- v. 43 [Genesis 30:43](#) (a graphic)
- v. 43 [Jacob's Accumulating Wealth](#) (Commentators and Commentary)
- v. 43 [Genesis 40:43—Jacob is Blessed with Many Children and Flocks](#) (a graphic)
- v. 43 [God's Blessing of Jacob](#) (Many Commentators)
- v. 43 [God Blesses the Patriarchs with Wealth](#)
- v. 43 [Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:43: Jacob's Prosperity](#)
- v. 43 [Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:37–43](#)

- Summary [A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary](#)
- Summary [An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 30](#)
- Summary [Genesis 30 Divided into Subsections](#)
- Summary [Jacob's Sheep](#) (a photograph)
- Summary [Genesis 30 Divided into Subsections](#)
- Summary [Why Genesis 30 is in the Word of God](#)
- Summary [What We Learn from Genesis 30](#)
- Summary [Jesus Christ in Genesis 30](#)
- Summary [Summary Statements](#) (Various Commentators)
- Summary [A Visual Representation of Genesis 30](#) (a graphic)
- Summary [The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on Jacob's Feelings & Thoughts](#)
- Summary [Clarke on the Scheming Character of Jacob](#)
- Summary [Wenstrom on Happiness in the Devil's World](#)
- Summary [Links to Discussions of Jacob and the Goats](#)
- Summary [B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 30](#)
- Summary [Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 30](#)
- Summary [Why God Blessed Jacob](#)

Summary	Carol Summarizes Genesis 30
Summary	Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30
Summary	The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp
Addendum	The Twelve Patriarchs from James Burton Coffman
Addendum	Jacob's Family (a graphic)
Addendum	The Providence of God (by James Burton Coffman)
Addendum	Esau & Jacob—an Overall Summary of Their Lives (a summary on a slide)
Addendum	Josephus' History of this Time Period
Addendum	Related Laws from the Code of Hammurabi
Addendum	A Complete Translation of Genesis 30
Addendum	Doctrinal Teachers Who Have Taught Genesis 30
Addendum	Word Cloud from a Reasonably Literal Paraphrase of Genesis 30
Addendum	Word Cloud from Exegesis of Genesis 30

Chapter Outline	Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines	
Beginning of Document	Definition of Terms	Introduction and Text
Chapter Summary	Addendum	A Complete Translation
www.kukis.org	Exegetical Studies in Genesis	

Doctrines Covered or Alluded To			
Blessing by Association	Envy		
		Polygamy	

Chapters of the Bible Alluded To and/or Appropriately Exegeted with this Chapter			
Genesis 28	Genesis 29		

Many who read and study this chapter are 1st or 2nd generation students of R. B. Thieme, Jr., so that much of this vocabulary is second nature. One of Bob's contributions to theology is a fresh vocabulary along with a number of concepts which are theologically new or reworked, yet still orthodox. Therefore, if you are unfamiliar with his work, the definitions below will help you to fully understand all that is being said. Also, I have developed a few new terms and concepts which require definition as well.

In addition, there are other more traditional yet technical theological terms which will be used and therefore defined as well.

Sometimes the terms in the exegesis of this chapter are simply alluded to, without any in-depth explanation of them. Sometimes, these terms are explained in detail and illustrated. A collection of all these terms is found here: ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Definition of Terms	
Anthropopathism	An anthropopathism is taking an easily understood emotion, thought or action that man has or does and attributing that emotion, thought or action to God, to explain God's thinking and action in language of accommodation. One might view this is somewhat of a shortcut when speaking about God. For more information, see Bible Doctrine Resource .
Blessing by Association	Friends and relatives and associates of a spiritually mature believer receive some overflow of blessing from that believer. People in the same geographical area of a mature of maturing believer receive blessings through their association. Blessing by Association (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
Laws of Divine Establishment	These are the laws, principles and morality which God has designed to perpetuate every society or government in such a way that freedom to evangelize, freedom to teach doctrine and the freedom to send out missionaries are maximized. See the Laws of Divine Establishment (HTML) (PDF) (WPD).
The Revealed God (or, the Revealed Lord)	We all come to a time of God-consciousness where we understand the concept and possibility of the existence of God. At that point, we face 2 great questions: (1) do we want to know this God and (2) are will willing to believe in God as He has revealed Himself or do we make a god in our own image and worship that? In both the Old and New Testaments, God will make Himself known (He reveals Himself) to those who will believe in Him and to others as well. We know Him firmly and concretely as Jesus Christ; and in the Old Testament, He is known as the God of the Jews, the Creator of the Universe, the God of Moses (or of Abraham), etc.
Some of these definitions are taken from http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/ http://rickhughesministries.org/content/Biblical-Terms.pdf http://www.gbible.org/index.php?proc=d4d http://www.wordoftruthministries.org/terms-and-definitions/ http://www.theopedia.com/	

An Introduction to Genesis 30

Introduction: To most people, Genesis 30 appears to be two chapters: a list of Jacob's sons born to him while working for Laban are given (excluding 4 who have already been born and listed in Genesis 29); and then the agreement between Jacob and Laban is explored, after Jacob worked for Laban 14 years in order to fulfill his obligations to Laban.

Chapter 30 will give us the remainder of Jacob's family, including those children which are borne on Rachel and Leah's behalf by their maids. Finally, Rachel herself will bear one son, who would be greatest of the eleven sons (it will be several chapters until the twelfth son is born).

At this point, we have 4 sons: Reuben (*behold, a son!*), Simeon (*to hear*), Levi (*joined to*) and Judah (*praised*); all from Leah. You will note that this portrays the gospel message.⁸ Behold, a son! Hear (or *listen and obey*) [Him]; [with the result that we are] joined [to Him]; [with the result that we may] praise [Him]. We covered this back in **Genesis 29** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

⁸ Taken from <http://www.studyight.org/commentaries/gab/view.cgi?bk=4&ch=34> (Arno Gaebelain's Annotated Bible); accessed May 25, 2015.

We do not know why Leah stopped bearing children. I believe that with these first 4 children, we have the gospel message, which is complete. Therefore, God temporarily ceased blessing their marriage with children. Obviously, if Jacob stopped having relations with her, she would no longer bear children. However, that does not appear to be the reason (which will be made more clear as we continue in this chapter).

Jacob was fooled into consummating marriage with Leah, a woman that he had no interest in marrying in the first place. All of this took place at night, and the proof of her virginity was most certainly collected and taken to Laban to store.

Jacob agreed to 7 more years of labor in exchange for Rachel's hand in marriage; and he was apparently granted her hand in marriage before completing this 7 years of labor. Jacob had come to an agreement with Laban where Jacob is given Rachel as his wife in addition to Leah—and he owes Laban 7 years more years of service (which he will faithfully give).

There is a chapter break, at this point; but Genesis 30:1 will continue the topic of Jacob's children. This will continue through v. 13, insert some related narrative after that. Up through v. 24, Jacob will continue to father sons.

Several commentators, like Lange,⁹ covered Genesis 29:1 (or 29:31) up to 30:24 as a single section. That section would be the birth of the 11 sons of Jacob. At first, that struck me as being the most reasonable approach—put the births of all the sons (and daughter) together, in the same chapter, which could have been a separate chapter, or placed all in Genesis 29 or 30. To most, it would seem logical that the line of Jacob be placed together in the same chapter. That would separate the two seemingly different narratives (the mandrakes¹⁰ and the selective breeding). Many naturally think that the one who divided up these chapters should have, at the very least, placed all of the genealogy into this chapter.

Now, in support of the chapter break which we have, much of this chapter is about the rivalry between the two sisters, the wives of Jacob (vv. 1–24). Rachel envies her sister and complains to Jacob in v. 1. In v. 8, Rachel says she is wrestling with her sister, and so names her second surrogate son. Leah complains to Rachel about taking away her husband in v. 15. She speaks of her husband honoring her for her many sons in v. 20 (the idea being, Jacob will honor her over Rachel). God answered both the prayers of Leah (v. 17) and the prayers of Rachel (v. 22). I would not say that this polygamous marriage was unworkable; but two women as wives just does not work (and they were not even under the same roof, apparently—v. 16). So, throughout much of this chapter, Rachel is upset with Leah, because she keeps having children and she has none (until vv. 22–24); and Leah is upset with Rachel because Jacob obviously prefers her (v. 15). So, we might understand why the genealogy was split in half, as this second half of Jacob's genealogy is rife with strife. The first half of Genesis 30, although it seems to just be a continuation of children sired by Jacob, this chapter concentrates on the rivalry between the two sisters.

There is another and better reason why this chapter is divided up the way it is, and we will get to that shortly.

Unfortunately, these two women do not seem to care a whit about the promises which God has made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; they are concerned about themselves and about their husband Jacob, and what he is doing and feeling at any given moment. When it comes to the future of this line, neither woman seems to have given much thought to her personal line as being God's line of promise. Even when God's Name is invoked, it is often as a referee giving preference to one wife over the other. Gen. 30:6a **Then Rachel said, "God has judged [that is, vindicated] me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son."** Rachel is using this word in a positive sense; God has seen, considered and rendered a verdict on this circumstance and upon these wives, and He vindicates Rachel.

⁹ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 29:1–30:1.

¹⁰ The mandrakes are a part of the genealogical section.

At the end of the genealogy, Jacob and Laban have to figure out what to do, as Jacob has completed his 14 years working for Laban for his two daughters. Interestingly enough, Laban will seem to say to Jacob, "Tell me what you believe is right." However, Laban's approach hides the fact that this is a careful negotiation. Laban will attempt to exert the upper hand, but Jacob will be slightly more careful and less naive in their business dealings.

In my study of Genesis, I have found some of the topics to be quite odd, and I have wonder, from time to time, *why exactly is this in the book of Genesis?* Remember that the books of Job and Genesis (as it progressed) was *the Bible* for a thousand or more years. Many times, the human point of view is easy to recognize; and we can understand why Abraham, for instance, recorded these various experiences in his life; but I often ask myself, *why did God the Holy Spirit record these same incidents?* For any part of the Bible, there is the viewpoint of the human author and the viewpoint of God the Holy Spirit, and these are not always the same (the exception to this is where God speaks directly to the human author). So, as I work on a chapter, often in the back of my mind I am thinking, *why is this here? Why does God the Holy Spirit place this topic in the History of God and Man?* When it clicks *why*, all of a sudden, the meaning of the chapter, the theme (s) of the chapter, then becomes clear, and much of the narrative falls into place (I have the same experience when working on a psalm; sometimes, you find the key to that psalm and suddenly, the entire psalm makes sense and comes alive).

At first, there may seem to be little which connects these two disparate halves of Genesis 30 (the birth of Jacob's sons and the salary negotiations between Jacob and Laban); but they do fit together, and they are not randomly placed together. They are certainly consecutive events; but there is a thematic relationship, which I do not recall finding anyone explaining before.¹¹

For some, both Genesis 29 and 30 seem to be oddly divided. Jacob begins to sire children by Leah near the end of Genesis 29 and this is continued into Genesis 30, where Jacob fathers children by Rachel and by the personal maids of Leah and Rachel, and by Leah. There is certainly the view that the final 6 verses of Genesis 29 should have been combined with the first 24 verses of Genesis 30, and a chapter assembled devoted strictly to the sons of Jacob.

In Genesis 30:1, Rachel appears, at first, to be confused about basic biology (she isn't). However, at the end of the chapter, we will find out that Jacob is very confused about biology—even superstitious. I say that as a 21st century man who has some understanding of biology and genetics (not much); however, I should not disparage Jacob's breeding methods too much (vv. 37–39)—although they do not work, it is at least worthwhile as an experiment. Many centuries passed before a better understanding of genetics was developed.

Of the several difficulties in this chapter is, answering the many Bible critics who somehow believe that, because Jacob's breeding methods are recorded here in Scripture that they are somehow divinely inspired. What is recorded in the second half of this chapter is what Jacob actually did. However, Jacob's weird breeding scheme is nowhere divinely sanctioned.

One of the great problems of this chapter is, despite the mention of God on numerous occasions, no one seems to fully appreciate God's hand in all that is taking place. No one seems to have any idea about the promises which God made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They seem to be using God as a weapon more than anything else. Rachel thanks God that He has vindicated her with a son. In Genesis 30:18, 20 Leah also appears to use God to justify her position. Despite their spiritual confusion, God is nevertheless closely involved, carefully watching over these people (Genesis 30:17 *And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.* Gen. 30:22 *Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.*) So, all of this time, God is there; God hears both women and their prayers; but there seems to be a disconnect between the people in this chapter and God.

Interestingly enough, the one person who seems to have some understanding of what is going on is Laban. Genesis 30:27 *And Laban said to him, If now I have found favor in your eyes, stay here, for I have learned by*

¹¹ Jack Ballinger probably comes closest to properly tying these two incidents together.

experience that Jehovah has blessed me for your sake. (MLV¹²) Laban recognizes that God has blessed him; and recognizes that he is blessed because of Jacob. So Laban wants more of that. It is quite fascinating to me that one of the few people in this chapter who seems to know what is going on, still does the wrong thing.

The study of Jacob is, in itself, one of the most fascinating studies in Scripture, because everyone born from him will become the Hebrew people; and it ought to be quite clear that Jacob is not a great believer like Abraham, Moses or Paul. And, as we will find out in subsequent chapters, his kids are not the greatest either.

Sometimes, a commentator will begin with a good pithy observation of this chapter of the Bible.

Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 30

J. Vernon McGee: *When we come to this chapter, we see that God is moving in spite of Jacob's sin. God is not moving because of it, but in spite of it.*¹³

In teaching Genesis 27–30, the Donaghcloney Parish Church entitle these lessons,

Lessons from a Dysfunctional Family (a graphic); from [Donaghcloney Parish Church](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

Although this may be aptly titled, I don't know that this will help dysfunctional families in general.

Lessons from a Dysfunctional Family



L. M. Grant: *At first sight it may that people would not discern any spiritual significance of a history like this, and might wonder why the Lord has gone to such pains to record all the details of this. But all scripture is of vital consequence to every believer.*¹⁴

Exactly one of the first questions in my mind—*why does God the Holy Spirit record this information? Couldn't He have left out the mandrakes section? Of what benefit is Jacob and Laban's agreement or Jacob's breeding scheme?*

H. C. Leupold: *In the chosen race God was making it very apparent that human ambitions and human devices were not going to carry on the line of promise and furnish the desired offspring.*¹⁵

Arthur W. Pink: *Jacob's stay at Padan-Aram was a lengthy one, much longer than he imagined when he first went there, so little do any of us know what the immediate future holds for us. We move to some place expecting to settle there, and lo, in a short time, God calls us to strike our tents and move to another region. Or, we go to a place thinking it is only for a transient visit, but remain there many years. So it was with Jacob.*

¹² There will be no little discussion of this particular translation when we come to it.

¹³ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

¹⁴ From <https://www.studyLight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-30.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

¹⁵ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 30

Pink also remarks: *The thirtieth chapter of Genesis is not pleasant reading, yet is it, like every other in the Old Testament, recorded for our learning. No reflecting Christian mind can read through this chapter without being disgusted with the fruitage and consequences of polygamy as therein described. The domestic discords, the envies and jealousies between Jacob's several wives, forcibly illustrate and demonstrate the wisdom and goodness of God's law that each man should have his own wife, as well as each woman her own husband.*¹⁶

As much as Pink disliked this chapter, I personally enjoyed it.

Personally, I greatly enjoyed reading and studying this chapter.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

One key to this chapter is, Jacob and his wives attempt to solve their problems with human viewpoint solutions. Rachel first tries *bearing a child* by a surrogate (her personal maid); and then tries using mandrakes (which may be a sexual stimulate and possibly even encourage inception. Later in this chapter, Jacob will use a cockamamie scheme to affect the kinds of sheep born to Laban's flocks. But it is God who makes life; it is God who determines life. Jacob emphatically states, "[Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?](#)" (Genesis 30:2b; ESV) When it comes to matters of life, this chapter tells us, it is in God's hands.

R. B. Thieme, Jr.: *The human viewpoint solution is no-solution.*¹⁷

As I study a chapter, questions will occur to me—some of them important and many of them minor. Not all of these questions will be satisfactorily answered.

Fundamental Questions About Genesis 30

1. Someone, at some time, divided this chapter up in the middle of a genealogy. What were they thinking?
2. What does God the Holy Spirit include the information about mandrakes in the Bible? I can come up with a human explanation as to why Jacob's wives included this in their narrative; but why does God?
3. No doubt, you have, at some time or another, seen a skeptic speak about Jacob's goofy plan to breed sheep in front of almond branches which are stripped and cut to look spotted. We know that will not produce striped and spotted sheep. But, Jacob did end up with a lot of striped and spotted sheep. How did that happen? There is actually a genetic reason why Jacob's plan appears to work.
4. Why are these two seemingly disparate things together in the same chapter? Is there any sort of reason for that?
5. Joseph, among the brothers, is quite unique. He seems to have great personal integrity whereas his older brothers do not. Will this chapter, where he is born, give us any clues?

Clarke, early 19th century Bible scholar, will make this remark: *We have already seen many difficulties in this chapter, and strange incidents, for which we are not able to account. 1. The vicarious bearing of children; 2. The nature and properties of the mandrakes; 3. The bargain of Jacob and Laban; and 4. The business of the party-coloured flocks produced by means of the females looking at the variegated rods. These, especially the three last, may be ranked among the most difficult things in this book.*

Clarke continues: *Without encumbering the page with quotations and opinions, I have given the best sense I could; and think it much better and safer to confess ignorance, than, under the semblance of wisdom and learning, to multiply conjectures.*¹⁸

So, you see, I am not the only person who began this chapter with a lot of questions.

¹⁶ From http://www.biblebelievers.com/Pink/Gleanings_Genesis/genesis_31.htm accessed September 15, 2017.

¹⁷ Bob has said this or words to this effect dozens of times.

¹⁸ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 40:43.

What if I told you, all of these questions will be answered?

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

It is important to understand what has gone before.

The Prequel of Genesis 30

Jacob is the son of Isaac who is the son of Abraham. As the younger of twin sons, Jacob was continually trying to supersede his older twin brother, Esau. Esau would have been the son of the birthright, the double portion and the greater blessing that their father Isaac would give. Jacob got Esau to trade his birthright for a *mess of pottage* when they were young, but what he and their mother did was nearly unforgivable. Jacob's mother, Rebekah, convinced him to pretend to be Esau and go to his father to receive Esau's blessing. Isaac, nearly blind, gave Jacob the blessing he had intended for Esau. When Esau found out, he was apoplectic and he was fantasizing about murdering his brother. When Rebekah heard this, she knew she needed to get her favorite son, Jacob, away from there. She convinced Isaac to send Jacob away to marry a girl from their family (presumably, a non-heathen girl who believed in the Revealed God).

Isaac send his son Jacob to Paddan-aram with a blessing and nearly no material goods (some think that he was sent with nothing; I think he had bare necessities and the company of his mother's personal servant). See **Genesis 28** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

When Jacob arrives in Paddan-aram, he meets Rachel and later tells her father, Laban, that he will work for 7 years in order to marry her. Laban agrees to this, but on their wedding night, he substitutes his older daughter, Leah; and Jacob, not knowing the difference in the dark, consummates their marriage. Angry and frustrated, Jacob goes to Laban the next morning and is told the older daughter must be married before the younger. So Jacob agrees to work another 7 years for Rachel, as the first 7 years were now counted for Leah.

In Genesis 29, the final section takes place during the second 7 year period. Leah is giving birth to Jacob's first 4 sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. See **Genesis 29** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Genesis 30 will begin with Rachel and Leah's personal maids being given to Jacob in order to have children on behalf of Rachel and Leah. Then Jacob will speak to Laban about what will happen now that his 14 years of service is ended.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know who the people are who populate this chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 30

Characters	Commentary
Jacob	Jacob is the son of Isaac, the grandson of Abraham. Everyone with his genes will be Israel.
Rachel	Rachel is Jacob's younger wife.
Bilhah	Rachel's personal maid who will act as a birth surrogate for Rachel.
Dan and Naphtali	Sons born to Bilhah in this chapter. Although Rachel tries to present these as her sons, the Bible will always refer to them as Bilhah's children.
Leah	Leah is Rachel's older sister. Laban deceived Jacob into marrying Leah first; but allowed him to them marry Rachel, the woman that Jacob truly loved. Leah has already had 4 sons of Jacob at the end of the previous chapter.

The Principals of Genesis 30

Characters	Commentary
Zilpah	Zilpah is Leah’s personal servant and after Rachel uses her maid as a surrogate, the Leah will use Zilpah as her surrogate. Zilpah will have two sons.
Gad and Asher	Gad and Asher are the sons that Zilpah will give birth to. Although Leah presents them as her sons, the Bible will always refer to them as Zilpah’s sons.
Issachar and Zebulun	Leah will later give birth to these two sons.
Dinah	Leah also gives birth to a daughter, Dinah.
Joseph	God will hear Rachel and allow her to conceive and to give birth to Joseph.
Laban	Laban is the father of Leah and Rachel. Jacob worked for Laban for his daughters and Laban deceived Jacob on his wedding night by giving him the older daughter to marry. Laban will play a big part in the second half of this chapter, negotiating a new salary with Jacob, in order to keep Jacob on.

Although the sons are named in the order given above, it is possible that there is some overlap in their actual births. For instance, Gad may have been born after Dan (Leah may have insisted her maid be used as a surrogate after Rachel’s maid becomes pregnant). Similarly, Dinah may have been born after the 14th year. The Bible is not entirely clear about this and most simply accept their births in the order that they are given.

Since Jacob goes to Laban *after* Joseph is born (and Joseph is the youngest¹⁹); there had to have been some simultaneous pregnancies and possibly a somewhat different birth order in order for most of these to be born in the 7 years that Jacob is working for Rachel (he marries Rachel at the beginning of those 7 years, *on credit*). In other words, when Bilhah is pregnant with Dan, Leah could demand that Jacob impregnate her maid as well.

Furthermore, even though Jacob and Laban’s negotiations must take place after year 14, they may have taken place in year 15 or 16. Laban may have dictated the terms for that additional year or two.

[Chapter Outline](#)

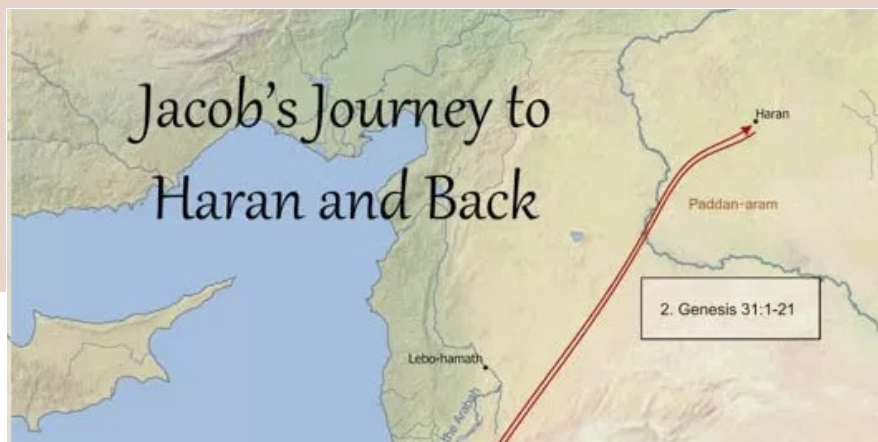
[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We need to know where this chapter takes place.

The Places of Genesis 30

Place	Description
Paddan-aram	This is the large area around the Euphrates River, where it makes a turn to go due north.
Haran	A city in Paddan-aram, which is probably where Laban lived.

Map of Jacob’s Journey; from [Headwaters Christian Resources](#); accessed August 12, 2017.



¹⁹ Except, perhaps, for Dinah.

We presume that this takes place in Haran, as Jacob moves toward Haran (Genesis 28:10); and the shepherds he meets are from Haran (Genesis 29:4, which is the last mention of Haran in Genesis).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

By the Numbers

Item	Date; duration; size; number
Benson's ²⁰ date for this chapter:	B.C. 1749
The Berkeley Bible's date for the birth of Joseph:	1915 B.C. The dramatic difference in these dates can be attributed to the difference of opinion of the time that Israel was enslaved to Egypt—some think 215 years; others think 430 years. Therefore, many dates will differ by as much as 200 years at this point.
Number of years Jacob worked for Laban.	14 years to marry Laban's daughters. He will work for 6 more years after that.
The number of sons born to Jacob:	11 sons, thus far in Genesis 29–30.
The number of daughters born to Jacob:	One is named in this chapter. There is a hint of another daughter or more being sired by Jacob in Genesis 46:7, 15.
Jacob's sons and daughters:	In this chapter, Jacob sired two sons by Bilhah, Rachel's maid; two sons by Zilpah, Leah's maid; and 2 more sons and at least one daughter by Leah. He also sires one son by Rachel.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The Patriarchal Timeline for Genesis 30

Legend	
Birth or death	God speaks with Abraham
Historical incidents (most of which are related to Abraham)	
Parenthetical dates (2065 B.C.) simply refer to taking the date assigned by the chronologist and using Scripture to determine the next date.	

²⁰ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 30 chapter comments.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
2234 B.C.	2097 B.C.			Genesis 11:24	Terah, Abram's father, is born. Gen 11:24–26 Nahor lived 29 years and fathered Terah. After he fathered Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and fathered other sons and daughters. Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
	1978 B.C.			Genesis 11:25	Death of Nahor, Abram's uncle
	1969 B.C.		Noah is 950	Genesis 9:28–29	Death of Noah
2164 B.C.	1967 B.C.			Genesis 11:26–27	Abraham (Terah's son) and Lot (Haran's son) born in Ur of the Chaldeans. Abram would be the 43 rd generation from Adam. Gen 11:26 Terah lived 70 years and fathered Abram, Nahor, and Haran.
2078 B.C.	1881 B.C.	2080 B.C.	Abraham is 86	Gen. 16:15–16	Ishmael born to Abraham and Hagar in the land of Canaan. Gen 16:16 Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him.
2064 B.C. (2066 B.C.)		2066 B.C.	Abraham is 100	Genesis 21:1–7 1Chronicles 1:34	Isaac born to Abraham. Isaac would be the 44 th generation from Adam. Gen 21:5 Abraham was 100 years old when his son Isaac was born to him.
	1841– 1816 B.C.			Genesis 25:12–16 1Chronicles 1:29–31	Ishmael's children.
	1834 B.C. 1829 B.C. (Klassen)	2054 B.C.		Genesis 22:1–19	Abraham is told by God to go to the land of Moriah to offer up his son Isaac to God as a sacrifice. This was a 3-day journey away. They then go to Beer-sheba , which could simply indicate that they are returning home to Beer-sheba .
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge ²¹ puts this date at 1872 B.C., based upon Antiquities by Josephus.					
(2029 B.C.)	1830 B.C.	2030 B.C.	Abraham is 137	Genesis 23:1–20	The death of Sarah. She dies in Kirjatharba , it is Hebron , in the land of Canaan . Gen 23:1 Now Sarah lived 127 years; these were all the years of her life. She is buried in a cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre ; it is Hebron , in the land of Canaan , purchased by Abraham from the sons of Heth.
(2026 B.C.)				Genesis 24:1–67 Genesis 25:20	Isaac (Abraham's son) and Rebecca. Genesis 25:20 Isaac was 40 years old when he took as his wife Rebekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramæan from Paddan-aram, and sister of Laban the Aramæan. At this time, Isaac is living in the Negev . It is likely that Abraham lived there as well; or near to there.
		2026 B.C.	Isaac is 40	Genesis 25:20	Isaac marries Rebecca. Genesis 25:20

²¹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, Genesis 22:1.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	1826 B.C.			Genesis 25:1	Abraham marries Keturah. Smith puts the date at 1860 B.C.; and Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge at 1853 B.C.
				Genesis 25:2–4 1Chronicles 1:32–33	Abraham's fathers children by Keturah.
	1817 B.C.		Shem is 600	Genesis 11:11	Death of Shem.
2004 B.C.	1807 B.C.	2006 B.C.	Abraham is 160; Isaac is 60	Genesis 25:19, 21–26	Jacob & Esau born to Isaac. Gen 25:26 <i>After this, his brother came out grasping Esau's heel with his hand. So he was named Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when they were born.</i> Therefore, Abraham would be 160 years old.
(1991 B.C.)				Genesis 25:5–6	Isaac is the heir of all things that Abraham has (but, most importantly, of the covenant of God with Abraham).
1989 B.C.	1792 B.C.	1991 B.C.	Abraham is 175	Genesis 25:7–10	Abraham dies. Gen 25:7 <i>This is the length of Abraham's life: 175 years.</i> He is buried in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Nephron (this would be with Sarah).
				Genesis 25:11	God blesses Isaac.
(1943 B.C.)	1788 B.C.			Genesis 25:17	The death of Ishmael. Gen 25:17 <i>This is the length of Ishmael's life: 137 years. He took his last breath and died, and was gathered to his people.</i>
			Eber is 464	Genesis 11:17	Death of Eber.
	1782 B.C.	1978 B.C.		Genesis 25:27–34	Jacob obtains Esau's birthright for a mess of pottage.
	1782 B.C. 1740 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:1–5	A famine in the land; God renews covenant with Isaac at Gerar.
				Genesis 26:6–10	Rebecca and Isaac in Gerar.
				Genesis 26:11–16	Isaac is blessed by God in Gerar.
	1782 B.C. 1735 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:17–22	Strife between Isaac and Philistines in and near Gerar.
	1767 B.C.			Genesis 26:34–35	Esau marries two Canaanite women.
	1757– 1739 B.C. 1733 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 26:23–25	Isaac makes an altar in Beer-sheba.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
(1943 B.C.)	1744 B.C.		Ishmael is 137	Genesis 25:17–18	The death of Ishmael.
	1738 B.C. c 1732 B.C. (Klassen)	1977 B.C.		Genesis 26:26–33	Isaac's alliance with Abimelech at Beersheba.
(1929 B.C.)	1737 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1929 B.C.		Genesis 27:1–46	Jacob by deception receives a final blessing from Isaac that was meant for Esau.
				Genesis 28:1–5	Jacob goes to his Uncle Laban's home in Padan-aram for a wife.
		1928 B.C.		Genesis 28:10–22	Jacob's dream; God speaks to Jacob.
				Genesis 28:6–9	Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael.
		1906 B.C. (For descendants)		Genesis 36:1–42	Esau's marriages and descendants.
	1736 B.C. 1730 B.C. (Klassen)	1928 B.C.		Genesis 29:1–14	Jacob in Haran (Charan).
	1736– 1729 B.C. 1730– 1723 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 29:15–20	Jacob works 7 years to marry Rachel, but is deceived by Laban, and Jacob marries Leah, her older sister.
	1729 B.C. 1724 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C.		Genesis 29:21–31	Jacob marries Rachel
(1915 B.C.)	1729– 1716 B.C. 1723– 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1921 B.C. 1916 B.C. (Rachel bears Joseph)		Genesis 29:32–34 Genesis 30:1–6 Genesis 29:35 Genesis 30:9, 7–8, 10–24	Jacob has 12 children by his wives, Rachel and Leah; and by their personal servants as well. Reese breaks the timeline down in smaller increments in his book.
1915 B.C.				Genesis	Joseph is born.
	1711 B.C.			Genesis 36:31–33 1Chronicles 1:43–44 Genesis 26:34–39 1Chronicles 1:45–50 Genesis 36:40–43 1Chronicles 1:51–54	The kings of Edom.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
(1909 B.C.)	1716 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 30:25–43 Genesis 31:1–16	Jacob's final years with Laban.
				Genesis 31:17–55	Jacob's departure from Laban.
		1908 B.C.		Genesis 32:1–23	Jacob returns to Canaan.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 32:24–32 Genesis 35:10	Jacob wrestles with the angel.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:1–16	Jacob meets Esau face to face.
	1715 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 33:17–20	The resumption of Jacob's journey.
	1711– 1708 B.C. 1706– 1705 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:1–5 1Chronicles 2:3	Judah fathers 3 sons.
	1700 B.C. 1687 B.C. (Klassen)	1906 B.C.		Genesis 34:1–31	Dinah, daughter of Judah, is defiled.
		1906 B.C.		Genesis 35:1–15	Jacob returns to Bethel.
	1700 B.C. 1710 B.C. (Klassen)	1903 B.C.		Genesis 35:16–19 48:7 35:20–22	Rachel dies when giving birth to Benjamin.
(1898 B.C.)				Genesis 35:27 37:1	The return to Hebron.
	1699 B.C.		Joseph is 17	Genesis 37:2–11	Joseph—his early days and his dreams.
				Genesis 37:12–35	Joseph in Shechem and Dothan.
1897 B.C.		1898 B.C.		Genesis 37:36 39:1	Joseph is sold into slavery, to end up in Egypt.
	c1699– 1690 B.C.	1898 B.C.		Genesis 39:2–6	Joseph enjoys prosperity in Egypt.
	c1695 B.C. 1707 B.C. (Klassen)	1898 B.C.		Genesis 38:6–11	Judah and Tamar.
	1692 B.C.			Genesis 38:12–26	Judah's wife dies.
	1692 B.C. 1691 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 38:27–30 1Chronicles 2:4	The birth of Pharez, the 41 st generation from Adam.

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
	c1690 B.C. 1689 B.C. (Klassen)	1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:7–19	Joseph flees adultery.
		1889 B.C.		Genesis 39:20–23	Joseph is put into jail; yet prospers in jail.
(1887 B.C.)	1688 B.C.	1887 B.C.		Genesis 40:1–23	Joseph gives the interpretation of the dreams of the baker and the butler.
1884 B.C.	1687 B.C.		Isaac is 180	Genesis 35:28–29	The death of Isaac. Now the days of Isaac were 180 years. (Genesis 35:28)
(1885 B.C.)	1686 B.C.	1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:1–37	Joseph interprets the Pharaoh's dream.
		1886 B.C.		Genesis 41:38–44	Joseph is made governor.
				Genesis 41:45	Joseph marries Asenath.
1884 B.C.	1686– 1679 B.C.	1886 B.C. (Beginning)		Genesis 41:46–49	The 7 years of plenty.
	1685– 1683 B.C.			Genesis 41:50–53	Sons are born to Joseph.
	1685– 1681 B.C.			Exodus 6:16 Num. 3:17 1Chronicles 6:1, 16	The descendants of Levi are born.
	1679– 1672 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 41:54–57	The seven years of famine.
(1876 B.C.)	1678 B.C. 1677 B.C. (Klassen)	1875 B.C.		Genesis 42:1–44:34	Joseph provides his family with food.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:1–15	Joseph reveals himself to his brothers.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 45:16–28	Jacob hears that his son, Joseph, is still alive, and he prepares to travel to Egypt himself.
	1677 B.C.			Ruth 4:18 1Chronicles 2:5	Birth of Hezron, the 40 th generation.
1873 B.C. ²²	1677 B.C.	1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:1–7, 28	Jacob goes to Egypt after God's assurance in Beersheba.
		1875 B.C.	Jacob is 130	Genesis 46:8–27 Exodus 1:1–5	Summary of the 70 who came to Egypt. Compare Genesis 47:8–9 and 46:27 for Jacob's age.
		1875 B.C.		Genesis 46:29–34 47:1–12	The people of Joseph are established in Egypt.
	1676– 1675 B.C.			Genesis 47:13–21	Joseph continues as prime minister in Egypt, exercising wise leadership during the famine.

²² Jacob moves family to the Land of Goshen in Egypt (Genesis 47:28)

MacDonald (N. Berkeley Bible)	Reese's Chronology Bible	Bible Hub	Ages	Scripture	Event/Description
				Genesis 47:22–26	The land of the priests in Egypt.
	1672– 1593 B.C.			1Chronicles 2:6–8	Zerah, the brother of Pharez, and his descendants.
	1671 B.C. 1660 B.C. (Klassen)			Genesis 48:1–22	Blessings to Manasseh and Ephraim.
	1660 B.C. 1665 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Berith to Ephraim.
				Genesis 47:28–31	The last days of Jacob; his charge to Joseph.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 49:1–32	Jacob speaks to his sons, giving them their final blessings and encouraging them.
1857 B.C.	1660 B.C.	1859 B.C.	Jacob is 147	Genesis 49:33	The death of Jacob.
		1859 B.C.		Genesis 50:1–14	The burial of Jacob.
				Genesis 50:15–21	The fears of Joseph's brothers after the death of Jacob.
	1638 B.C. 1644 B.C. (Klassen)				Birth of Resheph (who is in the line between Ephraim and Joshua).
	1625 B.C. 1620 B.C. (Klassen)			Num. 26:58	Birth of Aram (Levi's grandson and Moses' father.
	1623 B.C. 1604 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Ram, the 39 th generation.
	1615 B.C. 1625 B.C. (Klassen)				The birth of Telah, in the line between Ephraim and Joshua.
				Genesis 50:22–23	Joseph's last days.
	1606 B.C.			Genesis 50:24–25	Joseph's last words.
1805 B.C. (1805 B.C.)		1806 B.C.	Joseph is 110	Genesis 50:26 Exodus 1:6	The death of Joseph. His brothers also die.
	1606– 1462 B.C.			Genesis 47:27 Exodus 1:7	The population explosion among the Jews living in Egypt.

Bibliography

MacDonald's timeline is from: <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63.htm> accessed October 11, 2011 and August 12, 2014. Included in MacDonald's timeline is a timeline for Egypt interspersed.

See <http://www.bibleistrue.com/qna/qna63dating.htm> for his justification of his timeline.

The Bible Hub [timeline](#) (accessed January 11, 2015) appears to be pretty thorough, but no one specifically is credited.

From: http://www.christianshepherd.org/bible_study_guides/abram_to_the_exodus.pdf (Christian shepherd). This source believes that the Jews live only a short time in Egypt (210 years).

The Reese Chronological Bible; KJV translation; Editor: Edward Reese; ©1977 by Edward Reese and Klassen's dating system ©1975 by Frank R. Klassen; ©1980 by Bethany House Publishers, South Minneapolis, MN; pp. 18–19, 54–74.

The Modern Language Bible (The New Berkeley Version), Revised Edition; ©1969 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; pp. 10–54.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Here is what to expect from Genesis 30:

Clarke's Synopsis of Genesis 30

Rachel envies her sister, and chides Jacob, Genesis 30:1. He reproves her and vindicates himself, Genesis 30:2. She gives him her maid Bilhah, Genesis 30:3, Genesis 30:4. She conceives, and bears Dan. vv.5, 6; and afterwards Naphtali, Genesis 30:7, Genesis 30:8.

Leah [follows suit and] gives Zilpah her maid to Jacob, Genesis 30:9. She conceives and bears Gad, Genesis 30:10, Genesis 30:11, and also Asher, Genesis 30:12, Genesis 30:13.

Reuben finds mandrakes, of which Rachel requests a part, Genesis 30:14. The bargain made between her and Leah, Genesis 30:15. Jacob in consequence lodges with Leah instead of Rachel, Genesis 30:16. She conceives, and bears Issachar, Genesis 30:17, Genesis 30:18, and Zebulun, Genesis 30:19, Genesis 30:20, and Dinah, Genesis 30:21.

Rachel conceives, and bears Joseph, Genesis 30:22–24.

Jacob requests permission from Laban to go to his own country, Genesis 30:25, Genesis 30:26. Laban entreats him to tarry, and offers to give him what wages he shall choose to name, Genesis 30:27, Genesis 30:28. Jacob details the importance of his services to Laban, Genesis 30:29, Genesis 30:30, and offers to continue those services for the speckled and spotted among the goats, and the brown among the sheep, Genesis 30:31–33. Laban consents, Genesis 30:34, and divides all the ring-streaked and spotted among the he-goats, the speckled and spotted among the she-goats, and the brown among the sheep, and puts them under the care of his sons, and sets three days' journey between himself and Jacob, Genesis 30:35, Genesis 30:36. Jacob's stratagem of the pilled rods, to cause the cattle to bring forth the ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted, Genesis 30:37–39.

In consequence of which he increased his flock greatly, getting all that was strong and healthy in the flock of Laban, Genesis 30:40–43.

Like all chapters of the Word of God, you need more than just the simple plot outline to understand what God wants us to know.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30 chapter comments.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Many commentators divide this chapter into two distinct parts: (1) Jacob's genealogy is continued and (2) the contract between Laban and Jacob. Like everyone else, I saw it in the same way. However, within each of these

two sections is a peculiar story. In part I, there is the finding of the mandrakes (which ostensibly increases fertility) and in part II, there is the Jacob's breeding scheme (he exposed his sheep and goats to branches with some of the bark peeled off, so that the animals might take on the same patterns). What ought to be in the back of the mind of any believer studying this chapter is, *what the heck does God the Holy Spirit expect me to get out of this?*

Part I of this chapter (the genealogy) is clearly different from what follows.

Synopses of Genesis 30 (Various Commentators)

Benson:

(1,) Of Jacob's family; eight children more being registered in this chapter.

(2,) Of Jacob's estate. He comes upon a new bargain with Laban, Genesis 30:25–34. And in the six years' further service he did to Laban, God wonderfully blessed him, so that his stock of all cattle became very considerable, Genesis 30:35–43. Thus was fulfilled the blessing with which Isaac dismissed him: God make you fruitful, and multiply you.²³

Matthew Henry has an interesting way of summing this chapter up:

In this chapter we have an account of the increase,...

I. Of Jacob's family. Eight children more we find registered in this chapter; Dan and Naphtali by Bilhah, Rachel's maid (Genesis 30:1–8). Gad and Asher by Zilpah, Leah's maid (Genesis 30:9–13). Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah, by Leah (Genesis 30:14–21). And, last of all, Joseph, by Rachel (Genesis 30:22–24).

II. Of Jacob's estate. He makes a new bargain with Laban (Genesis 30:25–34). And in the six years' further service he did to Laban God wonderfully blessed him, so that his stock of cattle became very considerable (Genesis 30:35–43). Herein was fulfilled the blessing with which Isaac dismissed him (Genesis 28:3), "God make thee fruitful, and multiply thee." Even these small matters concerning Jacob's house and field, though they seem inconsiderable, are improvable for our learning. For the scriptures were written, not for princes and statesmen, to instruct them in politics; but for all people, even the meanest, to direct them in their families and callings: yet some things are here recorded concerning Jacob, not for imitation, but for admonition.²⁴

Arno Gaebelein:

CHAPTER 30 **Jacob with Laban**

1. The sons of Bilhah: Dan and Naphtali (Genesis 30:1–8)
2. The sons of Zilpah: Gad and Asher (Genesis 30:9–13)
3. The children of Leah: Issachar, Zebulun and Dinah (Genesis 30:14–20)
4. The birth of Joseph (Genesis 30:22–24)
5. Jacob's request to return (Genesis 30:25–26)
6. Laban's confession and Jacob's prosperity (Genesis 30:27–43)²⁵

Hawker: *The further relation of the events in Jacob's history, is contained in this Chapter. Of the increase of his family, his children; of the increase of his wealth and riches: until after fourteen years in the service of Laban, his father-in-law, he proposes to return to his father Isaac; but is detained by Laban, who agrees to certain conditions which, Jacob had offered for his further labours in Laban's service; Jacob adopts a singular method for the increase of his flock, and succeeds.*²⁶

²³ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Gen. 30 chapter comments.

²⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30 chapter comments. .

²⁵ Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:1–43.

²⁶ Robert Hawker *The Poor Man's Commentary*; ©1805; from e-sword, Genesis 30:1.

Synopses of Genesis 30 (Various Commentators)

Ron Snider:

- I. Rachel's sinful trend in action. vs 1-8
- II. Leah's sinful trend in action. vs 9-13
- III. sinful trend rivalry between Leah and Rachel. vs 14-24
- IV. New agreement with Laban. vs 25-36
- V. Jacob's sinful trend scheme. vs 37-43²⁷

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Since I have not come up with a better chapter summation format.

A Synopsis of Genesis 30 from the Summarized Bible

Contents:	Jacob's posterity in Padan-aram. Another bargain between Jacob and Laban.
Characters:	Rachael, Jacob, Laban, Leah, Joseph.
Conclusion:	The toiling and scheming of men is the result of ignorance of God's Grace, and inability to put implicit confidence in God's promises.
Key Word:	Blessed, Genesis 30:27.
Strong Verses:	Genesis 30:27 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. (ESV)
Striking Facts:	The success of Jacob's policy was not sufficient to justify it, had it been unjust toward the shrewd Laban, but evidently it was not unjust, for see Genesis 31:12.

Keith L. Brooks, *Summarized Bible; Complete Summary of the Bible*; ©1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 30.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Peter Pett combines this chapter with subsequent chapters (what is in boldface is a title of sorts for this section): **Jacob Prospers and Decides to Return Home** (Genesis 30:25 to Genesis 32:2). *This passage is centred around two theophanies and two covenants. In the first theophany Yahweh appears to Jacob and tells him to return home (Genesis 31:3). Then Jacob, describing the theophany to his wives, amplifies what God said as the God of Bethel, emphasising the command to return home (Genesis 31:11–13). And the second is when he meets the angels of God at Mahanaim (Genesis 32:1–2). The passage also contains details of the two covenants made between Jacob and Laban (Genesis 30:31–33 and Genesis 31:44–53). Originally separate covenant records may well have been involved.*²⁸

Dr. Thomas Constable sums up the first half of this chapter: *The conflict between Rachel and Leah focuses on love and motherhood. Rachel had Jacob's love, but she could not become a mother. Conversely Leah was the mother of Jacob's children, but she could not win his love.*²⁹

I may add this in with each chapter. It is helpful to see what came before and what follows in a brief summary.

²⁷ From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

²⁸ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30 chapter comments.

²⁹ From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

The Big Picture (Genesis 29–31)

Scripture	Text/Commentary
Genesis 29:1–30	Jacob comes to Paddan-aram, to his family in the east, and marries his two cousins.
Genesis 29:31–30:24	Jacob's wives and their servant girls bear 11 sons to Jacob.
Genesis 30:25–43	Jacob begins to think about leaving, but his Uncle Laban persuades him to stay, setting up a new deal to pay him for his work.
Genesis 31:1–21	There are rifts in the extended family of Laban; so Jacob, speaks to his wives, and then gathers up his family and sneaks away.
Genesis 31:22–55	Laban finds out that they are gone and goes after Jacob and his family, catching up to them. Laban and Jacob air all of their grievances and come to an agreement about Jacob leaving. They make a covenant and go their separate ways.

This takes us all the way from Canaan to Paddan-aram, and back again.

You will note how the major narratives are divided up above. This should have you asking yourself the question, *why was this chapter divided up the way it was? What were they thinking?* Even though the division of chapters was not inspired, whoever did it this way must have had some sort of reason for how they came to this decision. Before this study is finished, you will have the answers to these questions. When I figured this out, I thought to myself, "Wow, that's kind of brilliant." As far as I know, this observation is unique among the commentaries.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Shmoop makes an attempt to present this summary in a cool way.

Book of Genesis Chapters 29 - 33 Summary (from Shmoop)

Jacob and His Ladies

- Jacob is heading east when he runs into some shepherds at a well
- The narrator emphasizes the big stone at the mouth of the well. The shepherds there roll it away every day to water the sheep.
- Then Rachel arrives to water her sheep. Cue spotlight
- Jacob removes the stone all by himself. Who is this guy, Hercules?
- Next attempt at a pick-up: Jacob waters his uncle's sheep for Rachel.
- And then, the big moment: he kisses Rachel and weeps. Yeah, he's strong and sensitive. Don't get too excited, it's just a hello kiss, European style
- Rachel tells Laban that Jacob has shown up, and Laban is psyched. He runs to welcome him and calls him "my bone and my flesh" (29:14). Remember what he got the last time these distant relatives visited him (recall 24:53)
- Jacob stays with Laban for a month and then tells him that he'll work for seven years for Rachel's hand in marriage
- Fast forward seven years. (Hey, why draw it out?)
- Laban throws a big wedding party, but afterwards, Laban delivers Leah into Jacob's tent. Of course, Jacob thinks it's Rachel, and they have sex.
- Oops
- In the morning Jacob realizes it's Leah, not Rachel, and he confronts Laban about the deception.
- Laban points out that it's not the regional custom to marry off a younger sibling when the older is available. He offers the same terms for Rachel, but he can marry her before the seven years of service are up. Jacob takes the deal.

Book of Genesis Chapters 29 - 33 Summary (from Shmoop)

- God makes Leah fertile because she is so unloved by Jacob, while Rachel is left barren. Guess he's just trying to even the playing field.
- With some pinch-hitting from their midwives, the final score is: Leah 8, Rachel 3. Of course, daughters don't count
- Jacob asks Laban to pay him with all of the speckled goats. He leaves out the fact that he's devised a way for the flocks to produce more speckled goats than not. Can you say embezzlement
- The Lord commands Jacob to return to the place of his birth, so with everyone in agreement, Jacob packs up the family and the property.
- While Laban's shearing his flocks, Rachel steals all of his household idols. And just like that, Jacob takes off
- Laban tries to go after him, but God intervenes via a dream and warns Laban to lay off or watch out
- Laban catches up with Jacob anyway, and after some idol-hiding, he and Jacob make a pact
- Jacob is moving closer to his homeland and he finally settles where he sees angels of God
- At this point, Jacob sends messengers to Esau, trying to make amends.
- Esau receives the message and sends word that he and 400 of his men will meet with Jacob
- 400 men? Yowza. Jacob panics. He thinks Esau is going to kick his butt. Don't forget that that Esau was plotting to kill Jacob before he left (27:41). So Jacob prays to God for protection.
- While it's still night, Jacob escorts his family across the Jabbok river.
- Then he stays on the other side alone, where he wrestles with a "man" until daybreak. The man then changes Jacob's name to Israel, which means something like "striving with God," as the narrator is sure to mention (32:28).
- The next morning, Jacob sees Esau coming with his posse of 400 men. It's the moment of truth
- And... here's where we all breathe a big sigh of relief. Esau's not going to slaughter Jacob. Phew.

From <https://www.shmoop.com/genesis/chapter-29-33-summary.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The first title is often applicable to the entire chapter (although it may pertain just to the verses which follow it to the next section heading).

Paragraph Divisions of Modern Translations for Genesis 30 (from Dr. Bob Utley)

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (FOLLOWS MT)
The Sons of Jacob	The Children of Jacob (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24)	Jacob's Success in Haran (Gen. 29:1 to Gen. 31:55)	The Children Born to Jacob (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24)	Jacob's Children (Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:24)
Gen. 30:1-13			Gen. 30:1 Gen. 30:2 Gen. 30:3-8	Gen. 29:31 to Gen. 30:8
Gen. 30:14-21	Gen. 30:9-13 Gen. 30:14-21	Gen. 30:9-13 Gen. 30:14-21	Gen. 30:9-13 Gen. 30:14 Gen. 30:15 a Gen. 30:15 b Gen. 30:16 Gen. 30:17-21	Gen. 30:9-13 Gen. 30:14-21
Gen. 30:22-24	Gen. 30:22-24	Gen. 30:22-24	Gen. 30:22-24	Gen. 30:22-24
Jacob Prospers	Jacob's Agreement with Laban		Jacob's Bargain with Laban	How Jacob Became Rich
Gen. 30:25-36	Gen. 30:25-36	Gen. 30:25-36	Gen. 30:25-26	Gen. 30:25-31

			Gen. 30:27-28	
			Gen. 30:29-30	
			Gen. 30:31 a	
			Gen. 30:31-33	
			Gen. 30:34-36	Gen. 30:32-36
			Gen. 30:37-39	
Gen. 30:37-43	Gen. 30:37-43	Gen. 30:37-43	Gen. 30:40	Gen. 30:37-43
			Gen. 30:41-43	

From Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30 chapter comments).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Changes—additions and subtractions (for Genesis 30):

Many of these new charts and ideas will be eventually added to previous chapters of Genesis. In fact, going back to the first few chapters of Genesis will be like starting over again.

I added the chart *The Big Picture* (Genesis 29–31) (the chapters will of course change). This is a very short summary of what has come before, what is in the chapter we are studying, and what will happen after. If you have ever looked at a shopping mall map and there is a big black arrow marked, *you are here*; that is what *The Big Picture* does for us. I also added **Brief, but insightful observations on Genesis 30**. This could be a summary of the chapter or a simple and insightful observation about the chapter.

It appears that the Bible translation found in Chuck Smith's commentary is unique, so I assume that it is his; and I will quote from it from now on.

At the end of the exegesis of every verse, I will make certain that there is a Kukis mostly literal translation and a Kukis paraphrase, both of them marked as such.

I have decided to add spacing between the translation and the commentary.

I drew from hundreds of sources for this chapter. I literally stand on the shoulders of thousands of men in order to put this document together.

Although it is easy to get caught up in simply the names of the sons found in this chapter; there is a great deal of human interaction which is taking place at the same time.

Most people think that the final verses of Genesis 29 should have been placed with the first section of Genesis 30. This would have kept most of the births together. That is what I thought originally.

The Cambridge Bible: In this section [Genesis 29:31–30:35] is narrated the account of the birth of eleven sons and one daughter. Six of the sons, viz. Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun, and the daughter Dinah, are the children of Leah; Gad and Asher are the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Dan and Naphtali are the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; and Joseph is the son of Rachel. These are all born to Jacob in Haran. The only son born in Canaan is Benjamin (see Genesis 35:16–19).³⁰

Clearly, there was enough text here to make up a separate chapter.

³⁰ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 29:31-30:24.

Let me suggest that the person (s) who divided these chapters in the way that they did looked at what Jacob said in response to Rachel (vv. 1–2) with the scheming of the wives, using the mandrakes; and added this to the breeding scheme which Jacob used against Laban. These are all related topics, and together, they form a literary whole. I will tie all of these things together in **The Mandrakes and Jacob's Breeding Scheme**, at the end of this chapter (once we have studied these topics individually). At that time, the cohesiveness of this portion of Scripture will become obvious (and I think this is a unique observation³¹).

I came across a lot of error in commentaries which I generally find to be quite accurate. This is a very difficult chapter and there are some issues in this chapter which I do not believe were correctly addressed until now. It is my opinion that, after a careful read of this particular commentary, you will correctly understand all or most of it (of course, there are always motivations and actions which are not completely explained, so we just take them at face value).

I probably went overboard on the supplementary material provided on the mandrakes and Jacob's breeding scheme. At some point, I will edit many of these out. I added them in when I was pondering these two topics in my own mind. Now that I have come to some solid conclusions, much of this material is superfluous.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jacob Sires Eight More Children

Rachel has 2 sons through her maid Bilhah (vv. 1–8)

As always, 3 separate translations will be produced for each verse. The slavishly literal translation attempts to preserve word order and number, making it more literal than Young's translation (however, I do not preserve the consistency of the translation that Young does). The moderately literal translation may add or delete a definite article, change the number of a noun to correspond with the English sense of thinking, and the order is often changed in order to better represent our English sentence structure. The paraphrase is an attempt to give a thought-for-thought interpretation of what each verse tells us.

Kukis slavishly literal:

And so sees Rachel that she has not born [any children] to Jacob; and so is envious Rachel in her sister. And so she says unto Jacob, "Give to me sons; and if not, dying [am] I."

Genesis
30:1

Kukis moderately literal:

Rachel sees that she has not given birth [to any children] to Jacob; and she [lit., Rachel] is therefore envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "Give me sons; I will die if I don't [bear any children]."

Kukis not so literal:

Because Rachel has not given birth to any children of her own, she became quite envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "You must give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Note: I compare the Hebrew text to English translations of the Latin, Syriac and Greek texts, using the Douay-Rheims translation³²; George Lamsa's translation, and Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's translation as revised and edited by Paul W.

³¹ Or very nearly so; some commentators noticed some continuity throughout this chapter.

³² I have begun to doubt my e-sword Douay-Rheims version, so I now use www.latinvulgate.com.

Esposito, respectively. I often update these texts with non-substantive changes (e.g., *you* for *thou*, etc.). I often use the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible instead of Brenton's translation, because it updates the English text.

The Septuagint was the earliest known translation of a book (circa 200 B.C.). Since this translation was made before the textual criticism had been developed into a science and because different books appear to be translated by different men, the Greek translation can sometimes be very uneven.

When there are serious disparities between my translation and Brenton's (or the text of the Complete Apostles' Bible), I look at the Greek text of the Septuagint (the LXX) to see if a substantive difference actually exists (and I reflect these changes in the English rendering of the Greek text). I use the Greek LXX with Strong's numbers and morphology available for e-sword. The only problem with this resource (which is a problem for similar resources) is, there is no way to further explore Greek verbs which are not found in the New Testament. Although I usually quote the Complete Apostles' Bible here, I have begun to make changes in the translation when their translation conflicts with the Greek and note what those changes are.

The Masoretic text is the Hebrew text with all of the vowels (vowel points) inserted (the original Hebrew text lacked vowels). We take the Masoretic text to be the text closest to the original. However, differences between the Masoretic text and the Greek, Latin and Syriac are worth noting and, once in a great while, represent a more accurate text possessed by those other ancient translators.

In general, the Latin text is an outstanding translation from the Hebrew text into Latin and very trustworthy (I say this as a non-Catholic). Unfortunately, I do not read Latin—apart from some very obvious words—so I am dependent upon the English translation of the Latin (principally, the Douay-Rheims translation).

Underlined words indicate differences in the text.

Bracketed portions of the Dead Sea Scrolls are words, letters and phrases lost in the scroll due to various types of damage. Underlined words or phrases are those in the Dead Sea Scrolls but not in the Masoretic text.

I will only list the translation from the Dead Sea Scrolls if it exists and if it is different from the Masoretic text.

The Targum of Onkelos is actually the Pentateuchal Targumim, which are The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel. On the Pentateuch With The Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum From the Chaldee by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. From http://www.becomingjewish.org/texts/targum/onkelos_genesis.html and first published in 1862.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so sees Rachel that she has not born [any children] to Jacob; and so is envious Rachel in her sister. And so she says unto Jacob, "Give to me sons; and if not, dying [am] I."

Dead Sea Scrolls

Nothing of Genesis 28–31 is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. There is very little found on the nearby chapters as well.

Targum (Onkelos)	And Rahel saw that she did not bear unto Jakob; and Rahel envied her sister, and she said to Jakob, Give me children; and if not, I die. Translation for Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan by J. W. Etheridge, M.A. (1862).
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Rahel saw that she bare not to Jakob, and Rahel was envious of her sister, and said to Jakob, Pray before the Lord that He give me children; and if not, my life I shall reckon as the dead.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Rachel, seeing herself without <u>children</u> , envied her sister, and said to her husband: Give me children, otherwise I shall die.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	When Rachel saw that she bore Ya'aqub no <u>children</u> Rachel envied her sister. She said to Ya'aqub, "Give me children, or else I will die."
Peshitta (Syriac) ³³	AND when Rachel saw that she was not bearing <u>children</u> to Jacob, she envied her sister; and said to Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Rachel having perceived that she bore Jacob no <u>children</u> , was jealous of her sister; and said to Jacob, Give me children; and if not, I shall die. This is the New Brenton translation from http://www.katapi.org.uk/

Significant differences: The Latin is missing *to Jacob*. The word *children* is not found in the Hebrew, but it is implied. It is found in the Latin, Aramaic and Greek.

The targum inserts the words *shall reckon* into the final phrase.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:³⁴

Bible in Basic English	Now Rachel, because she had no children, was full of envy of her sister; and she said to Jacob, If you do not give me children I will not go on living.
Easy English	Rachel now knew that she could not have any children. She knew that she could not give Jacob any children. So, she did not like her sister because her sister had children. Rachel said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or I will die.' In Old Testament times, it was very important for women to have children. It was a blessing.
God's Word™	Rachel saw that she could not have children for Jacob, and she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"
Good News Bible (TEV)	But Rachel had not borne Jacob any children, and so she became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I will die."
International Children's B.	Rachel saw that she was not giving birth to children for Jacob. So she envied her sister Leah. Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"
New Simplified Bible	Rachel had not borne Jacob any children. As a result, she became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob: »Give me children, or I will die.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	When Rachel realized that she could bear Jacob no children, Rachel became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, "Give me children! If you don't, I may as well be dead."
Contemporary English V.	Rachel was very jealous of Leah for having children, and she said to Jacob, "I'll die if you don't give me some children!"
The Living Bible	Rachel, realizing she was barren, became envious of her sister. "Give me children or I'll die," she exclaimed to Jacob.
New Living Translation	When Rachel saw that she wasn't having any children for Jacob, she became jealous of her sister. She pleaded with Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

³³ From the George Lamsa Translation of the Peshitta, taken from <http://www.studylight.org/>

³⁴ Many of these Bibles fall into 2 or more categories. The CEV, for instance, is **approved** by the Catholic Church, it is a limited vocabulary Bible, and it is a paraphrase, for the most part.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, when Rachel realized that she wasn't bearing children for Jacob, she became jealous of her sister, and she said to Jacob: 'Give me children... for if you don't, I'll die!'
International Standard V	Rachel's Children by Bilhah Rachel noticed that she was not bearing children for Jacob, so because she envied her sister Leah, she told Jacob, "If you don't give me sons, I'm going to die!"
Revised Knox Bible	Rachel, meanwhile, when she found she remained barren, looked with envy on her sister; you must needs give me children, said she to her husband, or it will be my death.
Translation for Translators	Jacob had more sons and a daughter Rachel realized that she was not becoming pregnant and giving birth to any children for Jacob. So she became jealous of her older sister, Leah, because Leah had given birth to four sons. She said to Jacob, "Enable me to become pregnant and give birth to children. If you do not do that, I will die!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Rachel was to perceive - am I to have bore forth to Jacob? - Even Rachel was to envy her sister. She was to say to Jacob: Be providing me sons, without them I am to die.
Conservapedia	When Rachel saw that she couldn't give birth to any children for Jacob, she was jealous of her sister. She told Jacob, "Grant me sons! If you do not, then I shall die!"
God's Truth (Tyndale)	(Part Five) When Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, she envied her sister, and said unto Jacob: give me children, or else I am but dead.
H. C. Leupold	CHAPTER XXX 6. Jacob's Children and His Increasing Wealth (Continued) (30:1-43) When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob children, Rachel became jealous of her sister and said to Jacob: Give me children, or else I die.
Tree of Life Version	When Rachel saw that she bore no children for Jacob, Rachel was jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me sons—if there are none, I'll die!"
Urim-Thummim Version	When Rachel saw that she gendered Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister and said to Jacob, I can't live unless I have children.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Rachel saw that she had not born children for Jacob, and she became jealous of her sister; and said to Jacob "Bring me sons, and if not, I shall die."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, and Rachel was jealous of her sister; and said to Jacob, Give me children, and if there is none, I shall die.
New American Bible (2002)	When Rachel saw that she failed to bear children to Jacob, she became envious of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children or I shall die!"
New Jerusalem Bible	Rachel, seeing that she herself gave Jacob no children, became jealous of her sister. And she said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or I shall die!'
Revised English Bible	When Rachel found that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister and complained to Jacob, "Give me sons, or I shall die!"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

The Complete Tanach	And Rachel saw that she had not borne [any children] to Jacob, and Rachel envied her sister, and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, and if not, I am dead."
---------------------	--

and Rachel envied her sister: She envied her good deeds. She said, “If she had not been more righteous than I, she would not have merited children” (Gen. Rabbah 71:5).

Give me: Did your father [not] do that for your mother? Did he not pray for her?— [from Gen. Rabbah 71:7]

I am dead: From here [we learn] that whoever has no children is counted as dead. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71:6]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Rachel sees that she births not to Yaaqov; and Rachel envies her sister; and says to Yaaqov, Give me sons - and if not I die.
Kaplan Translation	<i>Jacob's Journey, Marriage and Children</i> Rachel realized that she was not bearing any children to Jacob. She was jealous of her sister and said to Jacob, 'Give me children! If not, let me die!'. The Kaplan Translation, particularly in Exodus through Deuteronomy, takes note of historic rabbinic opinions.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And when Rachel saw that she did not bear [banim] to Ya'akov, Rachel had kina toward her achot; and said unto Ya'akov, Give me banim, or else I die.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	When Rachel saw that she was not having children for Jacob, she envied [was jealous of] her sister Leah. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I’ll die!”
Kretzmann’s Commentary	Verses 1-13 The Sons of Bilhah and Zilpah And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister, and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. Barrenness was considered a special punishment and curse of God in the Old Testament, especially in the families of the patriarchs, in whose case the longing for the Messiah intensified the desire for children. Rachel, therefore, seeing her sister Leah bearing one son after the other, was filled with envy and impatience, believing, apparently, that all her prayers for offspring were vain. That explains her outburst of temper, which caused her to state that she would die from dejection and grief unless Jacob would manage to bring her children.
NET Bible®	When Rachel saw that she could not give Jacob children, she [<i>Heb</i> “Rachel.” The proper name has been replaced by the pronoun (“she”) in the translation for stylistic reasons.] became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children [<i>Heb</i> “sons.”] or I’ll die!” When it comes to making an actual material change to the text, the NET Bible® is pretty good about indicating this. Since most of these corrections will be clear in the more literal translations below and within the Hebrew exegesis itself, I will not continue to list every NET Bible® footnote. Language footnotes will be placed in the Hebrew exegesis. Some footnotes will quoted elsewhere in this document.
The Pulpit Commentary	And when Rachel saw (apparently after, though probably before, the birth of Leah’s fourth son) that she bare Jacob no children (literally, that she bare not to Jacob), Rachel envied her sister (was jealous of her, the root referring to the redness with which the face of an angry woman is suffused); and said unto Jacob, Give me children (sons), or else I die—literally, and if not, I am a dead woman; i.e. for shame at her sterility. Rachel had three strong reasons for desiring children—that she might emulate her sister, become more dear to her husband, and above all share the hope of being a progenitrix of the promised Seed. If not warranted to infer that Rachel’s barrenness was due to lack of prayer on her part and Jacob’s (Keil), we are at least justified in asserting that her conduct in breaking forth into angry reproaches against her husband was unlike that of Jacob’s mother, Rebekah, who,

The Voice in similar circumstances, sought relief in prayer and oracles (Kalisch). The brief period that had elapsed since Rachel's marriage, in comparison with the twenty years of Rebekah's barrenness, signally discovered Rachel's sinful impatience. When Rachel realized she couldn't have Jacob's children, she grew envious of her sister and complained to Jacob.
Rachel: I'll just die if you don't give me children!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Rahhel ^[Ewe] saw that she did not bring forth for Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] and Rahhel ^[Ewe] was envious with her sister and she said to Ya'aqov ^[He restrains], provide me sons and if not I am dead,...
- Concordant Literal Version And seeing is Rachel that she does not bear for Jacob. And jealous is Rachel of her sister. And saying is she to Jacob, "Grant me sons! And, should there be none, I will die.
- English Standard Version When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!"
- Green's Literal Translation And Rachel saw that she did not bear to Jacob, and Rachel was jealous of her sister. And she said to Jacob, Give me sons; and if there *is* none, I shall die.
- Modern English Version When Rachel saw that she could not give Jacob children, she became jealous of her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I will die."
- New European Version **Jacob's Children and Domestic Problems**
When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister. She said to Jacob, Give me children, or else I will die.
- A Voice in the Wilderness Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel was jealous of her sister, and said to Jacob, Give me sons, or if not I shall die!
- Young's Updated LT And Rachel sees that she has not borne to Jacob, and Rachel is envious of her sister, and says unto Jacob, "Give me sons, and if there is none—I die."

The gist of this passage: Rachel becomes upset at not being able to give Jacob children. She is envious of her sister and she complains to Jacob.

Genesis 30:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

Genesis 30:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: Rachel sees that she has not given birth [to any children] for Jacob;...

In the previous chapter, Leah bears one son after another. By this point in time, she has given birth to 4 sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Rachel has not given birth to any sons, even though she and Jacob are surely trying.

Genesis 30:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qânâ' (קָנְאָה) [pronounced <i>kaw-NAW</i>]	<i>to be jealous, to be envious; to be zealous for; to excite jealous anger; to become intensely red or black from dye</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #7065 BDB #888

Although the word *envy, jealousy* has occurred previously in Genesis (Genesis 26:14); we explore the consequences of jealousy in more detail in this chapter.

Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'âchôwth (אָחוּת) [pronounced <i>aw-KHOWTH</i>]	<i>sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #269 BDB #27

Translation: ...and she [lit., *Rache*] is therefore envious of her sister.

Because Leah has given birth to 4 sons, Rachel is very jealous, even though it is clear that her husband Jacob prefers Rachel.

Remember, Leah named her first 4 sons to indicate that she was unhappy with her relationship with Jacob; and she wanted a better relationship with him than they had.

So, Leah wanted what Rachel had and Rachel wanted what Leah had. If they switched hats, guaranteed that Leah would still want what Rachel had and Rachel would want what Leah has. The problem is, they have both given in to the mental attitude sin of envy. See the **Doctrine of Envy** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another's success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something.*

Wenstrom continues: *Rachel was jealous of Leah in the sense that she desired to have children like her and was resentful and intolerant and suspicious of Leah and her success having children and she was also guarded over her relationship with Jacob and did not tolerate Leah and considered her a rival.*³⁵

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge provides a list of Scriptures on envy: Genesis 37:11 1Samuel 1:4–8 Psalm 106:16 Proverbs 14:30 Eccles. 4:4 1Corinthians 3:3 Galatians 5:21 Titus 3:3 James 3:14 4:5.³⁶

Genesis 30:1c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
yâhab (בְּהִי) [pronounced <i>yaw-HAWB^V</i>]	<i>give, give here; grant, permit; provide [with reflexive]; place, put, set; ascribe</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with a cohortative/ voluntative hê	Strong's #3051 BDB #396

³⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 465); accessed September 9, 2017.

³⁶ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:1.

Genesis 30:1c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
bânîym (בְּנֵי) [pronounced <i>baw-NEEM</i>]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Consequently, she said to Jacob, “Give me sons;...”

Rachel says to Jacob, “Give me sons;” but it is not really up to him. Obviously he is potent, because Leah is having children by him.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Rachel was not satisfied with Jacob's love and affection and attention and wanted sons just as Leah was having them. She blames Jacob for her problem of not be able to get pregnant since she fails to understand that children are a gift from the Lord. Psalm 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”*³⁷

For some women, there is no stage of contentment. Rachel is clearly the favored wife—this has been both stated and implied—and Jacob spends most of his time with her. However, she cannot get over the fact that her older sister is bearing Jacob's children and she is not.

Genesis 30:1d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
ʾêyn (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ān</i>]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
Together, ʾîm lôʾ (אִם לֹא) [pronounced <i>eem low</i>] act as an emphatic affirmative and they mean <i>if not, surely, unless</i> . I am not sure how similar this is.			
mûwth (מוֹת) [pronounced <i>mooth</i>]	<i>dying, perishing; one who is dying [perishing]</i>	feminine singular, Qal active participle	Strong's #4191 BDB #559

³⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 465–466); accessed September 9, 2017.

Genesis 30:1d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'ānōkîy (אָנֹכִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me;</i> (sometimes a verb is implied)	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59

Translation: ...I will die if I don't [bear any children]."

So Rachel, despite the fact that Jacob loves her with all his heart feels like she has been left out because she has no children and her sister-wife has 4 sons.

Strife such as this brings on irrational behavior. Undoubtedly, she and Jacob have had sexual relations all along and she has not conceived. This is not a problem of Jacob's and she cannot demand from Jacob children. Her biological background is lacking here. If Leah can have Jacob's children, then Rachel's lack of offspring is not Jacob's fault. He can do nothing about it. Rachel will have to go to God and God will open her womb.

J. Vernon McGee: *[A] woman in that day was disgraced unless she had an offspring, and the more children she had, the better was her position.*³⁸

However, I believe that it would be a mistake to think of Rachel is being so naive as to put the actual blame on Jacob for not giving her children. I think that she has something in mind here. We might be underestimating her to think that she is simply angry and irrational, whereas, she may be able to manipulate others just as her father does. Think about that as we study the next couple verses.

Genesis 30:1 *Rachel sees that she has not given birth [to any children] to Jacob; and she [lit., Rachel] is therefore envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "Give me sons; I will die if I don't [bear any children]."* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:1 *Because Rachel has not given birth to any children of her own, she became quite envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "You must give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons."* (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:1 *Because Rachel has not given birth to any children of her own, she became quite envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "You must give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons."*

Rachel: "I will die if I do not bear children" (Various Commentators)

The College Press Bible Study: *Rachel's adopted sons, Genesis 30:1–8. A rather passionate scene, in which Rachel does not appear to advantage by any means. She even vented her spleen on Jacob: "Give me children, or else I die." Certainly not, I will take my life; but rather, I die from humiliation or dejection.*

The College Press Bible Study continues: *Since Jacob had already sired offspring by Leah, Rachel could hardly have doubted his ability to do so by her, and must have recognized that the fault was with her. But she was unwilling to face the facts and tried to palm off the responsibility for the situation on Jacob.*³⁹

³⁸ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

³⁹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

Rachel: “I will die if I do not bear children” (Various Commentators)

Lange: *Her vivid language sounds not only irrational, but even impious, and therefore she rouses also the anger of Jacob.*⁴⁰

Everett: *Rachel had the right action of pleading for children, but the wrong address in asking her husband. She began to pray for a child, and besought her husband. She should take her need to the Lord in prayer. This statement from Rachel suggests that she does not know the God of Jacob.*⁴¹

Gill: *Rachel could never be so weak as to imagine that it was in the power of Jacob to give her children at his pleasure, or of a barren woman to make her a fruitful mother of children.*⁴²

Lange: *Her vivid language sounds not only irrational but even impious, and therefore she rouses also the anger of Jacob.*⁴³

Dr. Peter Pett: *Her words here probably reflect a continual period of nagging, which to someone who loved her so much became exasperating...Rachel sees little point in life and is suffering mild depression. And she seek partly to put the blame on Jacob. He too is aware of a feeling of guilt. But he feels he has proved his ability to have children. The fault must be Rachel's. The account smacks of an eyewitness account.*⁴⁴

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Rachel found that, with all her beauty, she was childless. In Oriental countries, where the maternal relation is counted a great glory, a childless marriage is regarded as a shame and calamity. Here we see the character and effects of Rachel's impatience of her barrenness.*⁴⁵

After this, the Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary gave Rachel quite a beat-down, spending about a page on her deficiencies. All of the people found in this chapter are subject to great deficiencies. I would be hard-pressed to somehow make her out to be the worst person in this chapter. I did not quote from of, as it seemed rather excessive to me.

The Pulpit Commentary: *[T]he motherhood of Leah was the good fortune of a sister, in which Rachel should have lovingly rejoiced; and both the barrenness and the fruitfulness were of God's appointment, in which Rachel should have piously acquiesced.*⁴⁶ Rachel's eyes were on Leah; and Leah's eyes were on Rachel; so this was never going to happen.

Whedon: *Here breaks forth the passionate cry of the child of nature. Envy and jealousy, even to bitterness, speak out in this appeal, not the hopeful yearning of the child of faith.*⁴⁷

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Her statement "I'll die" expresses her extreme grief over the matter of being childless. Even though she is the object of Jacob's love and affection and attention, she does not consider life worth living without children. Ironically, she dies giving birth to Benjamin (See Genesis 35:16-19).*⁴⁸

⁴⁰ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

⁴¹ Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 30:1.

⁴² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:1.

⁴³ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:1–8 (Exegetical and Critical).

⁴⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:1.

⁴⁵ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, *Rachel's Impatience*.

⁴⁶ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Homiletics Genesis 30:1–13.

⁴⁷ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:1.

⁴⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 466); accessed September 9, 2017.

Rachel: “I will die if I do not bear children” (Various Commentators)

Gordon J. Wenham, *It was a serious matter for a man to be childless in the ancient world, for it left him without an heir. But it was even more calamitous for a woman: to have a great brood of children was the mark of success as a wife; to have none was ignominious failure.*⁴⁹

James Burton Coffman: *This is called Rachel's rash prayer, for God indeed gave her children, and she died! (Genesis 35:16-20).*⁵⁰

Everett points out the real problem for Rachel: *Male children were a mother's source of hope and future security in this ancient world. When a husband died, a widow became destitute without a son to provide her needs. We see this in the life of Naomi in the book of Ruth and in the widow of Nain, whom Jesus raised her son from the dead (Luke 7:11–15). Rachel's cry was a cry for hope and security, and ultimately, redemption from this corrupt world.*⁵¹

Prov. 14:30 [A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but envy makes the bones rot.](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Note that what would seem to many men to be the ideal situation, being married to two sisters, is not an ideal situation. There was tremendous strife and suffering under Jacob's roof, something which he was drawn into continually. Leah was jealous of Jacob's devotion to her younger sister and Rachel was jealous of Leah's children. Some men marry, believing that means they will have sex on a regular basis, that it is automatic, no matter how they treat their wives, no matter what slobs they are. They have no idea as to who they marry, in most cases (even after living with a woman for years) and are very surprised by who pops out from behind that beautiful face and figure (women face the same problems, obviously⁵²). This is why men go to bars, go bowling, go hunting and camping with their friends. They did not marry someone that they even knew, and once they begin to find out who that person is, they are rather unhappy and discouraged. It is not because the woman they married is necessarily a bad person (save for her old sin nature, of course) but because they are ill-suited for one another. They focused on the externals; they had premarital sex before they were ready to commit to one another, and now both parties are miserable.

No matter how many television programs tell you that the key to a good marriage is good sex, they are completely wrong and have it completely backwards.

Jacob, faced with great variety (and even greater variety as this chapter unfolds) with respect to women, is not overjoyed in this multiple marriage. It is not a great life for him. He faces daily tension and strife. All the wonderful sex in the world cannot make up for that. And even though it is never mentioned, there is normal jealousy that would erupt when he sleeps with one wife over the other or has sex with one wife instead of with the other. Jacob did not choose for this to happen. What happened to him occurred because he was deceived, just as he had deceived his father Isaac.

Furthermore, the existence and the Biblical recording of this multiple marriage does not sanctify a multiple marriage. Under progressive revelation, it was not told to man directly that multiple marriage was unacceptable to God, although it was implied. God did not bring Adam a harem; he brought Adam his right woman. Jacob was not in love with his wives or mistresses; he was in love with Rachel. The strife which is revealed in v. 1 is a result of Jacob living with two women, even though this was not completely of his own choosing. He is acting as

⁴⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 466); accessed September 9, 2017. Wenstrom cites Word Biblical Commentary series, Genesis 15—50; Waco: Word Books, 1994.

⁵⁰ From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

⁵¹ Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 30:1.

⁵² A quick way to evaluate your prospective husband: *is this a man you can submit to for the rest of your life?* The man should ask himself, *are you willing to take on responsibility for this person for the rest of your life, no matter how much weight she gains?*

honorably as the situation is allowing. I hesitate to say this, but the ideal situation may have been for Jacob to remain with Leah, not to marry Rachel, and to wait the situation out (or so many suggest). He would remain faithful to Leah and, at some point in time, would have probably married Rachel after the death of Leah. God would have worked things out. However, being as much in love with Rachel as he was, Jacob emotionally felt as though he had no other options; as did Adam when Eve ate of the fruit and then offered it to him. Men are at their weakest when they are in love.

We also need to bear in mind, polygamy was not specifically outlawed at this point in time. Some commentators will speak about Jacob as if he committed the worst sin ever by marrying these two women. Some commentators will become quite huffy about it, in fact. So, it is questionable whether Jacob committed a sin at this point in time or not. Even though marrying two sisters will be a violation of the Mosaic Law in Leviticus 18:18; there is no reason to hold Jacob accountable for violating the Mosaic Law.

In any case, life is built upon the actual choices that we make; not on the choices that we could have made.

Genesis 30:1 And when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister. And she said to Jacob, "Give me sons, or else I will die."

During this marriage, Leah and Jacob continued to have relations, even though she was not the favored wife; and she bore him 4 sons. Rachel is envious of her sister and she asks Jacob to give her sons. Essentially, she is blaming Jacob somehow for not giving her a son. Isn't this just like a woman? I meant to say, *doesn't this sound true to life?*

For any man who has been married, there will be times that your wife blames you for this or that thing with which you have nothing to do. That is what Rachel is doing here. Jacob is not the problem here. He is having relations with Leah, and these relations are producing children. He is having more relations with Rachel, but these are unfruitful. No children are being produced. Obviously not Jacob's fault.

There is the distinct possibility that, when Rachel was not pregnant by Jacob, that she sent him back to Leah for a night or two just to make sure everything was working right. Obviously it was, as Leah produced 4 children.

Remember, Jacob was in love with Rachel; and not so much with Leah—but Rachel was not always an easy woman to deal with. Her complaint here to Jacob is irrational and illogical. She is asking him to do something that he has no power to do. Remember, with Leah's 4th son, it is clear that she was focusing more and more on God; but Rachel is not. Her eyes are on Leah; her eyes are on the children of Leah; and her eyes are on herself. In the Christian life, your focus needs to be upon God—not upon things, not upon people and not upon yourself.

Application: When it comes to wealth in our society today, jealousy abounds. We have entire movements based upon jealousy. They are angry about the 1%. They have all the wealth and that is just wrong and unfair. Those who are jealous never recognize that they live in the most prosperous society in all human history; and that they are themselves better off than 95%⁵³ of all humans who have lived—their problem is, they cannot get their eyes off the people who have a massive amount of wealth and a lot of things. Their anger and jealousy is a complete waste of their lives and it fills them with additional mental attitude sins.

Application: Wealth is very much a relative concept. Solomon was not just the 1%; he was the 1% of the 1% (in his day). Now, simply on the basis of my life and my personal belongings, if I had to choose between being Solomon or being who I am—I'd choose my life today where I am right now in a nanosecond. If you are a very middle class American today, in a middle class home with the normal stuff—you are light years ahead of Solomon. Why are you angry, bitter and jealous if you have a better life than one of the richest men in history?

⁵³ Probably more like 98–99%.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Ironically, Rachel is jealous of a sister who has been pawned off to a husband who does not love her exclusively. Each woman wants what the other has and neither treasures what she has been given for its own value.*⁵⁴

And so is kindled a nostril of Jacob in Rachel and so he says, “In a place of Elohim [am] I; Who has withheld from you a fruit of a womb?”	Genesis 30:2	Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel and he said [to her], “[Am] I in the place of Elohim, Who has withheld the fruit of [your] womb from you?”
---	-----------------	--

Jacob’s anger was stirred up against Rachel, and he said to her, “Am I as powerful as God, that I am able to hold back from you the fruit of your womb?”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so is kindled a nostril of Jacob in Rachel and so he says, “In a place of Elohim [am] I; Who has withheld from you a fruit of a womb?”
Targum (Onkelos)	And the anger of Jakob was <u>incensed</u> against Rahel, and he said, Why ask of me? Is it not before the Lord that thou shouldest ask, who hath denied thee the generation of the womb?
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the anger of Jakob was <u>strong</u> against Rahel, and he said, Why do you ask of me? Ask before the Lord, from before whom are children, and who hath restrained from thee the fruit of the womb.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob being angry with her, answered: Am I as God, who has deprived you of the fruit of your womb?
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in God's place, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacobs anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said to her, Am I in the place of God, that I have prevented you from having a child?
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob was angry with Rachel, and said to her, Am I in the place of God, who has deprived you of the fruit of the womb?
Significant differences:	The targums get fancy with the word <i>kindled</i> . Jacob’s nostril being kindled means that Joseph became angry.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	But Jacob was angry with Rachel, and said, Am I in the place of God, who has kept your body from having fruit?
Easy English	Jacob became angry with Rachel. He said ‘Am I God? God has stopped you from giving birth to children!’
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, “I am not God. He is the one who has caused you to not have children.”
International Children’s B.	Jacob became angry with her. He said, “Can I do what only God can do? He is the one who has kept you from having children.”
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob got angry with Rachel and said, “Am I God? Am I the one who refused you babies?”
Names of God Bible	Jacob became angry with Rachel and asked, “Can I take the place of <i>Elohim</i> , who has kept you from having children?”

⁵⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 466); accessed September 9, 2017.

NIRV	Jacob became angry with her. He said, "Do you think I'm God? He's the one who has kept you from having children."
New Simplified Bible	Jacob became angry with Rachel. He said: »I cannot take the place of God. He is the one who keeps you from having children.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Jacob was angry at Rachel and said, "Do you think I'm God? God alone has kept you from giving birth!"
Contemporary English V. The Living Bible	But Jacob became upset with Rachel and answered, "Don't blame me! I'm not God." Jacob flew into a rage. "Am I God?" he flared. "He is the one who is responsible for your barrenness."
New Berkeley Version	Then Jacob's anger rose hotly against Rachel, he rejoined, "Am I taking God's place, who has deprived you of fertility?"
New Century Version	Jacob became angry with her and said, "Can I do what only God can do? He is the one who has kept you from having children."
New Living Translation	Then Jacob became furious with Rachel. "Am I God?" he asked. "He's the one who has kept you from having children!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	This made Jacob very angry with Rachel, so he asked: 'Am I in the position of God who has deprived you of the fruit of your womb?'
Beck's American Translation	Jacob got angry with Rachel. "Am I in God's place?" He asked. "He kept you from having children."
International Standard V	That made Jacob angry with Rachel, so he asked her, "Can I take God's place, who has not allowed you to conceive [Lit. <i>has withheld from you fruit of the womb</i>]?"
Revised Knox Bible	What, answered Jacob, angry at her mood, Must I stand in the place of God to you? It is he that has denied you motherhood
Translation for Translators	Jacob became angry with Rachel and said, " I am not God!/Am I God? [RHQ] He is the one who has prevented you from becoming pregnant!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob was to be blusteringly furious against Rachel, and was to say: He of mighty ones, is to have withheld the fruit of your womb.
Conservapedia	Jacob became hotly angry with Rachel. He told her, "Do I act instead of God? It's God's doing that you have no children, not mine!"
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But Jacob's anger fired at Rachel, and he answered, "Am I in the place of God, to hold back from you the fruit of your body ? "
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then was Jacob wroth with Rachel saying: Am I in Gods stead which keeps from you the fruit of your womb?
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob's anger against Rachel was kindled and he said: Do I stand in God's place, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Jacob's nostril's flared and he became furious against Rachel, and he said, am I in the place of Elohim who has denied from you the offspring of the womb?
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob snarled his lip to Rachel , he said: "Am I God's agent, who has kept your womb from fruit?"

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Jacob became angry and said to her, "Is it my fault that God has deprived you of children?"
----------------------------	---

The Heritage Bible	And Jacob's nostrils burned against Rachel, and he said, Am I in God's place who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?
New American Bible (2002)	In anger Jacob retorted, "Can I take the place of God, who has denied you the fruit of the womb?"
New Jerusalem Bible	This made Jacob angry with Rachel, and he retorted, 'Am I in the position of God, who has denied you motherhood?'
Revised English Bible	Jacob said angrily to Rachel, "Can I take the place of God, who has denied you children?"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	This made Ya'akov angry at Rachel; he answered, "Am I in God's place? He's the one who is denying you children."
The Complete Tanach	And Jacob became angry with Rachel, and he said, "Am I instead of God, Who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Am I instead of God: Am I in His place?

Who has withheld from you: You say that I should do as my father did. I am not like my father. My father had no sons [at the time he prayed], but I have sons. [It is thus apparent that] He has withheld [children] from you, not from me. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71:7]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov kindles his wrath against Rachel: and he says, Am I in the stead of Elohim? Who withholds the fruit of the belly from you?
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Jacob was incensed at Rachel, and said, "Can I take the place of God, who has denied you fruit of the womb?"
Kaplan Translation	Jacob became furious with Rachel. 'Shall I take God's place?' he said. 'It is He who is holding back the fruit of your womb.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And af Ya'akov was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in place of Elohim, Who hath withheld from thee p'ri beten?
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Ya'aqob's displeasure burned against Raḥēl, and he said, "Am I in the place of Elohim, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Jacob became furious with Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has denied you children?"
The Expanded Bible	Jacob became angry with her and said, "Can I do what only God can do [Am I in the place of God]? He is the one who has kept you from having children [has withheld the fruit of your womb]."
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? The stern reproof of Jacob was fully deserved by Rachel: In the place of God am I supposed to be, who has denied thee children? He was powerless so far as his own strength was concerned, and probably, together with Rachel, did not make a sufficient use of prayer as a power to storm the heart of God.
NET Bible®	Jacob became furious [<i>Heb</i> "and the anger of Jacob was hot."] with Rachel and exclaimed, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children [<i>Heb</i> "who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb."]"
The Pulpit Commentary	And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel (not without just cause, since she not only evinced a want of faith and resignation, but wrongfully imputed blame to him): and he said, Am I in God's stead,—i.e. am I omnipotent like him? This you yourself will surely not presume to believe. The interrogative particle conveys the force of a spirited denial—who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

Rachel herself understood that God alone could remove sterility (Genesis 30:6); but to this fact jealousy of Leah appears for the moment to have blinded her.

The Voice

Jacob became angry with Rachel.

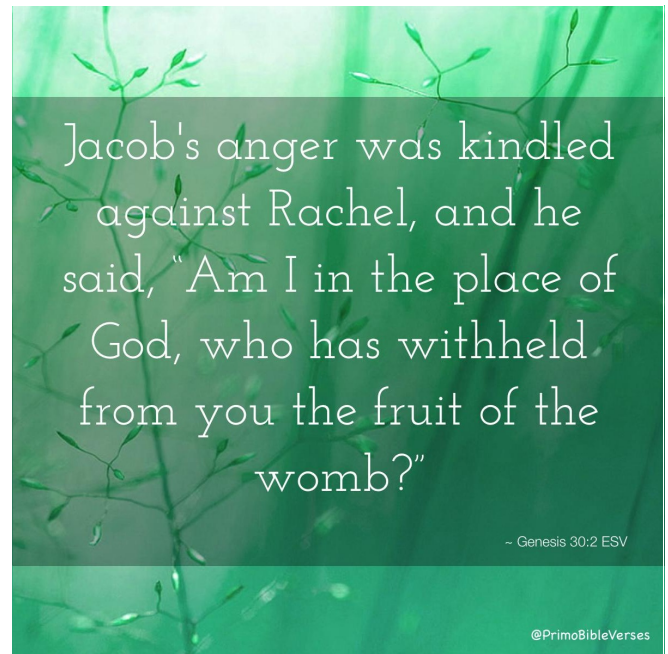
Jacob: Am I God? He's the One responsible for you not getting pregnant, *not me!*

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and the nose of Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] flared up with Rahhel ^[Ewe] and he said, am I in the place of Elohiym ^[Powers] who withheld from you the produce of the womb,...

Concordant Literal Version And hot is the anger of Jacob against Rachel. And saying is he to her, "In Elohim's stead am I, Who withholds from you the fruit of the belly?"

English Standard Version Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"



Genesis 30:2 (ESV) (a graphic); from PrimoBibleVerse.com; accessed September 15, 2017.

Green's Literal Translation And Jacob's anger glowed against Rachel, and he said, Am I in God's place, who has kept back from you the fruit of the womb?

New King James Version And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Young's Updated LT And Jacob's anger burns against Rachel, and he says, "Am I instead of God who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

The gist of this passage: Jacob is angry with Rachel, recognizing that it is not his choice that she is barren.

Typically, vv. 1 and 2 are understood to be Rachel making some irrational statements and Jacob reacting in anger to what she says.

Genesis 30:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
chârâh (חָרָה) [pronounced khaw-RAWH]	to burn, to kindle, to become angry, to burn with anger; to evoke great emotion	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2734 BDB #354

Genesis 30:2a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾaph (אָפּ) [pronounced ahf]	<i>nose, nostril</i> , but is also translated <i>face, brow, anger, wrath</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #639 BDB #60
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ġuh-KOH ^{BV}]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent</i> and is transliterated <i>Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewe</i> and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932

Translation: [Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel...](#)

Despite being in love with Rachel, this woman was sometimes difficult for Jacob to put up with. He could not control Rachel's womb. This is quite frustrating for a man when a woman blames him for something he cannot change or fix. There appears to be nothing that Jacob can do to change this situation with Rachel.

Rachel needed to mellow out, as her sister did, and look toward God; and not place everything on Jacob's shoulders.⁵⁵ It is possible to love someone and, at times, become exasperated by them as well.

Gill: *Rachel,.... Whom yet he dearly loved, hearing her talk in such an extravagant manner, as her words seemed to be, and were not: only expressive of great uneasiness and impatience, but implied what was not in the power of man to do.*⁵⁶

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *This is the woman he loves. Here is a couple who love each other but because they have their priorities wrong and they are not oriented to doctrine first, then what happens is that the wife is focused on one priority that she thinks is going to get her happiness, not her relationship with the Lord. That in turn stimulates his mental attitude sins (he is already out of fellowship). When they get away from doctrine couples don't have objectivity any more. They get involved in self-absorption, focusing on their job, their career, or whatever it is that is important to them and it just creates more and more conflict within the marriage.*⁵⁷

Genesis 30:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

⁵⁵ Assuming that Rachel is simply being irrational.

⁵⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:2.

⁵⁷ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017.

Genesis 30:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hă (הֲ) [pronounced heh]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced TAH-khahth]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'ânōkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced awn-oh-KEE]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
mâna' (מָנַע) [pronounced maw-NAHṬ]	<i>to keep back, to restrain, to withhold, to hold back</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4513 BDB #586
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
p ^e rîy (פֶּרִי) [pronounced p ^e ree]	<i>fruit, produce (of the ground); fruit, offspring, children, progeny (of the womb); fruit (of one's actions, labor)</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #6529 BDB #826
beṭen (בֶּטֶן) [pronounced BEH-ten]	<i>womb; belly, stomach [in reference to a man]; inside; appetite, craving</i>	feminine singular noun; pausal form	Strong's #990 BDB #105

Translation: ...and he said [to her], “[Am] I in the place of Elohim, Who has withheld the fruit of [your] womb from you?”

Jacob is quite frustrated with Rachel. “Can I keep you from giving birth? I am not God!” is essentially what he says.

The continuation of mental attitude sins, including great seething jealousy, results in bad decisions. Jacob, the harried husband, just does not want to make trouble. It is difficult for him with Rachel and Leah; he is frustrated, he does not know how to calm his wives' anger toward one another. In his frustration and inability to deal with the situation, Jacob is apparently open to doing anything, no matter what his wife asks. It is an unfortunate and weak state for any man to be in. What Rachel is asking for is common during those times; the maid is used as a surrogate, if you will, for the children of the woman when the woman cannot bear children herself. However, bringing one more woman into this situation is not the solution to Rachel's barren womb.

In any case, Jacob states exactly what is true. God is overseeing the births of these children. Jacob has nothing to do with the giving of life. That is a divine decision.

Jacob's statement here is also the key to this entire chapter as a literary unit. “[Am] I in the place of Elohim, Who has withheld the fruit of [your] womb from you?” It is God who gives life. This is what this chapter is all about. It may seem somewhat odd, as if some unusual elements are mixed into this one chapter, but if you remember what Jacob says here—even though it is spoken in exasperation—it helps to explain what is actually happening. It is this statement which provides us the cohesion for this entire chapter.

The very wise Jewish rabbi Nathan divided up these chapters⁵⁸ where he did, thus allowing vv. 1–2 to give us a very proper introduction to all of the events of this chapter. There was nothing odd or wrong about Leah bearing 4 sons in the previous chapter—it is the natural result of marriage. And some very wise man, recognized this and began this chapter with Rachel's complaint followed by Jacob's answer. This provides us the proper window through which to view the rest of this chapter.

Genesis 30:2 Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel and he said [to her], “[Am] I in the place of Elohim, Who has withheld the fruit of [your] womb from you?” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:2 Jacob's anger was stirred up against Rachel, and he said to her, “Am I as powerful as God, that I am able to hold back from you the fruit of your womb?” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:2 Jacob's anger was stirred up against Rachel, and he said to her, “Am I as powerful as God, that I am able to hold back from you the fruit of your womb?”

Jacob asks, “Am I in the place of God?” (Many Commentators)

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob very properly reminds her that conception and the bearing of offspring lie in the will and the power of God alone.*⁵⁹

Benson: *[Jacob] was angry at the sin, and showed his displeasure, by a grave and pious reply: Am I in God's stead? — Can I give you that which God denies you? He acknowledges the hand of God in the affliction: He has withheld the fruit of the womb. Whatever we want, it is God that withholds it, as sovereign Lord, most wise, holy, and just, who may do what he will with his own, and is debtor to no man; who never did, nor ever can do any wrong to any of his creatures.*⁶⁰

The Geneva Bible: *It is only God who makes one barren or fruitful, and therefore I am not at fault.*⁶¹

Gill rephrases Jacob's question: *[D]o you take me to be God, or one that has a dispensing power from Him to do what otherwise no creature can do; and which also He never gives to any? Then Gill adds: Children are the gift of God, and His only.*⁶²

⁵⁸ He did this in approximately A.D. 1227. The first Bible with these chapter divisions was the Wycliffe English Bible of 1382.

⁵⁹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

⁶⁰ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:2 (slightly edited).

⁶¹ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:2.

⁶² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:2.

Jacob asks, “Am I in the place of God?” (Many Commentators)

Matthew Poole: *It is God’s prerogative to give children. See Genesis 16:2 1Samuel 2:5,6 Psalm 113:9 127:3.*⁶³

Dr. Peter Pett: *Rachel’s accusations stir up Jacob’s anger. He too no doubt feels frustrated. So he reacts with an outburst. He points out that it is God who is withholding a child not him.*

Pett adds the comment: *There is possibly a hint that Rachel is somehow to blame. I just do not see that as likely. God’s reasoning is actually given to us: Rachel has got Jacob’s love and devotion; so God gave Leah the children. As we will continue to note, no one in this chapter—Jacob, Leah, Rachel or Laban—comes off like a spiritual giant.*

Pett concludes: *Failure cannot be laid at the door of God as Yahweh. Indeed from now on the whole passage uses Elohim until we reach Rachel’s vindication in the bearing of a blood child (Genesis 30:24). What happens is no longer looked on as the direct intervention of Yahweh (compare Genesis 29:31), it is more pious comment.*⁶⁴

Whedon: *Here is something that stings to the quick the soul of him who has hitherto showed such general gravity and calmness. Such rebuke from the lips of his beloved Rachel arouses him to a sudden outburst of anger, in which he administers to her a sharp rebuke.*⁶⁵

This is somewhat reminiscent of Job speaking strongly to his wife, but with more content in his speech, after she told him to curse God and die. **But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good from God, and shall we not receive evil?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips.** (Job 2:10; ESV)

Barrenness was a greater problem in that era (Genesis 16:2 25:21 Deut. 7:13–14 1Samuel 1:5 Psalm 113:9 127:3 Luke 1:42). Today, people do almost anything they can to avoid having children.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:2 **Jacob’s anger was stirred up against Rachel, and he said to her, “Am I as powerful as God, that I am able to hold back from you the fruit of your womb?”**

Wenstrom on Jacob’s Response to Rachel

Jacob deals with Rachel’s impatience by being impatient with her. Jacob’s anger is not justified and therefore, is not “righteous indignation” as the Lord Jesus Christ displayed with the Pharisees in calling them “hypocrites” and “white washed sepulchres that are filled with dead men’s’ bones” (See Matthew 23:13-29).

Even though Jacob’s response to Rachel’s demands is accurate theologically, it was misapplied and was motivated out of frustration, impatience with her and a lack of compassion for her situation rather than love. Jacob’s response is a classic example of a believer “not” speaking truth in love to someone.

Ephesians 4:25, **“Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.”**

Ephesians 4:15–16 **Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.**¹ (ESV)

⁶³ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:2.

⁶⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:2.

⁶⁵ *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:2.

Wenstrom on Jacob's Response to Rachel

His response demonstrates a lack of sensitivity to Rachel's situation of not having children, which as we noted was calamitous for a woman in the ancient world and brought on public ridicule from other women. Jacob should have been compassionate towards her by offering words of encouragement and speaking truth to her in love and not in frustration.

Colossians 3:12-13, "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

Unlike his father Isaac who interceded in prayer for his wife Rebekah to get pregnant, Jacob does not follow his example demonstrating that he is a spiritual child at this time.

¹ In context, *speaking the truth in love* refers to communicating Bible doctrine while filled with the Holy Spirit. The phrase *in love* in the New Testament can refer to teaching while in fellowship. However, the principle is still correct; Jacob's response should not have been so insensitive.

From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 466–467); accessed September 9, 2017 (slightly edited).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:2 And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel. And he said, "Am I in God's stead, Who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

Jacob is upset with Rachel, and he asks her, "What do you think? Do I have the power of God? I am somehow preventing you from having children? Give me a break, woman." In other words, he is saying, "I cannot keep you from having children; only God can do that."

And, 4 times, Jacob has impregnated Leah.

Ultimately, only God can give life. Keep this in mind as we study this chapter.

Jacob actually has very little to say in this chapter. Here, he tells Rachel that she is being illogical; but later, when he comes in from the fields, he will be told which wife he will sleep with, and he just goes along with it (v. 16). Throughout this period of time when these women are having babies (or their surrogates are having babies), and it comes time to name the child, we do not read, "And Jacob named the child ____." In fact, Jacob will name only one son, and that will be Benjamin, as Rachel will die when giving birth to him. Every other child of Jacob's will be named by either Leah or Rachel.

Now, when dealing with Laban, Jacob takes a stand (to a limited degree). They discuss and they come to a conclusion which they both agree on. We do not see Jacob doing that much with either of his wives, with v. 2 being a rare exception.

There is also something else going on here. We will find out in the future that pregnancies are hard on Rachel. She will die when giving birth to her second son. So, her *not* getting pregnant allows her and Jacob more time together. God knows best. We may want to have X, but God gives us not-X instead. This is according to His plan; and this is often for our benefit. The believer needs to learn to appreciate what God has given. In the illustration, you may want more children (or you may want fewer children); but God gives life and God preserves life. Whatever it is in life that you think you need, but you don't have; do not worry about it. There is a reason for it. The more doctrine that you know, the better you understand God's plan. The better you understand God's plan, the more you appreciate what God has given you; and the less you are concerned about what it is you believe you lack. Again, you do not focus on things; you focus on the Person of Jesus Christ.

Verse-by-verse ministries: *Rachel will die in giving birth to her second child. Can we see the wisdom in God giving Leah to Jacob rather than Rachel? It would appear that Rachel wasn't able to live through 12 births. God knew that giving her sons would bring her to an end, so He graciously kept her barren for several years.*⁶⁶

Genesis 30:1 Because Rachel has not given birth to any children of her own, she became quite envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "You must give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons."

After reading this passage over for the 30th time, I am developing a slightly different view of what Rachel is doing here. At first I thought, *Surely she must know that if Jacob is having children by Leah, that it is not his fault. That has to be clear to her.* And Jacob will respond to her, as if that is what she is saying.

Genesis 30:2 Jacob's anger was stirred up against Rachel, and he said to her, "Am I as powerful as God, that I am able to hold back from you the fruit of your womb?"

Had I been Jacob, I am sure that I would have responded in the same way. "Listen, darling, I do not have the power to keep you from giving birth. You know our relationship; and you know my relationship with your sister. The idea that I am at fault here is ludicrous, and you know it!"

Let me suggest that Rachel knew that her accusation was ludicrous, and the Jacob would respond as he did. Then she says, "This is what I want you to do..." Do you see how she perhaps set Jacob up here? I do not know that to be a fact, but she is from a family of manipulators. Is it possible that she had an idea, and then figured out how to get Jacob to go along with her idea?

If Rachel went to Jacob and said, right off the bat, "Listen, I want you to take my maid as a surrogate on my behalf." Then Jacob's answer may have been, "My grandfather Abraham did this with Hagar, Sarah's maid, and the end result was a mess." So, instead of leading with, "Here is what I want you to do"; Leah leads with, "Give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons." Obviously, Jacob will respond with, "Well what the hell can I do about that? I cannot control the generation of life in your womb!" And *then* she says, "Well, then, this is what you can do..." Men like to be able to fix things for the woman that we love. If she has a complaint or a concern, and there is a way to make it all better (in such a way that does not interfere with the big game that is on today), we will do it. We like being the shiny knight coming to her rescue. Rachel perhaps is playing to that aspect of the man's character. This does not mean that Rachel has to be a great psychologist, well-studied in the field of genders; this just means that she knows and understands her man, Jacob. Admittedly, this is just a theory, and I do not believe that any other commentator proposes this particular approach. However, it is not inconsistent with anything that we read in this chapter.

No matter what plans and schemes that man puts together, in the end, *life* is always God's prerogative.

Interestingly enough, God uses what she says and then what Jacob answers, in order to set up the theme of this chapter: it is God Who gives life. No matter what plans and schemes that man puts together, in the end, *life* is always God's prerogative.

H. C. Leupold: *Rachel, the well-beloved, finds her secure position less satisfactory than it once was. Desire for offspring is a healthy and a natural desire. In childbearing woman fulfils her destiny.*⁶⁷

⁶⁶ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_30a.pdf accessed September 8, 2017.

⁶⁷ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Rachel has a ready-made answer for Jacob. He has more or less said, "God is in charge of giving life; what can I do about it?" And she answers, "*This* is what you can do about it." I am admittedly putting somewhat of a spin on this conversation between Rachel and Jacob; but what I have said is consistent with the words that we read.

And so she says, "Behold my maid Bilhah: go unto her and she will bear upon my knees and I will be built up [even] I from her."

Genesis
30:3

Then she said, "Here [is] my maid, Bilhah. Go in to her and she will bear [a child] upon my knees and I, [even] I, will be built up by [lit., from] her."

Then she said, "Here is my maid, Bilhah. Take her so that she will bear a child upon my knees, and I will be built up by her."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so she says, "Behold my maid Bilhah: go unto her and she will bear upon my knees and I will be built up [even] I from her."
Targum (Onkelos)	And she said, Behold my handmaid Bilhah, go in unto her, and she shall bear, and I also shall nourish (children), and be builded up from her.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And she said, Behold my handmaid Bilhah, enter with her, that she may bear, and I may increase and may be builded up from her.
Revised Douay-Rheims	But she said: <u>I have here</u> my servant Bala: go in unto her, that she may bear upon my knees, and I may have children by her.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	She said, "Behold, my maid Bilhah. Go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, and I also may obtain children by her."
Peshitta (Syriac)	Then she said to him, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also be comforted by her.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Rachel said to Jacob, Behold my handmaid Balla, go in to her, and she shall bear upon my knees, and I also shall have children by her.
Significant differences:	The Revised Douay-Rheims (from the Latin) has <i>I have here</i> rather than <i>behold</i> ; which was probably an attempt to modernize the translation. The targums leave out <i>on my knees</i> .

At the end, the Hebrew text reads, *I will be built up from her*. The Latin, Aramaic and Greek all have *will have children by her* instead. This was probably a modernizing which took place when translating those languages into English.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Easy English	Rachel said 'Here is Bilhah. She is my female servant. Have sex with her so that she can have children for me. Through her, I can build a family.' This is like what Sarah did with Hagar.
International Children's B.	Then Rachel said, "Here is my slave girl Bilhah. Have physical relations with her so she can give birth to a child for me. Then I can have my own family through her."
<i>The Message</i>	Rachel said, "Here's my maid Bilhah. Sleep with her. Let her substitute for me so I can have a child through her and build a family."
New Simplified Bible	She said: »Here is my maid Bilhah. Sleep with her, so that she can have a child for me. This way I can become a mother through her.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	She said, "Here's my servant Bilhah. Sleep with her, and she will give birth for me. Because of her, I will also have children."
Contemporary English V.	"Here, take my servant Bilhah," Rachel told him. "Have children by her, and I'll let them be born on my knees to show that they are mine."
The Living Bible	Then Rachel told him, "Sleep with my servant girl Bilhah, and her children will be mine."
New Berkeley Version	She then suggested, "Consider my maid Bilhah; go in to her and let her bear for me! Through her I will rear a family." Jacob must have learned of the Abraham-Hagar trouble; but a following generation usually prefers to learn lessons the harder way.
New Century Version	Then Rachel said, "Here is my slave girl Bilhah. Have sexual relations with her so she can give birth to a child for me. Then I can have my own family through her."
New Life Version	Then she said, "Here is Bilhah, the woman who serves me. Go in to her, and let her give birth for me. Even I may have children through her."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Rachel told Jacob: 'Look; Here's my handmaid Bilhah. [Sleep] with her, and she will give birth [to children] on my knees... I will have children by her.'
Beck's American Translation	"There is my maid Bilhah," she said. "Lie with her. Her children will be mine, and she'll build my family for me."
International Standard V	Rachel [Lit. <i>She</i>] responded, "Here's my handmaid Bilhah. Go have sex with her. She can bear children [Lit. <i>them</i>] on my knees so I can have children through her."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Here is Bilhah, she said, my maid-servant; get her with child instead, and it shall be born on my knees; thus, through her means, I shall have a family of my own. Legitimacy, in ancient times, depended on recognition by the foster-parents, and if Rachel consented to take the child on her knees, the ceremony would make it, for legal purposes, her child.
Translation for Translators	Then she said, "Look, here is my female slave, Bilhah. <Sleep with/Have sex with> [EUP] her, so that she may become pregnant and give birth to children for me. In that way it will be as though <I have children/her children are mine>."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	She was to say: To my maid servant Bilhah, be going in to, even she was to bear forth on my knees, and I was to be built up.
Conservapedia	And she said, "Here is my handmaid, Bilhah. Take her to bed, and she will give birth on my knees, so that I can have children through her." This is the second instance of surrogate motherhood mentioned in the Bible. The phrase "give birth on another woman's knees" referred to the literal pose that handmaid and mistress would strike, after the handmaid agreed to take the mistress' place in the marital bedchamber for this specific purpose.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	She therefore said, " See now my attendant Bilah ; — go to her and she shall bear at my knee, so that I also myself shall have children from her ; "...
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then she said: here is my maid Bilha: go in unto her, that she may bear upon my lap, that I may be increased by her.
HCSB	Then she said, "Here is my slave Bilhah. Go sleep with her, and she'll bear children for me so that through her I too can build a family."
Unlocked Literal Bible	She said, "See, there is my servant Bilhah. Sleep with her, so she might give birth to children on my knees, and I will have children by her."
Wikipedia Bible Project	And she said "Here, my nurse Bilha, go to her and she will give birth, by my blessing, and I will also generate, through her."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	She then said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; sleep with her so that she may give birth on my knees; so the child will be mine."
The Heritage Bible	And she said, See, my maid, Bilhah; go in to her, and she shall bear upon my knees, and I will also build from out of her.
New American Bible (2002)	She replied, "Here is my maidservant Bilhah. Have intercourse with her, and let her give birth on my knees, so that I too may have offspring, at least through her." On my knees: in the ancient Near East, a father would take a newborn child in his lap to signify that he acknowledged it as his own; Rachel uses the ceremony in order to adopt the child and establish her legal rights to it.
New American Bible (2011)	She replied, "Here is my maidservant Bilhah. Have intercourse with her, and let her give birth on my knees [On my knees: in the ancient Near East, a father would take a newborn child in his lap to signify that he acknowledged it as his own; Rachel uses the ceremony in order to adopt the child and establish her legal rights to it.], so that I too may have children through her." Gn 16:2–4.
New Jerusalem Bible	So she said, 'Here is my slave-girl, Bilhah. Sleep with her and let her give birth on my knees; through her, then, I too shall have children!'
Revised English Bible	"Here is my slave-girl Bilhah," she replied. "Lie with her, so that she may bear sons to be laid upon my knees, and through her I too may build up a family."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	She said, "Here is my maid Bilhah. Go, sleep with her, and let her give birth to a child that will be laid on my knees, so that through her I too can build a family."
The Complete Tanach	So she said, "Here is my maidservant Bilhah; come to her, and she will bear [children] on my knees, so that I, too, will be built up from her."

on my knees: As the Targum renders: and I will rear [them].

so that I, too, will be built up: What is [the meaning of] "too" ? She said to him, "Your grandfather Abraham had sons from Hagar; yet he girded his loins (he prayed fervently) on Sarah's behalf." He replied, "My grandmother brought her rival into her house." She said, "If this matter is holding things up (prevents me from having children), here is my maidservant." - [from Gen. Rabbah 71:7]

so that I, too, will be built up from her: like Sarah. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71:7]

exeGesés companion Bible	And she says, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in to her; and she births on my knees that I also have children by her.
Kaplan Translation	[Rachel] said, 'Here is my handmaid Bilhah. Come to her and let her give birth on my lap [Literally, 'on my knees.' This denotes that the child born would be considered hers. The woman giving birth would sit on the lap of the foster mother, using the lap like a birthstool (see Exodus 1:16). The child would then appear to emerge between the legs of the foster mother.]. Through her I will then also have a son [See Genesis 16:2.]'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she said, Hinei my amah (maidservant) Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my birkayim, that I may also build up through her.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	She said, "Here, take my maid Bilhah and go in to her; and [when the baby comes] she shall deliver it [while sitting] on my knees, so that by her I may also have children [to count as my own]."
The Expanded Bible	Then Rachel said, "Here is my slave girl Bilhah. ·Have sexual relations with [·Go to] her so she can ·give birth to a child for me [·bear a child on my knees]. Then I can ·have my own family [·be built up] through her."

Kretzmann's Commentary	And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. This was not the manner of faith, but the expedient of the flesh: the children of Rachel's slave would belong to her mistress, all the more so if Jacob, at Rachel's suggestion, was the father.
NET Bible®	She replied, "Here is my servant Bilhah! Have sexual relations with her so that she can bear children [The word "children" is not in the Hebrew text but has been supplied in the translation for stylistic reasons.] for me [<i>Heb</i> "upon my knees."] and I can have a family through her [<i>Heb</i> "and I will be built up, even I, from her"]."
The Pulpit Commentary	And she said,—resorting to the sinful expedient of Sarah (Genesis 16:2), though without Sarah's excuse, since there was no question whatever about an heir for Jacob; which, even if there had been, would not have justified a practice which, in the case of her distinguished relative, had been so palpably condemned—Behold my maid Bilhah (vide Genesis 29:29), go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees,—i.e. children that I may place upon my knees, as mothers do (Piscator, A Lapide, Calvin, Rosenmüller, Lange, Ainsworth); the literal sense of the words being too absurd to require refutation—that I may also have children—literally, be builded up (cf. Genesis 16:2)—by her.
The Voice	Rachel: Here's my servant, Bilhah. Sleep with her so she can be a surrogate for me. I'll have my children through her.

What Rachel suggests is not at all improper for her time. As you may recall, Sarah and Abraham had a similar situation with Hagar (16:1–4). Custom allows for these kinds of arrangements, just as technology today allows for an infertile woman to have a child through a surrogate. Any child born to Bilhah is regarded as Rachel's, because she has the right to name the child. As we have seen, the naming of a child carries great significance.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and she said, look, my bondwoman Bilhah ^[Wear out] , come to her and she will bring forth upon my knee and I will also be built from her,...
English Standard Version	Then she said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her."
Green's Literal Translation	And she said, Behold my servant Bilhah! Go in to her and let her bear on my knees; yea, let me be built up from her, me also.
Modern English Version	Then she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah. Have relations with her so that she may bear a <i>child</i> on my knees, so that I may also have children through her."
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And she said, Look, my slave Bilhah, go in to her; that she may bear on my knees, and I also may obtain [children] by her.
World English Bible	She said, "Behold, my maid Bilhah. Go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, and I also may obtain children by her."
Young's Updated LT	And she says, "Lo, my handmaid Bilhah, go in unto her, and she does bear on my knees, and I am built up, even I, from her;"

The gist of this passage: Rachel suggest that Jacob impregnate her personal maid; and that she will be seen as the mother of the children.

Genesis 30:3a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
Hinnêh can be used as a particle of incitement.			
'āmâh (אָמָה) [pronounced <i>aw-MAW</i>]	<i>maid, maidservant, handmaid, female servant, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #519 BDB #51
H. C. Leupold: <i>The expression found in Hebrew, "Behold, my handmaid," is like our: "There is my handmaid." This demonstrates the variety of translations that must be made of the interjection hinneh.</i> ⁶⁸			
Bil ^h hâh (בִּלְהָה) [pronounced <i>bihl-HAW</i>]	<i>terror, dread, destruction; trouble; transliterated Bilhah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1090 BDB #117

Translation: Then she said, "Here [is] my maid, Bilhah.

Jacob believed that there was nothing which could be done. He was potent; and they were trying, but she was not producing children. He could not be blamed in this. But Rachel counters with her maid. Sometimes when the woman proposes a solution, it is not necessarily the best idea (remember when Sarah had Abraham go into her maid Hagar in order to produce a child).

As has been discussed, Rachel's complaint may have been a setup in order to get Jacob to agree to her solution.

Genesis 30:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>come [in], go [in], enter, advance</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (אֶל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

⁶⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Translation: [Go in to her...](#)

Rachel suggests that Jacob have relations with her maid. This is one of the Biblical euphemism for sexual relations.

Gill: *[S]ince no method [to obtain a child by Rachel] occurred to him, she proposes one: behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her, take her and use her as your wife.*⁶⁹

Rachel, without thinking, looks to complicate her marriage even more. If Bilhah is her maid, who do you think is going to raise the child? Who will the child see as his actual mother?

God takes the good and bad decisions which people makes and these things become a part of His plan. He knew who and what Rachel was in eternity past. He knew the kinds of decisions that she would make. Nothing that she does (or anyone else does) in this chapter catches God by surprise. At no time, is God taken aback, and He says, "Hell, I did not know she was going to do *that!*"

Genesis 30:3c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
ʿal (עַל) [pronounced <i>áh</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
The NET Bible: <i>After the imperative, the prefixed verbal form with the conjunction indicates the immediate purpose of the proposed activity.</i> ⁷⁰			
berek (רָבַד) [pronounced <i>BEH-rehk</i>]	<i>knee; weak from fear</i>	feminine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1290 BDB #139

Translation: [...and she will bear \[a child\] upon my knees...](#)

Rachel's idea is, the maid will give birth to a child onto Rachel's knees, and Rachel will raise the child as her own.

I should point out that this is somewhat irrational, as the personal maids probably were the ones who raised Leah and Rachel's children for the most part.⁷¹

Genesis 30:3a-c [Then she said, "Here is my maid, Bilhah. Take her so that she will bear a child upon my knees,..."](#)

⁶⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:3 (slightly edited).

⁷⁰ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 25, 2016.

⁷¹ It is very possible that Rachel personally raised Joseph. We will discuss this later.

Rachel's Solution of Using a Surrogate Mother (Various Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Rachel deals with her problem of being barren just as Sarah dealt with the same problem, namely, by employing a concubine. Just as Sarah resorted to a custom acceptable in her culture, though contrary to God's will, to secure an heir for Abraham (cf. 16:1-2) so Rachel does the same in order to secure a child for Jacob.*

Wenstrom continues: *On the contrary, Isaac prayed that God would open Rebekah's womb and waited (25:21). Rachel and Jacob followed the example of Sarah and Abraham.*⁷²

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Following the example of Sarah with regard to Hagar, an example which is not seldom imitated still, she adopted the children of her maid.*⁷³

James Burton Coffman: *Thus, Rachel introduced concubinage into the patriarchal family of Israel with consequences of unmitigated sorrow.*⁷⁴ Although there was a lot of conflict between Rachel and Leah in this marriage (much of it documented in the Bible), we are not aware of their maids as being problematic in the marriage. I think part of the key there is authority. Their maids were under a strict system of authority.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr. also writes: *Rachel is not trusting in the Lord at this point in the narrative since she chooses to solve her problem of being barren by following the custom of the cosmic system of Satan in that day in offering her maid Bilhah to Jacob in order to produce children for her. Psalm 27:14, "Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD."*⁷⁵

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:3a-c Then she said, "Here is my maid, Bilhah. Take her so that she will bear a child upon my knees,..."

Bearing a child upon Rachel's knees (Various Commentators)

The NET Bible: *This is an idiomatic way of saying that Bilhah will be simply a surrogate mother. Rachel will adopt the child as her own.*⁷⁶

Lange: *From the fact that children were taken upon the knees, they were recognized either as adopted children (Genesis 50:23), or as the fruit of their own bodies (Job. 3:12).*⁷⁷

Speiser: *This act is normally performed by the father. Here, however, it is of primary interest to the adoptive mother who is intent on establishing her legal right to the child.*⁷⁸

The Cambridge Bible: *By this phrase Rachel means that she will recognize and adopt as her own the children by her handmaid, Bilhah. For the phrase, cf. Genesis 50:23; Job. 3:12. The child being received on the knees of the parent was regarded as being accepted into the family. The words retain the trace of a primitive ceremony of legitimization and adoption.*⁷⁹

⁷² From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 467); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁷³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

⁷⁴ From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

⁷⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 467); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁷⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 25, 2016.

⁷⁷ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

⁷⁸ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

⁷⁹ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

Bearing a child upon Rachel's knees (Various Commentators)

Clarke: *The handmaid was the sole property of the mistress, as has already been remarked in the case of Hagar; and therefore not only all her labor, but even the children borne by her, were the property of the mistress. These female slaves, therefore, bore children vicariously for their mistresses; and this appears to be the import of the term, she shall bear upon my knees.*⁸⁰

College Press followed by ICCG: *The ceremony may be traced to a widespread custom, according to which, "in lawful marriage, the child is actually brought forth on the father's knees. . . . Then it became a symbol of the legitimization of a natural child, and finally a form of adoption generally"*⁸¹

The Geneva Bible: *I will receive her children on my lap, as though they were my own.*⁸²

Guzik presented what struck me as a rather peculiar understanding of this phrase: *On my knees refers to the custom where the husband impregnated the surrogate while the surrogate reclined on the lap of the wife, and how she might even recline on the wife as she gave birth. The symbolism clearly showed the child was legally the child of the mother, not the surrogate, who merely "stood in" for the wife both in conception and birth.*⁸³

Dr. Peter Pett: *This confirms what we earlier saw with Sarah. When the maid bears a child she does it on her mistress's behalf. The child is Rachel's. But as Sarah's case demonstrated, the consequences were not always so simple when a blood child was later born. So the child does not rank fully with the true born unless fully accepted. It is to Jacob's credit that he does not differentiate between his sons. On the other hand in his case the slave children were not the firstborn. There is not the same rivalry as with Ishmael and Isaac.*⁸⁴

Poole: *She shall bear upon my knees; an ellipsis or short speech; She shall bear a child which may be laid upon my knees, or in my lap, which I may adopt and bring up as if it were my own. See Genesis 50:23 Isaiah 66:12.*

Poole adds: *That I may also have children by her; for as servants, so their work and fruit, were not their own, but their masters'*⁸⁵

Lange: *Ancient interpreters have explained this in an absurdly literal way. From the fact that children were taken upon the knees, they were recognized either as adopted children (Genesis 50:23), or as the fruit of their own bodies (Job. 3:12).*⁸⁶ I fail to understand why Lange calls some of these interpretations *absurdly literal*. When someone cares for an infant, that infant is in the person's arms and/or upon their knees quite a bit of the time.

John Wesley: *At the persuasion of Rachel he took Bilhah her handmaid to wife, that, according to the usage of those times, his children by her might be adopted and owned as her mistresses children. She would rather have children by reputation than none at all; children that she might call her own, though they were not so. And as an early instance of her dominion over the children born in her apartment.*⁸⁷

⁸⁰ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:3.

⁸¹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

⁸² Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 30:3.

⁸³ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:1–4.

⁸⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:3–4.

⁸⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:3.

⁸⁶ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:1–8 (Exegetical and Critical).

⁸⁷ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

Bearing a child upon Rachel's knees (Various Commentators)

Nahum Sarna: *The key to this phrase lies in a symbolic gesture, widely attested in Near Eastern sources, especially Hittite, as well as in the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. The placing or reception of a child on or by the knees of another signifies legitimation, whether in acknowledgement of physical parenthood or by adoption. This practice is again referred to in the Bible in Genesis 48:12 and 50:23 and in Job 3:12. Its origin is in the idea of the knee as the seat of generative power.*⁸⁸

Even though this may seem weird to us, this seems to square with secular sources of that era. It is a bad idea to take today's norms and standards and overlay them on the times that we are studying. Societal values and customs change over the centuries. What seems normal and right in one century seems weird and odd in another.

Trapp on an historical incident to match this (although I do not know any of the people he mentions): *Given her by her father on purpose, it may seem; that in case she proved barren, she might be built up by her. So Stratonice, the wife of King Dejotarus, being barren, gave secretly her maid Electra unto her husband; by whom she had an heir to the crown, as Plutarch relates.*⁸⁹

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

What Rachel suggests here was not done a lot in the Old Testament. We have the example of Sarah (actually, Sarai, at this point) giving her handmaiden to Abraham (Abram, at this time) in order to raise up a son (Ishmael)—but Sarai was never closely associated with this son (Genesis 16:2–3). Later in this chapter, Leah, because she had not gotten pregnant in awhile (which may be as little as 6 months), gives her maidservant over to the Jacob as well, for the same reason (Genesis 30:9).

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The people in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's culture regarded a concubine as a secondary wife with some, but not all, of the rights and privileges of the primary wife so in effect Bilhah became Jacob's concubine. Not only was using a concubine an option, but in Hurrian culture husbands sometimes required that if their wife could not bear children she had to provide a concubine for him. This custom helps explain why Jacob was willing to be a part of Rachel's plan that seems so unusual to us and though using a woman other than one's wife was a custom of the day it was never God's desire (2:24; Matt. 19:4-5).*⁹⁰

Waltke: *The terms wife and concubine are used more loosely in the patriarchal period. Three women in the patriarchal period are called both wife and concubine: Hagar (Genesis 16:3; Genesis 25:6 indirectly), Keturah (Genesis 25:1; cf. Genesis 25:6; 1 Chronicles 1:32), and Bilhah (Genesis 30:4; Genesis 35:22). Each of these concubines is an auxiliary wife to the patriarch, not a slave, but subordinate to the wife who is her mistress. After the patriarchal period, the term wife is never used as a synonym for concubine. Zilpah, though never called a concubine (cf. Genesis 30:9), has the same social position as Bilhah (cf. Genesis 37:2).*⁹¹

⁸⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 467); accessed September 9, 2017. Wenstrom cites The JPS Torah Commentary, pages 207-208, The Jewish Publication Society.

⁸⁹ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

⁹⁰ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 467); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁹¹ From <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/dcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017. Constable cites Waltke, Genesis , p411.

Genesis 30:3d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bânâh (בָּנָה) [pronounced <i>baw-NAWH</i>]	<i>to be built up, to be rebuilt, to be restored; to be set up, be established, be fixed; to be firmly established; to be established, be stable, be secure, be enduring; to be fixed, be securely determined; to be directed aright, be fixed aright, be steadfast; to prepare, be ready; to be prepared, be arranged, be settled</i>	1sy person singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #1129 BDB #124
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

The NET Bible: *The prefixed verbal form with the conjunction is subordinated to the preceding prefixed verbal form and gives the ultimate purpose for the proposed action. The idiom of "built up" here refers to having a family (see Gen 16:2, as well as Ruth 4:11 and BDB 125 s.v. בָּנָה).*⁹²

Translation: ...and I, [even] I, will be built up by [lit., from] her."

She says that through this child, she will be built up.

Clarke: *and I shall be built up by her. Hence וּבֶן ben, a son or child, from בָּנָה banah, to build; because, as a house is formed of the stones, etc., that enter into its composition, so is a family by children.*⁹³

Bear in mind that, in all of this human interaction, God's will is brought to fruition. Many times in Jacob's life, it will be hard to pinpoint anyone making a fully honorable decision—and yet, God's will always comes to pass.

Lange: *The bad example of Hagar continues to operate here, leading into error. The question here was not about an heir of Jacob, but the proud Rachel desired children as her own, at any cost, lest she should stand beside her sister childless. Her jealous love for Jacob is to some extent overbalanced by her jealous pride or envy of her sister, so that she gives to Jacob her maid.*⁹⁴

⁹² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 25, 2016.

⁹³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:3.

⁹⁴ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:1–8 (Exegetical and Critical).

J. Vernon McGee: *We find here Jacob and Rachel reverting to the practice of that day. Remember that Abraham and Sarah had done the same thing. God did not approve of it then, and He is not going to approve of it now. The Bible gives us an accurate record, but that does not mean that God approved of all that was done. In fact, it is quite obvious that He disapproved of this.*⁹⁵

Genesis 30:3 Then she said, “Here [is] my maid, Bilhah. Go in to her and she will bear [a child] upon my knees and I, [even] I, will be built up by [lit., from] her.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:3 Then she said, “Here is my maid, Bilhah. Take her so that she will bear a child upon my knees, and I will be built up by her.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:3 And she [Rachel] said, “Here is [lit., behold] my slave woman Bilhah; go in to her, and she will bear [a child] upon my knees, and, as a result, let me be built up from her.”

You may recall that Sarai, when she and her husband Abram were unable to conceive, she suggested that he use her personal maid, Hagar, in order to bear a child. This was apparently not unusual for that time period. That is, some women were wealthy enough to have personal maids; and sometimes, the husband would impregnate the maid (at the insistence of the wife) in order to have children. The children would be considered children of the husband and wife.

Like many things in the Bible, you have to distinguish between the cultural norms of the day, which are related to us in narrative; and eternal truths. In that day, it was not unusual for a wife to use her maid as a surrogate. Whereas, we do not have the exactly same thing today, we do have similar things which are done for childless couples.

Utle: *We learn from the Nuzi Tablets, which describe the Hurrian culture of the same period (2nd millennium B.C.), that this was a common practice. In case the daughter was barren, the servant could bear a child in her behalf (cf. Genesis 29:28–29 30:3). Genesis 29:24, 29.*⁹⁶

In anti-Bible circles, women of the Bible are often portrayed as having absolutely no free will; and that their men did with them as they pleased. The record of Sarai and Hagar; and of Rachel and Bilhah present a different picture. Here, Rachel directs her husband to impregnate her maid, and that would be their child. In both cases, it is the wife who makes the request. So, whenever you read disparaging remarks about Scripture which suggest that wives in the Bible have no free will; these instances indicate such thinking to be faulty.

Genesis 30:3 Then she said, “Here [is] my maid, Bilhah. Go in to her and she will bear [a child] upon my knees and I, [even] I, will be built up by [lit., from] her.”

Some Points of Genesis 30:3

1. Since this is the second time in Genesis that a maid is used as a surrogate mother; we must recognize that this is not all that unusual. The two times in Genesis this is spoken of, it is related to the line of promise.
2. Even though Rachel wants the child to be as her child (where her maid acts as a surrogate); the children by Bilhah will always be known as Bilhah’s and not Rachel’s.
3. In fact, in neither case, did the child end up being seen as the son of the mother who encouraged the pregnancy.
4. However, the results of the pregnancies of the two maids (Bilhah and Hagar) were quite different.
5. Hagar’s son, Ishmael, was never counted as Sarai’s son; and when Hagar was thrown out of Abraham’s camp, her son went with her.

⁹⁵ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

⁹⁶ Dr. Bob Utle, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 29:24.

Some Points of Genesis 30:3

6. Furthermore, Ishmael was never seen as being in the line of promise, even though Abraham petitioned God on his behalf ("O that Ishmael might stand before You," Abraham said).
7. On the other hand, the sons of Bilhah will be seen as a part of sons of Israel. They will not ever be treated differently simply because their mother was a maid. The key is, *who was their father*.

Jacob probably went along with Rachel, simply because that was the path of least resistance.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The ESV is used below.

Did Rachel Manipulate Jacob?

1. The typical interpretation of the beginning of this chapter is, Rachel goes to Jacob with an irrational complaint. Gen. 30:1 *When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!"*
2. Jacob responds to that complaint with normal frustration. Gen. 30:2 *Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"*
3. Then Rachel tells Jacob what she wants him to do.
4. There is the distinct possibility that Rachel knew that her complaint was irrational. It is also possibly that she knew that, with the right setup, Jacob would go along with her plan of using her maid as a surrogate mother.
5. It is also possible that Rachel knows that, if she simply approaches Jacob and says, "Let's use my maid as a surrogate, that I may have a child through her," that he might say *no*.
6. However, with the way that she has set this up, Jacob will have to agree to do what she asks him to do. Gen 30:3 *Then she said, "Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her."*
7. Jacob sets himself up by saying, essentially, "What can I do about it?" Rachel then answers, "This is what *you* can do about it."
8. This or the common interpretation does not really affect the important points of this chapter.

I believe this to be a unique interpretation.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:1–3 *Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I am a dead woman." Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of god, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" And she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, so that through her I too may have children."*

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:1–3

1. The problems in Jacob's family will continue to be detailed through this chapter.
2. The conflict between Leah and Rachel will not subside over the years, but continue unabated.
3. The births of the four sons of Leah were grouped together in chapter 29, occurred during the 11-14th year of service to Laban.
4. vs 1 does not necessarily occur immediately following the birth of the fourth son.
5. No doubt Rachel was somewhat envious of her sister with each passing birth, but at some point she could hold it in no longer.
6. Her frustration at her inability to conceive grew worse with each passing month.
7. At some point she could tolerate it no longer, and explodes under her SINFUL TREND OF ADAM.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:1–3

8. Like most under the delusion of the STA, she attempts to fix the blame for her problems on someone else.
9. She is frustrated at God, but that would not be "spiritual" to admit.
10. She launches into an attack on Jacob, as if he were the culprit.
11. Rachel has always been the attractive one in the family who was much prettier than her sister.
12. She now wants something which human attractiveness and ingenuity cannot provide.
13. She desires something which only God can provide.
14. Rather than pray about it, she gives in to her frustration and goes full tilt under her STA.
15. While there is nothing sinful or wrong in the desire to have children, the demand for children with no thought or regard for the will of God in the matter is not only stupid, it is sinful.
16. She threatens Jacob with her death, most likely a veiled threat of suicide.
17. Jacob does not react as some may expect, he does not attempt to comfort her in any way.
18. Instead, he explodes with indignation at her unreasonable demand.
19. He challenges her with the very pointed statement that her problem is not with him, it is with God.
20. He recognizes, as all should, that God controls the giving of life, not men.
21. Rachel responds with a cosmic convention, that of supplying the husband with a female slave, in order to have children.
22. This did not work for Sarah, and it will not work for Rachel.
23. Surrogate mothers are not endorsed in any way in the WORD OF GOD.
24. While the cosmos may endorse this approach in Rachel's day, and in our day, they may endorse this approach, and others as well, it does not mean that this is the will of God.
25. Her desire is to have a family by means of her servant, who is not consulted in the matter.
26. This is all a total violation of RM/RW and the institution of marriage.
27. Once again, we see a female dictating policy in the household and the wimpy male going along to keep the peace.
28. The problem is that this does not solve any problems, it only creates more. vs 9
29. It clearly demonstrates Rachel's lack of trust in God, her spiritual disorientation, and horsiness under the STA.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so she gives to him Bilhah her handmaid for a woman and so goes in unto her Jacob. And so conceives Bilhah and so she bears to Jacob a son.

Genesis
30:4–5

She then gave him Bilhah, her personal maid, for a wife, and Jacob went in to her. Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob.

She then gave her personal maid, Bilhah, to Jacob, as his third wife. Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so she gives to him Bilhah her handmaid for a woman and so goes in unto her Jacob. And so conceives Bilhah and so she bears to Jacob a son.

Targum (Onkelos)

And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife; and Jakob went in unto her, and Bilhah conceived, and bare to Jakob a son.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And she <u>made</u> her handmaid Bilhah <u>free</u> , and delivered her to him, and Jakob entered with her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare a son to Jakob.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And she gave him Bala in <u>marriage</u> : who, When her husband had gone in unto her, conceived and bore a son.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	She gave him Bilhah her handmaid as wife, and Ya'aqub went in to her. Bilhah conceived, and bore Ya'aqub a son.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And she gave him her maid Bilhah to wife; and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bore Jacob a son.
Septuagint (Greek)	And she gave him Balla her maid, for a wife to him; and Jacob went in to her. And Balla, Rachel's maid, conceived, and bore Jacob a son.

Significant differences: The phrase that Rachel gives Bilhah to Jacob *to wife* (literally, *for a woman*) can be interpreted in several different ways. The various ways it is translated above is alright, except for the translation *free*. The Pseudo-Jonathan targum messes up the first two phrases.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah became with child, and gave birth to a son.
Good News Bible (TEV)	So she gave Bilhah to her husband, and he had intercourse with her. Bilhah became pregnant and bore Jacob a son.
International Children's B.	So Rachel gave Bilhah, her slave girl, to Jacob as a wife. And he had physical relations with her. She became pregnant and gave Jacob a son.
New Simplified Bible	Then Rachel let Jacob marry Bilhah. Jacob slept with Bilhah. They had a son.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	Then Rachel let Jacob marry Bilhah, and they had a son.
New Living Translation	So Rachel gave her servant, Bilhah, to Jacob as a wife, and he slept with her. Bilhah became pregnant and presented him with a son.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So she gave him BalLa her handmaid to be his woman, and Jacob went in [and slept with] her. As the result, BalLa (RachEl's handmaid) got pregnant and bore a son to Jacob.
Beck's American Translation	So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob lay with her. Jacob and Bilhah had a baby boy. Rachel said, "Now God has done for me what is right. Yes, He heard me and gave me a son."
International Standard V	So Rachel [Lit. <i>she</i>] gave Jacob [Lit. <i>him</i>] her woman servant Bilhah to be his wife, and Jacob had sex with her. 5Bilhah conceived and bore a son for Jacob.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	So she gave him Bala as his mate; and Bala, got with child by Rachel's husband, bore a son.
Translation for Translators	So she gave him her slave, Bilhah, to be another wife for him, and Jacob had sex [EUP] with her. She became pregnant and bore Jacob a son.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	She was to give Bilhah, her maid servant, for to wife. Jacob was to go in to her. Bilhah was to conceive and bear forth to Jacob, a son.
Conservapedia	And she gave him her handmaid Bilhah for a (common-law) wife, and Jacob took her to bed. Bilhah fell pregnant, and gave birth to a son for Jacob.

God's Truth (Tyndale)	And she gave him Bilha her handmaid to wife. And Jacob went in unto her: And Bilha conceived and bare Jacob a son.
H. C. Leupold	So she gave him Bilhah, her handmaid, to wife, and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.
Urim-Thummim Version	Then she gave Bilhah her female slave to him for his woman and Jacob slept with her. And Bilhah became pregnant and gendered Jacob a son.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	And she gave Bilhah her servant as wife to Jacob. She became pregnant and bore him a son.
New American Bible (2011)	So she gave him her maidservant Bilhah as wife [As wife: in 35:22 Bilhah is called a "concubine" (Heb. pilegesh). In v. 9, Zilpah is called "wife," and in 37:2 both women are called wives. The basic difference between a wife and a concubine was that no bride price was paid for the latter. The interchange of terminology shows that there was some blurring in social status between the wife and the concubine.], and Jacob had intercourse with her. When Bilhah conceived and bore a son for Jacob, Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; indeed he has heeded my plea and given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan [Dan: explained by the term dannanni, "he has vindicated me."]. V. 6 is included for context.
New Jerusalem Bible	So she gave him her slave-girl Bilhah as concubine. Jacob slept with her, and Bilhah conceived and gave birth to a son by Jacob.
Revised English Bible	When she gave him her slave-girl Bilhah as a wife, Jacob lay with her, and she conceived and bore him a son.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	So she gave him Bilhah her slave-girl as his wife, and Ya'akov went in and slept with her. Bilhah conceived and bore Ya'akov a son.
The Complete Tanach	So she gave him her maidservant Bilhah for a wife, and Jacob came to her. And Bilhah conceived, and she bore Jacob a son.
exeGesés companion Bible	And she gives him Bilhah her maid to woman: and Yaaqov goes in to her: and Bilhah conceives and births Yaaqov a son:...
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	So she gave him her maid Bilhah as concubine, and Jacob cohabited with her. Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.
Kaplan Translation	She gave him her handmaid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob came to her. Bilhah became pregnant and gave birth to Jacob's son.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she gave him Bilhah her shifchah (slave woman, maidservant) as isha; and Ya'akov went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bore Ya'akov ben.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	So she gave him Bilhah her maid as a [secondary] wife, and Jacob went in to her. Bilhah conceived and gave birth to a son for Jacob.
The Expanded Bible	So Rachel gave Bilhah, her slave girl, to Jacob as a ·wife [or concubine], and he ·had sexual relations with [·went to] her. Bilhah ·became pregnant [conceived] and gave Jacob a son.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And she gave him Bilhah, her handmaid, to wife; and Jacob went in unto her. His own condition of mind with regard to his favorite wife's barrenness and his advancing age, since he was now almost ninety years old, caused Jacob to agree to his wife's plan. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son.

NET Bible®

So Rachel [*Heb* “and she”; the referent (Rachel) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob had marital relations with [*Heb* “went in to.” The expression “went in to” in this context refers to sexual intercourse.] her. Bilhah became pregnant [Or “Bilhah conceived” (also in v. 7).] and gave Jacob a son [*Heb* “and she bore for Jacob a son.”].

The Pulpit Commentary

And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. "Whence we gather that there is no end of sin where once the Divine institution of marriage is neglected" (Calvin). Jacob began with polygamy, and is now drawn into concubinage. Though God overruled this for the development of the seed of Israel, he did not thereby condone the offense of either Jacob or Rachel. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. "Conception and birth may be granted to irregular marriages" (Hughes). "So God often strives to overcome men's wickedness through kindness, and pursues the unworthy with his grace" (Calvin).

The Voice

So she gave Jacob her servant Bilhah to be another one of his wives, and Jacob slept with her. Bilhah conceived and gave birth to Jacob's son.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and she gave to him Bilhah ^[Wear out] her maid for a woman and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] came to her, and Bilhah ^[Wear out] conceived and she brought forth for Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] a son,...

Concordant Literal Version

And giving him is she Bilhah, her maid, for a wife. And coming is Jacob to her. And pregnant is Rachel's maid, Bilhah, and is bearing for Jacob a son.

Context Group Version

And she gave him Bilhah her slave as woman: and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah became pregnant, and bore Jacob a son.

Modern English Version

So she gave him Bilhah her maidservant as a wife, and Jacob had relations with her. Bilhah conceived and gave Jacob a son.

New King James Version

Then she gave him Bilhah her maid as wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.

Young's Updated LT

And she gives to him Bilhah her maid-servant for a wife, and Jacob goes in unto her; and Bilhah conceives, and bears to Jacob a son.

The gist of this passage:

Rachel gives her personal servant to Jacob as a secondary wife and he impregnates her and they have a son.

4-5

Genesis 30:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced le']	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 30:4a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Bil ^h hâh (בִּלְהָה) [pronounced <i>bihl-HAW</i>]	<i>terror, dread, destruction; trouble; transliterated Bilhah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1090 BDB #117
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced <i>eesh-SHAW</i>]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: She then gave him Bilhah, her personal maid, for a wife,...

This phrase sounds as if Rachel's human viewpoint solution is to offer up her own personal maid to be Jacob's third wife. I don't know that we should understand it in that way.

Gill's opinion on this: *To be enjoyed as a wife, though she was no other than a concubine; yet such were sometimes called wives, and were secondary ones, and were under the proper lawful wife, nor did their children inherit; but those which Jacob had by his wives' maids did inherit with the rest.*⁹⁷

At this point, Jacob already has two wives—Leah and Rachel—and he only wanted Rachel. However, it is clear from the text that Rachel took Jacob to the point of saying, "Honey, whatever you want, that's what I want."

Genesis 30:4a She then gave him Bilhah, her personal maid, for a wife,...

Birth Surrogacy in the Bible (Various Commentators)

Barnes: *Bilhah, Rachel's maid, bears two sons. Rachel becomes impatient of her barrenness and jealous of her sister, and unjustly reproaches her husband, who indignantly rebukes her. God, not he, has withheld children from her. She does what Sarah had done before her Genesis 16:2–3, gives her handmaid to her husband. No express law yet forbade this course, though nature and Scripture by implication did Genesis 2:23–25.*⁹⁸

Guzik: *This does not mean that Jacob actually married Bilhah. It means Jacob did with Bilhah what a man should only do with his wife.*⁹⁹

Personally, I do not think we should understand this to mean, Rachel is requiring her husband to take a 3rd wife. I think the idea is, he is to treat her as a wife. As Rachel's servant, Rachel could use her as a surrogate in order to bear children.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

⁹⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:4.

⁹⁸ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:1–8.

⁹⁹ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:1–4.

Genesis 30:4b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בו) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'el (ל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ġuh-KOH ^{BV}]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: ...and Jacob went in to her.

Based upon the insistence of his wife, Jacob had relations with Leah, his wife's handmaid.

Some commentators suggest that has relations with Bilhah simply to please his wife or to give in to his wife. However, Jacob's feelings are not displayed here. We know about some of the motivations of his wives; but we do not know much about what Jacob thinks until we come to the end of this chapter. We will know what he thinks when he interacts with Laban. As for this circumstance, it may have appealed to him; or he may have wanted to simply go along to get along with his wife. He may have known that, if this is her idea (Rachel will be known in this chapter for coming up with several ideas), that it is simply easier to go along with her.

Gill: and Jacob went in unto her; consenting to what Rachel his wife proposed to him: having concubines, as well as more wives than one, were not thought criminal in those times, and were suffered of God, and in this case for the multiplication of Jacob's seed; and perhaps he might the more readily comply with the motion of his wife, from the example of his grandfather Abraham, who took Hagar to wife at the instance of Sarah.¹⁰⁰

Genesis 30:4 And she gave him her slave woman Bilhah to wife. And Jacob went in to her.

Rachel's personal maid is Bilhah, and she gives her maid to Jacob. They have relations. Jacob gives in to Rachel's demand. Note that this is all done at the behest of Rachel; and note that Jacob is never said here to be married to Bilhah (although she will be called his wife later on in Genesis). So, she would be considered a secondary wife, of sorts. Jacob did not seek her out; Jacob does not have continued relations with her; but he does have a child by her (in fact, he will have two children by her). There is no indication in the Bible that Jacob had any further relationship with either of the personal servants.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: The statement "Jacob went in to her (Bilhah)" reveals that Jacob had failed not only spiritually by operating in unbelief but also failed in his authority in the marriage as Rachel's husband. His response should have been no and he should have explained to Rachel in love that the Lord would give her a child in His timing.

¹⁰⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:4.

Wenstrom continues: *Notice that Jacob and Rachel are never said to consult the Lord in prayer because they have decided to take things into their own hands.*¹⁰¹

Genesis 30:4 *She then gave him Bilhah, her personal maid, for a wife, and Jacob went in to her.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
Bil ^h hâh (בִּילְהָהּ) [pronounced <i>bihl-HAW</i>]	<i>terror, dread, destruction; trouble; transliterated Bilhah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1090 BDB #117

Translation: *Bilhah conceived...*

Bilhah, Rachel's personal servant, conceived; she became pregnant by Jacob.

Genesis 30:5b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya ^h âqôb (יַאֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-âuh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *...and bore a son to Jacob.*

¹⁰¹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 467); accessed September 9, 2017.

She bears Jacob his fifth son. The narrative tells us what actually happens. Rachel says that God has given her a son; but here, it reads that Bilhah bears a son to *Jacob*.

Throughout Scripture, Bilhah's sons will be seen as her sons and not as Rachel's. Even though Rachel will adopt this son—more or less—Bilhah, as her personal maid, probably would have been in charge of raising the son; so, for all intents and purposes, Bilhah's son was Bilhah's son.

The requirement to be a Hebrew, to be God's people, was to have the genes of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and, of course, have faith in the **Revealed God**). Any child sired by Jacob would be a Hebrew by race. This continued with all of Jacob's sons, no matter what their marital situation (Judah will have a particular unusual *marriage/son* situation; and yet he and his family would be blessed by God).

These sons, born by the two concubines, would become full tribes of nation Israel. There would be no separation between them and their half-brothers, born to Leah and Rachel. There will be no situation like Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was Abraham's son, but born to Hagar, Sarah's personal maid. He was not a Hebrew; he was not the son of the promise; his half-brother Isaac, born to Sarah, was a Hebrew.

Gill: *And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. This was so far countenanced by the Lord, that he blessed her with conception, and Jacob with a son by her.*¹⁰²

Genesis 30:5 And Bilhah conceived, and bore Jacob a son.

Genesis 30:5 Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:4–5 She then gave him Bilhah, her personal maid, for a wife, and Jacob went in to her. Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:4–5 She then gave her personal maid, Bilhah, to Jacob, as his third wife. Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob. (Kukis paraphrase)

Quite obviously, Jacob is not the problem. He is fathering children by Leah and by Rachel's maid Bilhah.

Those who are against the Bible love to point to passages like this and suggest that this is somehow God's approved form of marriage—a marriage of two sisters to the same man; and their personal slaves as surrogates. However, this is simply recording the events of Jacob's life. Both Rachel and Leah think about God; and all of them (including Jacob) speak of God in one way or another during this chapter (vv. 2, 6, 18, 20). Furthermore, God does give children to Leah (Genesis 30:17) and Rachel (Genesis 30:22). However, none of this means that this is somehow the ideal marriage in God's eyes. The Bible never presents the polygamous marriage in a positive light. At best, we have a situation like this where the Bible does not comment at all upon the state of their marriage. What will become clear is, this is not an ideal situation. This chapter and others will indicate that polygamy is not the best sort of relationship between the principles.

Application: This ought to be a warning to missionaries, however, who try to impose *Christian* standards wherever they go. If they are in a culture where some men have more than one wife, this passage suggests that they should *not* change that. They should not try to talk this or that man into giving up all but one of his wives. That should not be a part of the Christian message that they teach. They are to give the gospel of Jesus Christ; and they are to ignore the unusual marriage configurations (as the husband would remain responsible to the care of his several wives). Along the same lines, for future relationships, a missionary would encourage marriages between one man and one woman. This would come out in teaching Scripture.

Application: Missionaries are to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to a people. A portion of their ministry would logically involve teaching Bible doctrine to this same people. Part of that teaching includes the **laws of divine**

¹⁰² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:5.

establishment. There needs to be an asterisk and a reference to this passage. Ideally, marriages ought to be one man paired with one woman. However, a man with several wives is not told to abandon his other wives. Conversely, a marriage between two men or between two women is not a marriage. But, in any case, you teach the principles; you do not get personally involved to the point where you are telling individuals what to do—even in a church. Missionaries, like pastors, are not to live other people’s lives for them, no matter how tempting that might be. So, if faced with the oddball situation that you end up with two women in the congregation think they are married, you do not get up in their grill and tell them that they need to separate. You teach the principles and allow them to make the decisions. Personally, I would draw the line at displays of public affection anywhere in or around the church. Obviously, the church would never take part in recognizing two men or two women as legitimately married any more than it would recognize and/or celebrate a polygamous marriage as legitimate.

Application: So, a local church should not spend time trying to root out same-sex couples from their congregation. However, open displays of affection between those of the same gender needs to be discouraged, as that sends both wrong and confusing signals to young people.

Application: Modern society has brought to us a brand new wrinkle: *gay marriage*. First of all, no matter what the state or the federal government says, there is no such thing as a gay marriage. There might be a 40 year relationship between two persons of the same gender who also have intimate relations; but that is not a marriage. They may even get the laws of that state or country to define what they have as a legal marriage; but it is not a marriage.

Application: I say all of this because there are gay Christians. Anyone can believe in Jesus Christ, and faith in Christ makes them saved. It is not impossible to imagine a circumstance where both persons in a gay coupling come to the Lord around the same time. So, the pastor or missionary should still teach Bible doctrine; they should not hold back in their teaching. On the other hand, it is not up to the pastor or the missionary to follow people around and tell them what to do and what not to do.

Application: Homosexual relations are sinful; but then, so are some heterosexual relations. It is up to the pastor to teach the principle and to allow those in his congregation to apply what they learn. It is never up to the pastor to follow his parishioners around and to demand sinless behavior from them.

God could have appeared to Jacob at any time and said, “You can’t be married to two women; ditch Leah.” God works with the situation that Jacob is in; and nation Israel is actually blessed despite this unconventional marriage arrangement. At any time, God could have stepped in—on Jacob’s wedding night, in fact. But God allows everyone’s free will to play out (including Laban’s free will). God allows for our interaction within this fallen world.

So, Bilhah, Rachel’s maid, bears a son to Jacob. Jacob, having two wives and two surrogate mothers, will father children by all of them.

And so says Rachel, “Has judged me Elohim and also He heard in my voice. And so He gives to me a son.” Upon so she calls his name Dan.

Genesis
30:6

Then Rachel said, “Elohim has judged me and He has also heard my voice. Consequently, He has given me a son.” Therefore, she called his name *Dan*.

Rachel then said, “God has judged me and He has heard my voice. As a result, He has given a son to me.” For this reason, she named him *Dan*.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Rachel, "Has judged me Elohim and also He heard in my voice. And so He gives to me a son." Upon so she calls his name Dan.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Rahel said, The Lord hath judged me, and hath also received my <u>prayer</u> , and given me a son: therefore she called his name Dan ["Judgement."].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Rahel said, The Lord hath judged me <u>in His good mercies</u> ; He hath also heard the voice of my <u>prayer</u> , and given me a son; <u>and so it is to be that He shall judge by the hand of Shimshon bar Manovach, who shall be of his seed; and hath he not delivered into his hand the people of the Philistae?</u> Therefore she called his name Dan.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Rachel said: The Lord has judged for me, and has heard my voice, giving me a son, and therefore she called his name Dan.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son." Therefore called she his name Dan.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Rachel said, God has judged me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son; therefore she called his name Dan.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Rachel said, God has given judgment for me, and listened to my voice, and has given me a son; therefore she called his name, Dan.
Significant differences:	The targums have <i>prayer</i> instead of <i>voice</i> (one targum has both). One targum has all kinds of extra words.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Rachel said, God has been my judge, and has given ear to my voice, and has given me a son; so he was named Dan.
Easy English	Rachel said 'God has done what is right to me. He has listened to me. And he has given me a son.' Because of this, she called the baby Dan.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Rachel said, "God has listened to my prayer. He decided to give me a son." So she named this son Dan.
<i>The Message</i>	Rachel said, "God took my side and vindicated me. He listened to me and gave me a son." She named him Dan (Vindication).
Names of God Bible	Rachel said, "Now Elohim has judged in my favor. He has heard my prayer and has given me a son." So she named him Dan [He Judges].
NIRV	She had a son by him. Then Rachel said, "God has stood up for my rights. He has listened to my prayer and given me a son." So she named him Dan.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Living Bible	Rachel named him Dan (meaning "Justice"), for she said, "God has given me justice, and heard my plea and given me a son."
New Century Version	Rachel said, "God has judged me innocent. He has listened to my prayer and has given me a son," so she named him Dan.
New Life Version	Then Rachel said, "God has done the right thing for me. He has heard my voice and has given me a son." So she gave him the name Dan.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then RachEl said: 'God has given me justice and listened to my voice, for He has given me a son.' So she named him Dan (Justice).
Beck's American Translation	So she called him Dan ["He has done right"].
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Whereupon Rachel said, God has pronounced judgement for me, and listened to my plea, by giving me a son; and she called the boy Dan, as if she would say, He has pronounced judgement.

Translation for Translators Rachel said, "God has vindicated me/judged my case and has decided that what I have done is right . He has also heard my requests and has given me a son." So she named him Dan, *which sounds like the Hebrew word that means "he judged."*

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Rachel was to say: He of mighty ones is to have judged, and is to have heard my loud call, and was to give me a son. She is to have called his name Dan.

Conservapedia Rachel said, "God has adjudicated me, and has heard my voice, and given me a son." So she named him Dan. Which in Hebrew means "judged."

God's Truth (Tyndale) Then said Rahel: God has given sentence on my side, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son. Therefore called she him Dan.

H. C. Leupold And Rachel said: God has vindicated me and has hearkened also to my voice, and has given to me a son. Wherefore she called his name Dan (Vindication).

Tree of Life Version So Rachel said, "God has judged my cause and also heard my voice—and given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan.

Wikipedia Bible Project And Rachel said, God has judged me (Danani), and also listened to me, and gave me a son, so she named him Dan.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Rachel then said, "God has done me justice! He has heard my prayer and given me a son. That is why she named him Dan.

The Heritage Bible And Rachel said, God has set a straight course for me, and has also attentively heard my voice, and has given me a son; therefore she called his name Dan.

New American Bible (2002) So she gave him her maidservant Bilhah as a consort [Consort: The Hebrew word normally means "wife," but here it refers to a wife of secondary rank, who did not have the full legal rights of an ordinary wife.], and Jacob had intercourse with her. When Bilhah conceived and bore a son, Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; indeed he has heeded my plea and given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan [Dan: explained by the term dannanni, "he has vindicated me."]. Vv. 4–5 are included for context.

New Jerusalem Bible Then Rachel said, 'God has done me justice; yes, he has heard my prayer and given me a son.' Accordingly she named him Dan.

Revised English Bible Then Rachel said, "God has given judgement for me; he has indeed heard me and given me a son"; so she named him Dan.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Rachel said, "God has judged in my favor; indeed he has heard me and given me a son." Therefore she called him Dan [he judged].

The Complete Tanach And Rachel said, "God has judged me, and He has also hearkened to my voice and has given me a son"; so she named him Dan.

God has judged me: He judged me, declared me guilty, and then declared me innocent. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71:7].

exeGesés companion Bible ...and Rachel says, Elohim pleaded my cause and also heard my voice and gives me a son: so she calls his name Dan.

Kaplan Translation Rachel said, 'God has judged (dan) me and has also heard my prayer. He has finally given me a son!' She therefore named the child Dan.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Rachel said, Elohim danani (G-d hath judged me), and hath also heard my voice, and hath given to me ben: therefore called she shmo Dan.

The Scriptures 1998 And Raḥēl said, "Elohim has rightly ruled my case, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." So she called his name Dan.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then Rachel said, "God has judged and vindicated me, and has heard my plea and has given me a son [through my maid]." So she named him Dan (He judged).
The Expanded Bible	Rachel said, "God has judged me innocent [vindicated me]. He has listened to my prayer and has given me a son," so she named him Dan [^C sounds like "he has judged" in Hebrew].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son; therefore called she his name Dan (judge). So Rachel considered the situation as a quarrel between herself and her sister, in which God had now put aside the injustice in giving her a son by proxy.
NET Bible®	Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me. He has responded to my prayer [<i>Heb</i> "and also he has heard my voice." The expression means that God responded positively to Rachel's cry and granted her request.] and given me a son." That is why [Or "therefore."] she named him Dan.
The Pulpit Commentary	And Rachel said, God hath judged me,—"hath chastened me," as in Genesis 15:14 (Ainsworth, Wordsworth); better, "hath procured for me justice," as if reckoning her sterility an injustice by the side of Leah's fecundity (Keil, Lange); or, hath carried through my cause like a patron, i.e. hath vindicated me from the reproach of barrenness (Munster, Rosenmüller); or, hath dealt with me according to his sovereign justice, withholding' from me the fruit of the womb while I was forgetful of my dependence on him, and granting me posterity when I approached him in humble supplication (Murphy), which it is obvious from the next clause that Rachel did—and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son. With undue severity older interpreters regard Rachel as using the Divine name more hypocritarum, who, when their schemes prosper, think that God favors them (Vatablus, Calvin). The employment of Elohim by Jacob and Rachel, supposed to mark the first thirteen verses as belonging to the primitive document (Tuch, Bleek, Kalisch), though by others (Davidson, Colenso) they are ascribed to the Jehovist, is sufficiently explained by Rachers consciousness that in a large measure her handmaid's son was rather the fruit of her own impious device than the gift of Jehovah (Hengstenberg). Therefore called she his name Dan—i.e. "Judge," one decreeing justice, vindex, from טיף, to judge (Gesenius, Keil, Lange, et alii), though, as in other proper names, e.g. Joseph, Zebulun, in which two verbs are alluded to, Michaelis thinks non adjudicando solum, sed et ab audiendo nomen accepisse Danem, and connects it with another verb, a denominative from an Arabic root, signifying to hear.
The Voice	Rachel: God has absolved me. He has heard my plea and has given me a son <i>after all!</i> So this is why Rachel named her son Dan.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Rahhel ^[Ewe] said, Elohiym ^[Powers] will moderate me and he also heard in your voice and he gave to me a son therefore she called out his title Dan ^[Moderator] ,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Rachel, "Adjudicated has the Elohim for me, and, moreover, He hears my voice, and is giving to me a son. Therefore she calls his name Dan.
Darby Translation	And Rachel said, God has done me justice, and has also heard my voice, and given me a son; therefore she called his name Dan.
Green's Literal Translation	And Rachel said, God has judged and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son. So she called his name Dan.
NASB	Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan.

New King James Version	Then Rachel said, "God has judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son."
Third Millennium Bible	And Rachel said, "God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice and hath given me a son." Therefore she called his name Dan [that is, Judging].
Young's Updated LT	And Rachel says, "God has decided for me, and also has listened to my voice, and gives to me a son." Therefore has she called his name Dan.

The gist of this passage: Rachel says that God has given her justice or vindication; and names the son of her maid *Dan*.

Genesis 30:6a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
dîyn (דִּין) [pronounced <i>deen</i>]	<i>to judge, to correctly evaluate, to evaluate, to condemn, to vindicate; to defend [the right of anyone]; to rule, to regulate; to contend with</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1777 BDB #192
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: Then Rachel said, "Elohim has judged me..."

You will note that Rachel is not giving thanks to God. She is using God more like a prop; as if He is her cheerleader.

Genesis 30:6b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168

Genesis 30:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHĠ]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
qôwl (קול) [pronounced kohl]	<i>sound, voice, noise; loud noise, thundering</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6963 BDB #876

Translation: ...and He has also heard my voice.

Rachel had the standing request to have a child; and God heard her voice. The word *to hear* actually means *to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of*. So God did more than simply listen to her; she is saying that God heard her and agreed with her.

Again, she is not thanking God for anything; she is simply letting everyone know that God listened to her.

Genesis 30:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Consequently, He has given me a son."

Now Rachel said, "God has give me a son." But that is not what Bible says. The Bible says that Bilhah bears a child *to Jacob*.

Rachel thus claims vindication. She was Jacob's second wife; and Leah, her sister, had all of the sons, so far. Rachel had none. So, Rachel has a son through her personal maid—a surrogate son—and she presents this as

if God has vindicated her—God sees her side of this story and He has pronounced her right; and this son is proof of that!

Genesis 30:6a-c And Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son.”

We are given the bare-bones discussion between Jacob and Rachel. This may have been a matter that they discussed on several occasions. We are given the summation of what they had to say to one another, as if they had one conversation, and this is how it went down, with Rachel doing all of the talking. That was not how it happened.

Probably over a period of years, the topic of no children was discussed on many occasions. I am speculating here, but it is possible that Rachel said, “Are you sure you are potent? Go back to my sister again and prove it.” And Leah would have another child.

In the end, Rachel has what she believes is a solution—Jacob will take Bilhah, her maid, and have children by her; and Rachel will raise them as her own. It is likely that Jacob, when this was suggested, said, “Listen, Rachel, that is not a good idea.” But she keeps insisting. She eventually got her way in this matter, whether it took a few days, months or years. I think the way that she posed her concerns in the first verse of this chapter boxed Jacob into doing what she wanted.

Genesis 30:6d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘al (עַל) [pronounced <i>‘ahh</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over, by, beside</i>	preposition of proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, ‘al kên (עַל כֵּן) mean <i>so, upon the ground of such conditions, therefore, on this account, on account, for this reason</i> . Literally, these words would be translated <i>upon so, upon therefore, upon then</i> .			
qârâ’ (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Dân (דָּן) [pronounced <i>dawn</i>]	<i>judge and is transliterated Dan</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1835 BDB #192
The NET Bible: <i>The name Dan means “he vindicated” or “he judged.” The name plays on the verb used in the statement which appears earlier in the verse. The verb translated “vindicated” is from דָּן (din, “to judge, to vindicate”), the same verbal root from which the name is derived. Rachel sensed that God was righting the wrong.</i> ¹⁰³			

¹⁰³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

Translation: Therefore, she called his name *Dan*.

She calls the child's name *Dan*. His name means *to judge*. In many ways, she is saying, "We had a disagreement here; but God judged me and He agrees with me."

Dân (דָּן) [pronounced *dawn*] is the active participle of *to judge*. In Rachel's mind, God carefully considered her situation and, even though her womb was closed, He gave a child to her maid. Therefore, God judged Leah and the overall situation, and then blessed Rachel. However, the tribe of Dan is a prominent failure of the tribes, not even mentioned in the listing of the tribes of Israel in the book of Revelation. Furthermore, Jacob, in prophesying their future, called Dan a serpent in the way. It is possible that the false prophet comes from the tribe of Dan.

*Dr. Peter Pett: The depth of Rachel's feelings comes out in her expression of vindication. She has shown that she is not morally to blame after all. He has not withheld a son through Bilhah. She sees her 'son' as God's judgment passed on her situation. He has vindicated her. But there is not the intensity of feeling shown by Leah with her first four children, nor by herself when Joseph is born. Then it is Yahweh, the covenant God, Who acts, and her faith is renewed.*¹⁰⁴

Trapp passes the harshest judgment upon Rachel: *A vile profanation of God's holy name, under an opinion and pretence of piety. So they that, brow-beating their brethren, better than themselves, said, "Let the Lord be glorified"*¹⁰⁵

No doubt, Rachel has felt like she is a second-class wife, an inferior wife, because God has clearly given Leah sons, but she has none. Whether Leah added to this or not with what she said, we don't know. Did Leah get in a little dig now and again? We have no idea. But Leah felt shortchanged in this relationship as well. Rachel felt that she got the short end of the stick, because she produced no sons for her husband; and Leah felt she got the short end of the stick because Jacob obviously did not love her as much. I can guarantee you, if things were turned around, both wives would be equally unhappy.

There are certainly circumstances where it is reasonable to look to God to vindicate oneself. Psalm 35:23–24 *Awake and rouse yourself for my vindication, for my cause, my God and my Lord! Vindicate me, O LORD, my God, according to your righteousness, and let them not rejoice over me!* Psalm 43:1–2 *Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?* See also Lam. 3:59. But that would not be in this situation that we are studying.

Genesis 30:6 Then Rachel said, "Elohim has judged me and He has also heard my voice. Consequently, He has given me a son." Therefore, she called his name *Dan*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:6 Rachel then said, "God has judged me and He has heard my voice. As a result, He has given a son to me." For this reason, she named him *Dan*. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:6 And Rachel said, "God has judged me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son." Therefore she called his name *Dan*.

Rachel names this son *Dan*. The name *Dan* comes from the verb *dîyn* (דָּן) [pronounced *deen*]. *Dîyn* means *to judge, to correctly evaluate, to evaluate, to condemn, to vindicate; to defend [the right of anyone]; to rule, to regulate; to contend with*. Strong's #1777 BDB #192. So no matter what she and Jacob said to one another (and, remember that Jacob is not some spiritual paragon), she says here, "God has *judged* me and, observe, I turned out to be right." What married woman has not thought or said something similar to this to her husband?

¹⁰⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:5–6.

¹⁰⁵ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:6.

Genesis 30:6 Rachel then said, "God has judged me and He has heard my voice. As a result, He has given a son to me." For this reason, she named him *Dan*.

The Name of Dan (Various Commentators)

Carroll: *When Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, bore a son, Rachel named him Dan, meaning "a judge"; "God has judged my side of the case."*¹⁰⁶

The College Press Bible Study: *Rachel named Bilhah's first son Dan ("judge"; "dananni", "he has done justice to me"), i.e., God had procured justice for her, hearkened to her voice and removed the reproach of childlessness.*¹⁰⁷

Guzik: *Jacob's fifth son, born to him through Bilhah, the maid of Rachel, is named by Rachel Dan meaning, "judgment." Because of her own envy, she viewed this child born of the flesh as a victory and a vindication for her.*¹⁰⁸

Keil and Delitzsch: *The first [child] she named Dan, i.e., judge, because God had judged her, i.e., procured her justice, hearkened to her voice (prayer), and removed the reproach of childlessness.*¹⁰⁹

Lange: *Dan (judge, one decreeing justice, index).—She considered the disgrace of her barrenness by the side of Leah an injustice.*¹¹⁰

Matthew Poole: *God has judged me, pleaded my cause, or given sentence for me, as this phrase is oft taken.*¹¹¹

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Judging. The word is to be understood in a good sense as implying the vindication or deliverance of those who are unrighteously condemned or afflicted. (1Samuel 24:15).*¹¹²

John Wesley: *[Rachel] takes a pleasure in giving them names, that carry in them nothing but marks of emulation with her sister. As if she had overcome her, At law, she calls the first son of her handmaid, Dan, Judgment, saying, God hath Judged me - That is, given sentence in my favour.*¹¹³

Whedon: *Dan — Which means a judge, for, as she puts it, God had judged her cause, and vindicated her in this procedure. Observe that Rachel here speaks of God, Elohim, whereas Leah acknowledged Jehovah.*¹¹⁴

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *"And Rachel said, God has vindicated me, and has also heard my voice, and has given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan." Vindication is what she wants. He hasn't vindicated her; she thinks that. This is self-deception. Dan comes from the Hebrew word which means to judge, to contend, to plead. It is her perception. What is she focused on here? She is still focused on the past failure, on the past slights, insults and the deception and everything else. Rather than focusing on God she is consumed with the source of what she thinks the problem is, rather than dealing with the sin in her life.*¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁶ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

¹⁰⁷ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁰⁸ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:5–6.

¹⁰⁹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:1–8.

¹¹⁰ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:1–8 (Exegetical and Critical).

¹¹¹ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:6.

¹¹² *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:6.

¹¹³ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

¹¹⁴ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:6.

¹¹⁵ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:4–6 (a graphic); from [Slide Player](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

Rachel has convinced Jacob that he must do her bidding and have relations with her personal maid. Any child from that union would be considered Rachel's (in her own thinking, according to the culture of that time period).

Rachel believes that the birth of this son vindicates her. It is not clear in what way she believes herself to be vindicated. Does she see herself as vindicated before Jacob? "He did not want to use Bilhah as a surrogate mother, but I convinced him to; and now, her having this child vindicates me." Or, is she vindicated in comparison to her sister, Leah. Previously, Leah is seen as Jacob's primary or most important wife, as she has given him so many sons—but now, Rachel has given him a son as well!

Genesis 30:4-6

So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, and she became pregnant and bore him a son. Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; he has listened to my plea and given me a son." Because of this she named him Dan.

And so conceives again and so bears Bilhah, a handmaid of Rachel, a son second to Jacob. And so says Rachel, "Wrestlings of Elohim I have wrestled with my sister; moreover, I have prevailed." And so she calls his name Naphtali.

Genesis 30:7–8

Again, Bilhah conceived and, [as] the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob. Rachel then said, "I have battled with my sister [With] the battles of Elohim; yet, I have prevailed." Therefore, she named him *Naphtali*.

Later, Bilhah conceived again and, as Rachel's maid, bore another son to Jacob. Rachel said, "I am constantly at odds with my own sister; and yet, I have prevailed." For this reason, she names the son *Naphtali*.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so conceives again and so bears Bilhah, a handmaid of Rachel, a son second to Jacob. And so says Rachel, "Wrestlings of Elohim I have wrestled with my sister; moreover, I have prevailed." And so she calls his name Naphtali.

Targum (Onkelos)

And Bilhah the handmaid of Rachel conceived again, and bare a second son to Jakob. And Rachel said, The Lord hath received my request: when I entreated in my prayer, I desired that I might have offspring as my sister, and also it is given me. And she called his name Naphtali ["Wrestled for."].

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And Bilhah the handmaid of Leah conceived again and bare a second son to Jakob. And Rachel said, With affliction afflicted was I before the Lord in prayer; therefore He hath received my request that I might have a son as my sister, and hath given me two. Even so are my children to be redeemed from the hand of their enemies when they shall afflict themselves in prayer before the Lord; and she called his name Naphtali.

Revised Douay-Rheims	And again Bala conceived and bore <u>another</u> , For whom Rachel said: <u>God has compared me with my sister</u> , and I have prevailed: and she called him Nephtali.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, conceived again, and bore Ya'aqub a second son. Rachel said, "I have besought Mar-Yah, and have pleaded with my sister and I have prevailed." She named him Naphtali.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Bilhah, Rachels maid, conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, I have besought the LORD, and pleaded with my sister, and I have attained my desire; and she called his name Naphtali.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Balla, Rachel's's maid, conceived yet again, and bore a second son to Jacob. And Rachel said, God has helped me, and I contended with my sister and prevailed; and she called his name, Nephthalim.
Significant differences:	The Latin leaves out <i>Rachel's handmaid</i> . The Latin has <i>another</i> rather than a <i>second son to Jacob</i> . Both targums have a lot of additional text and leave out the first 3 phrases spoken by Rachel. The Latin has some additional text and leaves out the first 2 phrases spoken by Rachel. In the Aramaic and Greek, there does not appear to be any reference to <i>wrestling</i> in the first two phrases spoken by Rachel. The Aramaic has <i>pleading</i> ; and the Greek has <i>contending</i> , which is a reasonable translation.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And again Bilhah, Rachel's servant, was with child, and gave birth to a second son. And Rachel said, I have had a great fight with my sister, and I have overcome her: and she gave the child the name Naphtali.
God's Word™	Rachel's slave Bilhah became pregnant again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. Rachel said, "I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won!" So she named him Naphtali [My Struggle].
Good News Bible (TEV)	Bilhah became pregnant again and bore Jacob a second son. Rachel said, "I have fought a hard fight with my sister, but I have won"; so she named him Naphtali.
The Message	Rachel's maid Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. Rachel said, "I've been in an all-out fight with my sister—and I've won." So she named him Naphtali (Fight).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When Bilhah and Jacob had a second son, Rachel said, "I've struggled hard with my sister, and I've won!" So she named the boy Naphtali.
The Living Bible	Then Bilhah, Rachel's servant girl, became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. Rachel named him Naphtali (meaning "Wrestling"), for she said, "I am in a fierce contest with my sister and I am winning!"
New Century Version	Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. Rachel said, "I have struggled hard with my sister, and I have won." So she named that son Naphtali.
New Life Version	Bilhah, the woman who served Rachel, was going to have another child. And she gave birth to another son for Jacob. So Rachel said, "I have fought a hard fight with my sister, and I have won." She gave him the name Naphtali.
New Living Translation	Then Bilhah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a second son. Rachel named him Naphtali, for she said, "I have struggled hard with my sister, and I'm winning!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Balla (Rachel's handmaid) got pregnant again and bore a second son to Jacob. And Rachel said: 'God has helped me... I fought with my sister and won.' So she named him NaphTali (Struggle).
------------------------	--

International Standard V	Rachel's servant conceived again and bore a second son for Jacob, so Rachel said, "I've been through a mighty struggle with my sister and won." She named him Naphtali [The Heb. name <i>Naphtali</i> means <i>my struggle</i>].
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Afterwards Bala conceived again and bore a second son; of him Rachel said, God has matched me like a wrestler against my sister, and I have won the bout, so she called him Nephthali, Wrestling.
Translation for Translators	Later, Rachel's slave Bilhah became pregnant again and gave birth to another son for Jacob. Then Rachel said, "I have had a great struggle to have children like my older sister, but truly I have a son." So she named him Naphtali, <i>which sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'struggle.'</i>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Bilhah, Rachel's maid servant, was to conceive, and bore forth to Jacob, a second son. Rachel was to say: With he of mighty ones am I to have wrestled, a wrestling against my sister, and am to have prevailed. She was calling his name Naphtali.
Conservapedia	Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel, fell pregnant again, and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. Rachel said, "I have wrestled a mighty bout with my sister, and have won." So she named him Naphtali. Which in Hebrew means "I wrestled." The Hebrew is repeated for emphasis here.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Again Bilah the servant of Rachel conceived and bore a son to Jacob, when S Rachel exclaimed, "I struggled with God ; I also struggled with my sister ;" so she called his name Naphthali.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Bilha Rahels maid conceived again, and bare Jacob another son. And Rahel said. God is turned, and I have made a change with my sister, and have gotten the upper hand. And she called his name: Naphtali.
H. C. Leupold	And Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, conceived and bore a second son to Jacob. And Rachel said: Wrestlings with God have I wrestled together with my sister and I have prevailed, and she called his name Naphtali (Wrestling).
Tree of Life Version	Then Rachel's female servant became pregnant again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. So Rachel said, "I've surely wrestled greatly with my sister—also I've won." So she named him Naphtali.
Urim-Thummim Version	And Bilhah Rachel's female slave became pregnant again, and gendered Jacob a second son. Then Rachel said, with great contentions have I grappled with my sister, and I have prevailed, and she called his name Naphtali.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And she conceived again, and Bilha, Rachel's maid-servant, bore a second son for Jacob. And Rachel said, "I have wrestled (Niphtalti) my sister with contortions worthy of Gods, and I have also won;" and she named him Naphtali.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	Rachel's maidservant Bilhah conceived again and bore a second son, and Rachel said, "I engaged in a fateful struggle with my sister, and I prevailed." So she named him Naphtali. Naphtali: explained by the phrase "naptule elohim niptalti," literally, "in a divine wrestling match I have wrestled," perhaps implying the concept of an ordeal; hence the above rendering, I engaged in a fateful struggle.
New American Bible (2011)	Rachel's maidservant Bilhah conceived again and bore a second son for Jacob, and Rachel said, "I have wrestled strenuously with my sister, and I have prevailed." So she named him Naphtali [Naphtali : explained by the Hebrew term <i>naftulim</i> , lit., "contest" or "struggle."].
New Jerusalem Bible	Again Rachel's slave-girl Bilhah conceived and gave birth to a second son by Jacob. Then Rachel said, 'I have fought a fateful battle with my sister, and I have won!' So she named him Naphtali.

Revised English Bible Rachel's slave-girl Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob another son. Rachel said, "I have devised a fine trick against my sister, and it has succeeded"; so she named him Naphtali.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Bilhah Rachel's slave-girl conceived again and bore Ya'akov a second son. Rachel said, "I have wrestled mightily with my sister and won," and called him Naftali [my wrestling].

The Complete Tanach And Rachel said, "[With] divine bonds I have been joined to my sister; I have also prevailed"; so she named him Naftali.

divine bonds: Heb. מִיְהִלָּא יְלוּתְפָנִי. Menachem ben Saruk (p. 147) classified it in the grouping of Num. 19:15, "a cover bound (לִיתֵּפֶ) ." With bonds from the Omnipresent, I have joined my sister to merit children. But I interpret it as an expression of "perverse and crooked (לִתְלַתְפֹּנִי)." (Deut. 32:5). I have stubbornly pleaded many tortuous pleas to the Omnipresent to be equal to my sister.

I have also prevailed: He yielded to my importunities. Onkelos, however, rendered it as an expression of prayer (הִלַּכְתִּי) : יְתִלְתְּפֵנִי מִיְהִלָּא יְלוּתְפָנִי. Requests beloved to Him were accepted on my behalf, and I was answered like my sister.

יְתִלְתְּפֵנִי: means my prayer was accepted. There are many aggadic midrashim that interpret this phrase with the method of notarikon, (i.e., each group of letters represents a word).

exeGesés companion Bible And Bilhah the maid of Rachel conceives again and births Yaaqov a second son: and Rachel says, With wrestlings of Elohim I wrestled with my sister and I prevail! - and she calls his name Naphtali.

Hebraic Roots Bible And Bilhah, Rachel's slave-girl, conceived again, and bore a second son to Jacob. And Rachel said, With struggles of Elohim I have struggled with my sister; yea, I have prevailed. And she called his name Naphtali.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, "A fateful contest I waged with my sister; yes, and I have prevailed." So she named him Naphtali.

Kaplan Translation Rachel's handmaid Bilhah became pregnant again and had a second son by Jacob. Rachel said, 'I have been twisted around with my sister through all of God's roundabout ways (naphtuley), but I have finally won [(Rashi). A difficult phrase, also interpreted, 'I have offered many prayers to God regarding my sister, and I have been answered.' (Targum; Rashi); 'With divine bonds I have been bound to my sister' (Menachem ben Seruk in Rashi); 'With divine struggles I have struggled with my sister' (Ibn Ezra); or 'Divine mysteries have been hidden from me regarding my sister' (Malbim).]' She therefore named the child Naphtali.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And Bilhah shifchat Rachel conceived again, and bore Ya'akov ben sheni. And Rachel said, With naftulei Elohim nifalti (with wrestlings of G-d have I wrestled) with my ahot, and I have prevailed: and she called shmo Naphtali.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings [in prayer to God] I have struggled with my sister and have prevailed." So she named him Naphtali (my wrestlings).

The Expanded Bible Bilhah ·became pregnant [conceived] again and gave Jacob a second son. Rachel said, "I have ·struggled [or wrestled] hard with my sister, and I have won." So she named that son Naphtali [C sounds like "my struggle/wrestling" in Hebrew].

Kretzmann's Commentary	And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed; and she called his name Naphtali (one obtained by wrestling), In the struggle between herself and Leah, yea, between herself and God, Rachel had succeeded in obtaining also this son. Her words indicate her longing to share in the patriarchal blessing, although there is still a measure of self-will in her statement.
NET Bible®	Bilhah, Rachel's servant, became pregnant again and gave Jacob another son [<i>Heb</i> "and she became pregnant again and Bilhah, the servant of Rachel, bore a second son for Jacob."]. Then Rachel said, "I have fought a desperate struggle with my sister, but I have won [<i>Heb</i> "[with] a mighty struggle I have struggled with my sister, also I have prevailed."]. So she named him Naphtali.
The Pulpit Commentary	And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, literally, wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my sister, meaning, by "wrestlings of Elohim;" not great wrestlings in rivalry, with Leah (A.V. Vatablus, Ainsworth, Rosenm. ller, Calvin), nor wrestlings in the cause of God, as being unwilling to leave the founding of the nation to her sister alone (Knobel), but wrestlings with God in prayer (Delitzsch, Lange, Murphy, Kalisch), wrestlings regarding Elohim and his grace (Hengstenberg, Keil), in which she at the same time contended with her sister, to whom apparently that grace had been hitherto restricted—and I have prevailed (scarcely in the sense of achieving a victory over Leah, who had already borne four sons, but in the sense of drawing the Divine favor, though only indirectly, towards herself): and she called his name Naphtali—i.e. "My Wrestling."
The Voice	Rachel's servant Bilhah soon conceived again and gave birth to a second son for Jacob. Rachel: I have had to wrestle <i>with my own sister as I've wrestled with God</i> , but I have prevailed. So Rachel named this son Naphtali.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and she conceived yet again and Bilhah ^[Wear out] , the maid of Rahhel ^[Ewe] , brought forth a second son for Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] , and Rahhel ^[Ewe] said, wrestlings of powers I was entwined with my sister also, I was able and she called out his title Naphtali ^[Wrestling] ,...
Concordant Literal Version	And pregnant is she again, and bearing is Bilhah, Rachel's maid, a second son for Jacob. And saying is Rachel, "With twistings of the Elohim am I twisted with my sister, and moreover, I prevail. And calling is she his name Naphtali.
NASB	Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." And she named him Naphtali.
Third Millennium Bible	And Bilhah, Rachel's maid, conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, "With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed." And she called his name Naphtali [that is, My wrestling].
Young's Updated LT	And Bilhah, Rachel's maid-servant, conceives again, and bears a second son to Jacob. And Rachel says, "With wrestlings of God I have wrestled with my sister, yea, I have prevailed;" and she calls his name Naphtali.

The gist of this passage: Bilhah, Rachel's personal servant, gives birth to a second child. Rachel pictures herself as struggling with her older sister; and therefore names the child *Naphtali*, which means *wrestling, struggling*.

Genesis 30:7

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
ôwd (דוּעַ) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (דָּלָה) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
Bil'hâh (בִּילְהָב) [pronounced <i>bihl-HAW</i>]	<i>terror, dread, destruction; trouble; transliterated Bilhah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1090 BDB #117
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	ewe and is transliterated <i>Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
bên (בֶּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
shênîy (שֵׁנִי) [pronounced <i>shay-NEE</i>]	<i>second, the second; two, both, double, twice; secondly; in addition, again. When only two items are named, it can be rendered [the] other</i>	adjective singular numeral ordinal	Strong's #8145 BDB #1041
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: Again, Bilhah conceived and, [as] the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob.

Leah had 4 sons; and Rachel had one son by Bilhah. Bilhah has another son, and this obviously means that she and Jacob had relations again. We do not know the story behind that—was this initiated by Jacob or was this

initiated by Rachel? Were there other sons born in the meantime? We know the first son was a result of Rachel's approach. I suspect that the second son was a result of Rachel urging Jacob to employ Bilhah again.

The text is not clear that this second son is born right after the first. Did Rachel, a month after the birth, say, "Let's go for #2 now"? Or did events transpire (like Leah offering up her own maid to Jacob); and that caused her to offer Bilhah to Jacob a second time? Personally, I lean toward Leah's maid becoming a part of the surrogate scene first, to cause Rachel to spring back into action. However, that is all conjecture; we really do not know exactly when this second son came along.

In the next verse, Rachel will name the child. This suggests that this child was a result of her maneuvering.

Genesis 30:7 And Rachel's slave woman Bilhah conceived again, and bore Jacob a second son.

Rachel decides that she needs to have another son by means of her maid, and she choreographs this again.

What seems to be the case is, Rachel has certainly accepted the idea that she is married with Jacob and her sister. Therefore, additional relations with her maid are not as difficult for her and Abram's (Abraham's) relation with Hagar was for Sarai (Sarah).

Genesis 30:7 **Again, Bilhah conceived and, [as] the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob. Therefore, she named him Naphtali.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:8a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Râchêl (רַחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
naph ^{et} ûw ^l wîym (מִלּוּחָפְנִים) [pronounced nahf-too-LEEM]	<i>striving, contentions; battles; wrestlings</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #5319 BDB #836
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
pâthal (פָּתַל) [pronounced paw-THAHL]	<i>to be twisted; to wrestle; to be crafty, to be deceitful</i>	1 st person singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #6617 BDB #836
'im (עִם) [pronounced ġeem]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Genesis 30:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âchôwth (אָחֻוֹת) [pronounced aw-KHOWTH]	sister, half-sister; relative; beloved [bride]; figuratively of intimate connection; metaphorically for relationship between Israel and Judah; another	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #269 BDB #27

The NET Bible: *The phrase "mighty struggle" reads literally "struggles of God." The plural participle "struggles" reflects the ongoing nature of the struggle, while the divine name is used here idiomatically to emphasize the intensity of the struggle. See J. Skinner, Genesis (ICC), 387.¹¹⁶*

Translation: Rachel then said, "I have battled with my sister [with] the battles of Elohim;..."

It is clear that all of these people have a relationship with God and consider God in their lives. However, it is clear that Rachel is using God here. Her disagreements with Leah, her sister, she sees as being so contentious that they fought with one another as the battles of God. Perhaps an overestimation of the situation. However, women under the same roof sometimes do have some incredible contentions.

Genesis 30:8a Rachel then said, "I have battled with my sister [with] the battles of Elohim;..."

Rachel's Struggles (or, wrestlings) (Various Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *"With my wrestlings I have wrestled" in the Hebrew text literally reads "wrestlings with God, I have wrestled (with my sister)" since the Hebrew contains the noun naphtulim, "wrestlings," which is followed by the noun Elohim, "God" and the verb pathal, "to wrestle." Rachel's statement means that she wrestled in prayer with God to give her a child through Bilhah in order to be victorious over Leah.*

Wenstrom continues: *Of course, God did not give Bilhah a child based on Rachel's prayer because it was offered with wrong motivation and was against His will but rather God gave Bilhah a child based upon His permissive will. The statement made by Rachel on the occasion of the birth of Bilhah's second son is reflective of her true spiritual state at this time since it appears that she saw herself in a great wrestling match, not with God, but with her sister.*

Westrom continues: *She states that she has triumphed over Leah by Bilhah giving birth to Naphtali. This is a ridiculous statement by Rachel since how can two adopted sons win out over four of Leah's sons? Therefore, Rachel's statement in Genesis 30:8 indicates that she erroneously believed that God was on her side with the birth of these two boys, Dan and Naphtali and has given her the victory over her sister Leah.¹¹⁷*

Gill: *And Rachel said, with great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister,.... Or, "with the wrestlings of God" (a), wrestling and striving in prayer with God; being vehement and importunate in her petitions to him, that she might have children as well as her sister: some render it, "I used the craftinesses of God", or "great craftiness with my sisters"; [perhaps she saw herself as being particularly crafty] by giving her maid Bilhah to her husband, and having children by her.¹¹⁸*

¹¹⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

¹¹⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 468); accessed September 9, 2017.

¹¹⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:8.

Rachel's Struggles (or, wrestlings) (Various Commentators)

Whedon: Her words are, literally: *wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my sister*; also I have prevailed...She assumes to have struggled as with God for this victory, and glories in a seeming victory over her sister. But what a vain boasting!¹¹⁹

H. C. Leupold: *it merely looks like rivalry between two sisters, there is a higher element involved on the part of both: they strive with one another in rivalry and with God in prayer. This is what Rachel means by her remark, "wrestlings with God have I wrestled together with my sister."*

H. C. Leupold continues: *In the expression naphtûley 'elohîm the construct relationship represents a prepositional relationship which immediately afterward in the case of the sister is expressed by the preposition 'îm. To regard the use of the divine name in this connection as merely a device for expressing a kind of superlative, as does K. S. (3091), is the shallow approach of rationalism. That such a construction may replace the prepositional construction is apparent from K. S. 336 d. "Wrestlings with God," however, in the last analysis are wrestlings for God's mercy. We may wonder that one and the same situation may present such a tangle of jealousy and faith; but the soul's workings are often just such a tangled thing. The name given to the son, "Naphtali" ("Wrestling"), preserves the foster mother's sentiment for later consideration.¹²⁰*

H. C. Leupold remarks: *They who find fault with some of these names as not being strictly etymological forget what popular etymologies are in the habit of doing: they work very freely with words.¹²¹*

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

No doubt, both sisters believe that they have been in a great struggle with one another. No doubt that on any given day, an interview with either sister would produce the remark, "Every day is just such a struggle with her."

Is there any connection here between Rachel claiming to have wrestled or battled with her sister; and God wrestling with Jacob in a later chapter? The words are different, and, more importantly, the combatants are quite different as well.

Genesis 30:8b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
yâkôl (יָכֹל) [also yâkôwl (יָכֹוּל)] [pronounced yaw-COAL]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	1 st person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407

Translation: ...yet, I have prevailed."

This second child Rachel cites as victory over Leah.

¹¹⁹ Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:8.

¹²⁰ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

¹²¹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Genesis 30:7–8b Later, Bilhah conceived again and, as Rachel’s maid, bore another son to Jacob. Rachel said, “I am constantly at odds with my own sister; and yet, I have prevailed.”

Rachel proclaims, “I have prevailed” (Many Commentators)

Matthew Poole: *I have prevailed*; which was not true; for her sister exceeded her both in the number of her children, and in her propriety in them, being the fruit of her own womb, not of her handmaid’s, as Rachel’s were. Here is an instance how partial judges most persons are in their own causes and concernments.¹²²

Gill: [S]he strove in her desires and prayers to have another child before her sister had; in that she prevailed.¹²³

Since having children by means of her personal servant is her idea, Rachel must proclaim the end results as a success.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Very likely, when she encouraged Jacob to have relations with Leah, Leah was not too happy with this idea; and no doubt, they discussed this with great passion. Rachel possibly said, “We will let God decide; if a child is born, that will show that I am right.” That is what this statement appears to indicate. However, bear in mind, just because someone says something like this, it doesn’t mean that is what is really going on.

Furthermore, Leah has 4 sons of her own at this time; and Rachel has two surrogate sons. Hard to understand this as *prevailing*.

Genesis 30:7–8b Again, Bilhah conceived and, [as] the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob. Rachel then said, “I have battled with my sister [With] the battles of Elohim; yet, I have prevailed.”

The Rivalry Between Rachel and Leah (Various Commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *A bitter and intense rivalry existed between them, all the more from their close relationship as sisters; and although they occupied separate apartments, with their families, as is the uniform custom where a plurality of wives obtains, and the husband and father spends a day with each in regular succession, that did not allay their mutual jealousies. The evil lies in the system, which being a violation of God’s original ordinance, cannot yield happiness.*¹²⁴

The Geneva Bible: *The arrogancy of man’s nature appears in that she condemns her sister, after she has received this benefit from God to bear children.*¹²⁵

Dr. Peter Pett: *The rivalry between the two sisters comes out vividly. Rachel feels that she is having a great battle with her sister, and that she has now succeeded. The wrestlings must be seen as through prayer. She has fought for her position before God. Jacob will later be seen as wrestling with God although the Hebrew word is different (Genesis 32:24).*¹²⁶

Guzik, on the relationship of the sisters: *The hostility between Leah and Rachel is as obvious as it is painful. It must have been terrible living in a home where one wife believed the other had stolen her husband from her.*¹²⁷

¹²² Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:8.

¹²³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:8.

¹²⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

¹²⁵ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; courtesy of e-sword; 1599; Genesis 30:8.

¹²⁶ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:7–8.

¹²⁷ David Guzik’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:14–18.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Naph ^e tâlîy (נַפְתָּלִי) [pronounced <i>nahf^e-taw-EE</i>]	<i>wrestling; possibly cord, thread; twisted; transliterated Naphtali</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #5321 BDB #836

The NET Bible: *The name Naphtali (נַפְתָּלִי, naftali) must mean something like “my struggle” in view of the statement Rachel made in the preceding clause. The name plays on this earlier statement, “[with] a mighty struggle I have struggled with my sister.”*¹²⁸

Translation: *Therefore, she named him Naphtali.*

Rachel pictures her relationship with her sister as a constant struggle and that this child was some sort of a victory.

Rachel and Leah are both going to be greatly concerned with fertility and with providing more children for Jacob. That will be one of the topics in this chapter; and Rachel will later steal some small deity statues from her father, which statues are thought to be related to fertility.

Occasionally in Scripture, El, Elohîm or Yahweh are used as adjectives similar to our word *divine*. Some of these are used by the Holy Spirit as in the case of *the sons of God* in Genesis 6 and Job 1 to denote angels (who are created beings from the hand of God and not conceived from other angels). Other times this use of God's name is rather casual, bordering on a profane use, as it is here. Rachel is just feeling sorry for herself and almost without reason. Her direct quote of *wrestlings of God* shows a flair for the dramatic, out of proportion to the reality of the situation.

Naphtali means *wrestling* because Rachel saw herself in a struggle with her sister over all these years (how awful to feel as though you are in competition with your sister for most or all of your life. And what made it worse is that Leah, during her last birth, finally became relaxed about the situation. They both had something that the other did not. Rachel had the love of Jacob and Leah had his sons. Both focused on what the other one had and what they did not have. Naphtali, born of Bilhah, was practically never mentioned again in Scripture. As a person, he did not stand out and no one who was anyone in the Old or New Testament came from the loins of Naphtali (not knowingly, anyway).

¹²⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

The correct way to deal with this is for Jacob and Rachel to wait on God for their children. Abraham when he finally believed God and waited on God, was greatly blessed. What he did to solve the problem earlier only helped to confuse the issue and to cause problems for later Israel.

Rachel and Jacob will do likewise. Now these are the tribes of Israel and God expected in eternity past for all of this to occur. However, this was not God's first choice. It is likely that all Jacob's children should come through Leah and Rachel.

Genesis 30:8 And Rachel said, "With the wrestlings of God I have wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed. And she called his name Naphtali."

Genesis 30:8 Rachel then said, "I have battled with my sister [With] the battles of Elohim; yet, I have prevailed." Therefore, she named him *Naphtali*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

She names this young man *Naphtali*, which means *wrestling, contention, a battle*. He is, therefore, the result of many disagreements that Rachel had with Leah and with Jacob. Even with sisters, marriages are not smooth with two women under the same roof.¹²⁹

You will notice that the marriage dynamic is quite interesting. Leah was thinking about her relationship to Jacob when naming her children; but Rachel was thinking about her competition with Leah when naming her surrogate children.

The Bible again gives us the actual situation regarding Jacob, Rachel and Leah. There is no paradise here of Jacob being married to two sisters, and interacting with their maids. When Rachel names her surrogate son *wrestling, contention, a battle*; you know that things are not running smoothly in this household. This is not Ozzie and Harriet (or William and Mary). Having two wives and two mistresses is not a smooth ride.

Rachel wants to have children herself; she is not producing children; and she feels angry at Leah and at Jacob for this. She takes this anger out on Jacob, accusing him of somehow not giving her children. Then she decides, "You will give me a child by my maid, Bilhah." This no doubt caused more family discussion. Jacob appears to have intelligently bowed out of these discussions; and the strife appears to have been between Rachel and Leah, as she speaks of *wrestling with my sister*.

Genesis 30:7–8 Again, Bilhah conceived and, [as] the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob. Rachel then said, "I have battled with my sister [With] the battles of Elohim; yet, I have prevailed." Therefore, she named him *Naphtali*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:7–8 Later, Bilhah conceived again and, as Rachel's maid, bore another son to Jacob. Rachel said, "I am constantly at odds with my own sister; and yet, I have prevailed." For this reason, she names the son *Naphtali*. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:7–8 Later, Bilhah conceived again and, as Rachel's maid, bore another son to Jacob. Rachel said, "I am constantly at odds with my own sister; and yet, I have prevailed." For this reason, she names the son *Naphtali*.

The Name of *Naphtali* (Various Commentators)

Carroll: *When Naphtali, the second son, was born to her handmaid, Rachel names him "wrestling." She had wrestled in prayer to God for still additional hold on the husband.*¹³⁰

¹²⁹ They probably lived in separate tents.

¹³⁰ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

The Name of *Naphtali* (Various Commentators)

Lange: *The wrestlings of God could only be in the wrestlings of prayer, as we afterward see from Jacob's wrestlings, through which he becomes Israel.*¹³¹

Gill: *Naphtali...signifies "my wrestling", being a child she had been striving and wrestling for.*¹³²

Matthew Poole: *Heb. With wrestlings of God; either with great and hard wrestlings or strivings, or by wrestling with God in fervent prayer, and by God's grace and strength.*¹³³

Guzik: *Jacob's sixth son, born to him through Bilhah, the maid of Rachel, is named Naphtali by Rachel, meaning "wrestle." Relationships in this home have broken down to the point where Rachel will openly acknowledge this "baby competition" between her and her sister by naming the new baby wrestle. **With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and indeed I have prevailed:** This seems strange. How do two sons prevail over four? Perhaps she meant it in the sense that now Leah seemed to have stopped having children.*¹³⁴

Keil and Delitzsch: *[She named] the second [child] Naphtali, i.e., my conflict, or my fought one, for "fightings of God, she said, have I fought with my sister, and also prevailed." ...[these are the] wrestlings of prayer she had wrestled with Leah.*¹³⁵

Lange: *Naphtali.—According to Knobel: wrestler; according to others: my wrestling, or even, the one for whom I wrestled. Delitzsch: the one obtained by wrestling. The LXX place it in the plural: Naphtalim, wrestlings. Fürst regards it as the abbreviated form of Naphtalijah, the wrestling of Jehovah. Against the two last explanations may be urged the deviation from the form Naphtalim, wrestlings; and according to the analogy of Dan, vindicator, the most probable explanation is, my wrestler. As laying the foundation for the name, Rachel says: **With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister.—The wrestlings of God could only be in the wrestlings of prayer, as we afterwards see from Jacob's wrestlings, through which he becomes Israel. Delitzsch, too, explains: These are the wrestlings of prayer, in the assaults and temptations of faith.***¹³⁶ Lange had more to say, but I figured that this was enough.

Benson: *In battle, she calls the next Naphtali, wrestlings, saying, I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed — See what roots of bitterness envy and strife are, and what mischief they make among relations!*¹³⁷

John Wesley: *In battle, she [Rachel] calls the next Naphtali, Wrestlings, saying, I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed - See what roots of bitterness envy and strife are, and what mischief they make among relations!*¹³⁸

Whedon: *Naphtali...means, my wrestling, in allusion to the struggle of rivalry between herself and Leah.*¹³⁹

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *"And Rachel said, **With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.**" Naphtali means to wrestle, to struggle. So her focus is on the conflict, not on God's grace and provision.*¹⁴⁰

¹³¹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹³² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:8.

¹³³ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:8.

¹³⁴ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:7–8.

¹³⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:1–8.

¹³⁶ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:1–8 (Exegetical and Critical).

¹³⁷ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:3.

¹³⁸ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:3.

¹³⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:8.

¹⁴⁰ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017.

The Name of *Naphtali* (Various Commentators)

The NEV Commentary: *The names [of these sons] reflect how they wished to see things, rather than how they were in reality. For Rachel hardly "prevailed" just because her maid had another son. Leah had more male sons at this point and 'won' the race to get the most. It's an example of where people drag "God" into their interpersonal struggles; her struggle with her sister became a struggle with God. She may not have "prevailed" as she meant, in a human sense. But the similarities with Jacob's wrestling with God continue when we realize that "prevailed" is the same word used of how Jacob did "prevail" over "God" in the form of the Angel he wrestled with (Gen. 32:25,28). He started off trying to force his way upon God, but because he repented, he did in another sense prevail over the Divine judgment which was what Jacob deserved; Jacob prevailed over God in that he asked for grace and was granted it, and in this he becomes our example (Hos. 12:4 s.w.). Rachel's struggle with God perhaps went according to the same pattern.*¹⁴¹

Lange's observations on this: *[H]ow can Rachel speak of a victory over her sister rich in children? Leah has left bearing, while Bilhah her maid, begins to bear; at the same time, Rachel includes as much as possible in her words in order to overpersuade herself. [She believes she has overcome—Gosman]. Hence, still, at Joseph's birth, she could say: Now (not before) God has taken away my reproach.*¹⁴²

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Rachel and Leah were very different in the naming of their respective sons. Rachel spoke of being vindicated by God (v. 6) and wrestling with her sister and prevailing in v. 8 (with her two surrogate sons). Leah's focus was clearly on her husband for her first 3 sons (although this was based upon competition with Rachel—Genesis 29:32–34); but she seems to come to at least a momentary time of peace when she praises God with her 4th son (Genesis 29:35).

Keil and Delitzsch make something of Leah using the personal name of God (*Y^ehowah*); and Rachel using the less personal form (*Elohim*).¹⁴³ However, Rachel uses the personal name of God in v. 24; a Leah uses *Elohim* in vv. 17–20. Although, I have not yet put together a reason why a person uses these different names (even though I do that all the time, simply to vary my writing); I don't think that we can simply conclude that Leah had a better relationship with God, since she used His personal name most of the time. Or maybe we can. ☺

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:4–8 *So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan. And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So Rachel said, "God's wrestling match I have wrestled against my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." And she named him Naphtali.*

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:4–8

1. Rachel proceeds with her sinful trend of Adam plan to have children through the agency of her female servant.
2. Jacob cooperates in this venture, and has sex with Bilhah.
3. She conceives and 9 mos. later gives birth to a son.
4. Rachel demonstrates her self will and disorientation in the naming of the boy.
5. She names him Dan, due to the fact that her dubious scheme was successful.
6. She fully believed that since her plan was successful, this demonstrated clearly that God was for her.
7. She wanted vindication before her contemporaries, and since Bilhah had this child she perceived this

¹⁴¹ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

¹⁴² *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁴³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:1–8.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:4–8

- as God's stamp of approval.
8. Her statement that God had heard her voice indicates that she had made this issue a matter of prayer.
 9. She prayed about her human viewpoint solution to her problem, and then proceeded with her human viewpoint solution.
 10. Because it did not meet with failure, she concluded that God evaluated this situation just as she did.
 11. This demonstrates maximum disorientation and the delusion which the Sinful trend of Adam can produce in the believer.
 12. Her plan violated the sanctity of marriage, and was in no fashion the will of God.
 13. Because He permitted it, she wrongly concludes that it was His directive will.
 14. She boasts that she is now vindicated by this human viewpoint action, and all should know that God is for her.
 15. She is completely deluded by her own SINFUL TREND OF ADAM.
 16. Like the Corinthians, she is a perfect example of the sarkikos believer. ICor. 3:1-3
 17. When the believer does not understand the issues of doctrine clearly and therefore spends too much time out of fellowship, spiritual growth is stunted.
 18. Beyond that they fall under certain delusions and perceive that they are just fine in terms of God and His plan for their life, even though they are completely wrong.
 19. They begin to rationalize that since God has not stopped them and their Sinful trend of Adam plans and schemes meet with a certain amount of success, that God must be blessing their case.
 20. The mistakenly assume their folly to be their vindication.
 21. The believer does not need to search for vindication in this life, God is the only one who can truly evaluate each believer.
 22. One fact each believer must keep before themselves is the fact that God is the only one who can accurately judge me. ICor. 4:4-5
 23. Not only can you not fully evaluate yourself, you certainly cannot completely evaluate other believers. Rom. 14:4,10-13
 24. This action of seeking children through her servant did not stop after the first child.
 25. Both Rachel and Jacob continue with this practice.
 26. Once again Bilhah becomes pregnant and gives birth to another son.
 27. Both of these children were taken by Rachel as her own, and she acted as the mother.
 28. The naming of the second child gives further proof of Rachel's Sinful trend of Adam view of things.
 29. She names the child Naphtali, which means wrestling.
 30. She obviously considers her sister an enemy and a rival for her place in Jacob's life.
 31. She expresses the idea that she and her sister have been wrestling, and that she represents the side of God in the matter.
 32. Rachel is completely deluded into thinking that God is for her in this activity, and somehow against her sister.
 33. She claims to have won the match, which she was fighting for God.
 34. As she struggles under the Sinful trend of Adam to have what God has denied her in grace, she comes up with these strange sinful trend of Adam rationalizations for her activity.
 35. If she would but just wait and be patient, she would eventually have children in the proper manner. vs 22
 36. This became such a big issue to her, that she allowed it to blind her to reality.
 37. She would eventually die in childbirth. Gen. 35:16ff

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:1–8 Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die."

Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

She said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children." So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan.

Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." And she named him Naphtali.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:1–8: Rachel the Instigator

1. The only conversation recorded in Genesis between Jacob and Rachel is an heated exchange between husband and wife!
2. The sin in the background that prompted this sinful trend of Adam activity is the sin of jealousy/envy.
3. Leah was blessed by God with four sons to Rachel's none.
4. Rachel did not rejoice in her sister's good fortune but instead became captive to the sin of jealousy.
5. Jealousy is a devastating sin when given free reign (cf. Prov. 27:4 "Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?").
6. Some examples from the NT:
 - 1) Acts 13:45 "But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began contradicting the things spoken by Paul, and were blaspheming.";
 - 2) 1Cor. 3:3 "for you are still carnal. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not carnal, and are you not walking like men?";
 - 3) 2Cor. 12:20 "For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you a to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;";
 - 4) Gal. 5:19-20 "Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.";
 - 5) Jam. 3:14-16 "But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.";
 - 6) 1Cor. 13:4 "Love is patient, love is kind, is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant";
 - 7) 1Pet. 2:1 "Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation.").
7. Envy was the motivator behind the Jewish assault upon Christ (Matt. 27:18 "For He knew that because of envy they had handed Him over.").
8. This is the first explicit mention of this sin in Scripture.
9. This scene like the last (cf. 29:31 "when Yahweh saw Leah's plight, He was merciful") begins with someone seeing something ("When Rachel saw").
10. Rachel reacted to her barrenness rather than rejoice in her sister's good fortune (NT admonition to "rejoice with those who rejoice").
11. These two sisters should have lived in peace and should have encouraged one another to acclimate to their respective testing.
12. Rachel under extreme frustration with her childless state irrationally confronts her husband as if he were somehow to blame for her state (v. 1).
13. Her desperate desire for children and her placing the blame on her husband smacks of an attack on God.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:1–8: Rachel the Instigator

14. Continual prayer and patience should have been Rachel's response to her situation.
15. Her "[Give me children, or else I die!](#)" would prove prophetic as she would die in childbirth bearing Jacob's youngest son Benjamin (35:18).
16. Jacob's angry reply to Rachel's ridiculous assertion was a spiritually sound reply and one that his wife should have been occupied with (v.2).
17. She should have gone to God with her complaint instead of a desperate attempt to find a scapegoat.
18. The story of Sarah and Rebekah suffering the same sort of testing should have been Rachel's comfort, but no, she acts out her frustration with carnality.
19. Jacob's "[Am It in God's place](#)" has a parallel when the king of Israel was faced with an impossible demand (1Kgs. 5:7).
20. Jacob's rebuke of his wife's stupidity bore no fruit as she proceeded to engage in her own solution (v.3).
21. We have her an clear example of a believer who was unwilling to wait on God to bring something to pass.
22. In ancient Near Eastern times the practice of surrogate marriages is well documented.
23. The pattern here follows the expediency of Sarah with respect to her maid Hagar.
24. Rachel uses the same semi-technical verb as Sarah in v. 3 translated "obtain."
25. The verb is banah ('to build') followed by the preposition min with the 3rd feminine suffix referring to her maid, Bilhah.
26. The expression could be rendered: "[that I may build up from her.](#)"
27. The expression "[that she my bear on my knees](#)" is a colorful way of saying that the son born to Bilhah will be adopted.
28. Also, it refers to Rachel acting as midwife.
29. The only other use of this expression is in 50:23.
30. Rachel's term for "maid" is amah which term is used for the relationship of a slave-girl to her master while the term shipechah, used of the relationship between a maid and her mistress (cf. 16:1,2,3,5,6,8; 30:4,7,9,10,12,18).
31. So Rachel gives Jacob Bilhah as a slave-wife, just as Sarah did with Hagar.
32. Jacob for reasons not specified is compliant with his wife's proposal (vv. 4-5).
33. There is no condemnation of Jacob's compliance ("[Jacob went in to her.](#)"), unlike the words "[And Abram listened/obeyed the voice of Sarai.](#)"
34. It could have been pity or historical precedent or something else but whatever the case Jacob like Abraham goes along with the designs of his wife.
35. As with Hagar Bilhah becomes pregnant like clockwork (v.5).
36. Rachel, unlike Sarah, is thrilled with the new baby boy (v. 6).
37. For her the birth of this surrogate child is divine vindication and an answer to her prayers!
38. "[God has vindicated me](#)" is Rachel's first assertion at the child's birth and is a play on the name Rachel gave the baby—Dan.
39. The verb din means 'to judge', and is here translated with the nuance 'to vindicate.'
40. The reader of this episode is dubious to say the least about Rachel's first assertion ("[God has vindicated me](#)").
41. The reader doesn't doubt that Rachel had been praying, but the birth of this fifth patriarchal leader is not the product of answered prayer as his birth is the product of God's plan to bring on the scene the 12 founders of the 12 tribes of Israel.
42. The name "Dan" also plays on the verb "has given me a son" (nathan).
43. Note how she regards this baby as her very own whereas Sarah rejected Ishmael (16:1-7).
44. Rachel is clearly preoccupied with her own happiness and is insensitive to anyone else.
45. Her superficial happiness was bound to be overturned as it was not built on genuine trust in God.
46. In rapid succession a 2nd child is born to Jacob and his wife Bilhah (v. 7).
47. Upon the birth of the sixth patriarch Rachel once again espouses silliness of speech (v. 8).
48. She uses the terminology of wrestling as in some athletic competition.
49. She may have taken this analogy from one of Jacob's pastimes.
50. The noun (hapax) and the verb (patal) are rare.
51. Elsewhere the verb is used to describe "the cunning" (Job 5:13); "the shrewd" (Ps. 18:27) and "the

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:1–8: Rachel the Instigator

crooked" (Prov 8:8), but only here as "wrestled" and "wrestlings."

52. Here we find that she views her struggle with Leah as a competition ("I have wrestled with my sister").
53. The meaning of Naphtali appears to be "struggles."
54. Her words "and I have indeed prevailed" is wishful thinking.
55. Based on a contest the score is still 4 to 2 Leah's favor and her sons were not surrogates.
56. This is how screwed up and nonsensical a believer becomes when some sinful trend of Adam sin takes over and when contentment with one's circumstance is not left in God's hands.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017 (slightly edited).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Leah has 2 sons through her maid Zilpah (vv. 9–13)

For the most part, very little is said about Jacob's contribution in all of this. However, based upon both Rachel's and Leah's temporary lack of fertility; both women apparently had a great deal of access to Jacob. The women appeared to discuss this and determine it with one another, based upon vv. 14–16. And, based upon vv. 3–12, if the wives directed Jacob to sleep with one of their maids, he just went along with it. That seems to be the implication of the first third of this chapter.

Genesis 30:9 [Leah saw that she had stopped bearing children; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as his wife.](#)

Leah decides to use her maid as a surrogate (Many Commentators)

The College Press Bible Study: *Leah, however, was not content with the blessing of four sons bestowed on her by Yahweh. The means employed by Rachel to retain the favor of her husband made her jealous, and this jealousy moved her to resort to the same device, viz., that of giving her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob for the begetting of adopted sons.*¹⁴⁴

Guzik: *Leah, who has stopped bearing children, figured she could use the same "surrogate mother" method to increase "her" number of children, so she gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob as Rachel gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob.*¹⁴⁵

Lange: *Leah is still less excusable than Rachel, since she could oppose her own four sons to the two adopted sons of Rachel. But the proud and challenging assertions of Rachel, however, seem to have determined her to a renewed emulation; and Jacob thought that it was due to the equal rights of both to consent to the fourth marriage. That Leah now acts no longer as before, in a pious and humble disposition, the names by which she calls her adopted sons clearly prove.*¹⁴⁶

Rachel has made this into some kind of competition, so Leah is going to respond in kind.

¹⁴⁴ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁴⁵ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:9–11.

¹⁴⁶ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:9–13 (Exegetical and Critical).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

And so sees Leah for she had ceased from bearing; and so she takes Zilpah her maid and so she gives her to Jacob for a woman. And so bears Zilpah a maid of Leah to Jacob a son. And so says Leah, "In [good] fortune." And so she calls his name Gad.

Genesis
30:9–11

Leah observed that she had ceased from bearing [children]; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob for a wife. Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob. Leah remarked, "[This birth comes] by [good] fortune." Therefore, she named him *Gad*.

Leah saw that she had stopped bearing children; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as his wife. Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob. Leah remarked, "This birth comes by way of good fortune." Therefore, she named the child *Gad*.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so sees Leah for she had ceased from bearing; and so she takes Zilpah her maid and so she gives her to Jacob for a woman. And so bears Zilpah a maid of Leah to Jacob a son. And so says Leah, "In [good] fortune." And so she calls his name Gad.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing, and she took Zilpha her handmaid, and gave her to Jakob to wife. And Zilpha the handmaid of Leah bare a son to Jakob, and Leah said, There <u>cometh</u> prosperity; and she called his name Gad ["Fortune, prosperity." In Chaldee, "a fortunate star."].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing, and she made Zilpha her handmaid <u>free</u> , and gave her unto Jakob to wife. And Zilpha the handmaid of Leah conceived, and bare Jakob a son; and Leah said, Good fortune <u>cometh</u> ; <u>his children shall surely inherit their habitation on the east bide of Jardena: and she called his name Gad</u> . [JERUSALEM. And Leah said, Good success Cometh; for the feastings of the Gentiles are to be cut off: and she called.]
Revised Douay-Rheims	Lia, perceiving that she had left off bearing, gave Zelpha her handmaid to her <u>husband</u> . And when she had conceived and brought forth a son, She said: Happily. And therefore called his name Gad.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	When Leah saw that she had finished bearing, she took Zilpah, her handmaid, and gave her to Ya'aqub as a wife. Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Ya'aqub a son. Leah said, "How fortunate!" She named him Gad.
Peshitta (Syriac)	When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her maid Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, My fortune <u>has come</u> ; so she called his name Gad.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Lea saw that she ceased from bearing, and she took Zelpha her maid, and gave her to Jacob for a wife; <u>and he went in to her</u> . And Zelpha the maid of Lea conceived, and bore Jacob a son. And Lea said, It is happily: and she called his name, Gad.
Significant differences:	Similar problems. Hebrew says the maid is given to Jacob <i>to wife, to woman</i> ; one targum has <i>free</i> ; and they other has <i>to her husband</i> . The Greek adds <i>and he went in to her</i> ; which the Hebrew appears to take for granted.

When it comes to the word *fortune*, some translations had the verbs *has come*. Apparently there are two readings: *with fortune* and *fortune has come*.¹⁴⁷ Jonathan's targum adds a lot of extra text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	When it was clear to Leah that she would have no more children for a time, she gave Zilpah, her servant, to Jacob as a wife. And Zilpah, Leah's servant, gave birth to a son. And Leah said, It has gone well for me: and she gave him the name Gad.
Easy English	Leah saw that she had stopped having children. So she took her female servant. Her name was Zilpah. She gave her to Jacob as a wife. Zilpah became pregnant. And she gave Jacob a son. Leah said 'This is very good.' And she called the baby Gad.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Leah saw that she could have no more children. So she gave her slave girl Zilpah to Jacob. Then Zilpah had a son. Leah said, "I am lucky."
God's Word™	When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her slave Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as his wife. Leah's slave Zilpah gave birth to a son for Jacob. Leah said, "I've been lucky!" So she called him Gad [Luck].
The Message	When Leah saw that she wasn't having any more children, she gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob for a wife. Zilpah had a son for Jacob. Leah said, "How fortunate!" and she named him Gad (Lucky).
New Simplified Bible	When Leah realized she could not have any more children, she let Jacob marry her servant Zilpah. They had a son. Leah said: »How fortunate. She called him Gad.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When Leah realized she could not have any more children, she let Jacob marry her servant Zilpah, and they had a son. "I'm really lucky," Leah said, and she named the boy Gad.
The Living Bible	Meanwhile, when Leah realized that she wasn't getting pregnant anymore, she gave her servant girl Zilpah to Jacob, to be his wife, and soon Zilpah presented him with a son. Leah named him Gad (meaning "My luck has turned!").
New Life Version	Leah saw that she had stopped giving birth. So she took Zilpah, the woman who served her, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. And a son was born to Jacob through Zilpah, the woman who served Leah. Then Leah said, "Good things have happened to me!" So she gave him the name Gad.
New Living Translation	Meanwhile, Leah realized that she wasn't getting pregnant anymore, so she took her servant, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Soon Zilpah presented him with a son. Leah named him Gad, for she said, "How fortunate I am!"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, when Leah saw that she was no longer bearing children, she took Zelpha her handmaid and gave her to Jacob as his woman, and he went in to [sleep with] her. So Zelpha, Leah's handmaid, got pregnant and bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, '[I'm] happy!' So she named him Gad (Happiness).
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Lia, too, finding that she was not having any more children, gave her maid-servant Zelpha to her husband for his mate; and when Zelpha conceived and bore a son, Lia said, Good fortune has come to me, and called the boy Gad, Fortune.
Translation for Translators	When Leah realized that she was not becoming pregnant and giving birth to any more children, she took her female slave, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob to be another wife for him. Zilpah soon became pregnant and gave birth to a son for

¹⁴⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:11.

Jacob. Leah said, "I am truly fortunate!" So she named him Gad, *which means* 'fortunate.'

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Leah was to perceive, she is to have ceased to bear forth, and she was to take Zilpah, her maid servant, and was to give her, to Jacob, to wife. Zilpah, Leah's maid servant, was to bear forth to Jacob, a son. Leah was to say: The invasion is to have come! She was to call his name Gad.
Conservapedia	When Leah saw that she had stopped giving birth, she took her own handmaid, Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob for a (common-law) wife. [Not to be outdone, Leah does the same thing that Rachel did.] Zilpah, the handmaid of Leah, fell pregnant and gave birth to a son for Jacob. Leah said, "A troop of raiders is coming!" So she named him Gad [Which in Hebrew means "raid."].
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	When Leah saw that she ceased to bear, she took Zilfa her attendant and gave her to Jacob for a wife, so Zilfa the servant of Leah bore a son to Jacob. Then Leah said, "By a troop," and called his name Gad.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	When Lea saw that she had left bearing, she took Silpha her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. And Silpha Leas maid bare Jacob a son. Then said Lea: Good luck: and called his name Gad.
Jubilee Bible 2000	When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing <i>children</i> , she took Zilpah, her maid and gave her Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, gave birth to a son unto Jacob. And Leah said, <i>Good</i> venture has come; and she called his name Gad.
H. C. Leupold	When Leah saw that she had ceased from bearing children, she took Zilpah, her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob for wife. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a son. And Leah said: Good Luck! and she called his name Gad (Luck).
Unlocked Literal Bible	When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took Zilpah, her servant, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Zilpah, Leah's servant, bore Jacob a son. Leah said, "This is fortunate!" so she called his name Gad.
Urim-Thummim Version	When Leah saw that she had stopped giving birth, she took Zilpah her female slave and gave her to Jacob for his woman. And Zilpah Leah's female slave gendered Jacob a son. Then Leah said, a good fortune comes and she called his name Gad.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Leah feared, because she no longer bore children, and she took Zilpah her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob as a wife. And Zilpa, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a son. And Leah said: "Fortunate (Be-gad)", and she called him Gad.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2002)	When Leah saw that she had ceased to bear children, she gave her maidservant Zilpah to Jacob as a consort. So Jacob had intercourse with Zilpah, and she conceived and bore a son. Leah then said, "What good luck!" So she named him Gad. Gad: explained by the Hebrew term begad, literally "in luck," i.e., what good luck!
New Jerusalem Bible	Now Leah, seeing that she had ceased to bear children, took her slave-girl Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as concubine. So Leah's slave-girl Zilpah gave birth to a son by Jacob. Then Leah exclaimed, 'What good fortune!' So she named him Gad.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	When Le'ah saw that she had stopped having children, she took Zilpah her slave-girl and gave her to Ya'akov as his wife. Zilpah Le'ah's slave-girl bore Ya'akov a son; and Le'ah said, "Good fortune has come," calling him Gad [good fortune].
-----------------------	---

The Complete Tanach When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing [children], she took her maidservant Zilpah, and gave her to Jacob for a wife. And Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, bore Jacob a son.

And Zilpah...bore: In the case of all of them (i.e., all Jacob's wives), conception is mentioned, except for Zilpah, because she was the youngest of them all and so young in years that her pregnancy was not noticed. In order to deceive Jacob, Laban gave her to Leah, so that he would not perceive that they were bringing in Leah, for this was their custom, to give the older maidservant to the older [daughter] and the younger [maidservant] to the younger [daughter]. — [from Gen. Rabbah 71: 9]

And Leah said, "Luck has come"; so she named him Gad.

"Luck has come": Heb. בָּאֵל גַּד. Good luck has come [Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel] similar to (Shab. 67b) "May my fate be lucky (אֵל גַּד) and not fatigued," and similar to this (Isa. 65:11), "who set a table for Gad." According to the Aggadah [Midrash Aggadah in the name of "some say"], he was born circumcised גַּד, meaning "cut off"), like Dan. 4:11, "cut down (גָּדוּ) the tree," but I do not know why it is written as one word (בָּאֵל גַּד) [in our verse]. Another explanation: Why is it read as one word? בָּאֵל is like בָּאֵל בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ, you betrayed me when you came to my handmaid, as a man who has betrayed (בָּאֵל) the wife of his youth.

exeGeses companion Bible And Leah sees she is stayed from birthing, she takes Zilpah her maid and gives her to Yaaqov to woman. And Zilpah the maid of Leah births Yaaqov a son: and Leah says, A Fortune comes: and she calls his name Gad.

Israeli Authorized Version When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Yaakov to wife. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Yaakov a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad.

JPS (Tanakh—1985) When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as concubine. And when Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son, Leah said, "What luck!" So she named him Gad.

Kaplan Translation Leah realized that she was no longer having children. She took her handmaid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Leah's handmaid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 'Good fortune (gad) [Or 'success.' (Targum Yonathan; Rashi; Josephus). Others render it, 'A troop has come,' (Ibn Ezra), that is, 'she (Leah) has had a troop of sons,' or 'let him be considered as many children.' Also see Genesis 49:19. Or, 'I have been vindicated' (Saadia).] has come!' exclaimed Leah. She named the child Gad.

Orthodox Jewish Bible When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her shifchah, and gave her to Ya'akov as isha. And Zilpah shifchat Leah bore Ya'akov ben. And Leah said, BaGad (What Good Fortune!) And she called shmo Gad.

The Scriptures 1998 And Lě'ah saw that she had ceased bearing, and she took Zilpah her female servant and gave her to Ya'aqob as wife. And Lě'ah's female servant Zilpah bore Ya'aqob a son. And Lě'ah said, "With Gad!" So she called his name Gad.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing [children], she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as a [secondary] wife. Zilpah, Leah's maid, gave birth to a son for Jacob. Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad (good fortune).

The Expanded Bible Leah saw that she had stopped having children, so she gave her slave girl Zilpah to Jacob as a wife [or concubine]. When Zilpah, the slave girl of Leah, got

Kretzmann's Commentary	pregnant [conceived] and had a son, Leah said, “-I am lucky [Good fortune],” so she named him Gad [^c sounds like “lucky” in Hebrew]. When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah, her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife, thus following the example of her sister. The matter was now actually becoming a carnal struggle. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh; and she called his name Gad (good fortune). She considered the birth of this son a fortunate event to herself.
NET Bible®	When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she gave [<i>Heb</i> “she took her servant Zilpah and gave her.”] her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife. Soon Leah's servant Zilpah gave Jacob a son [<i>Heb</i> “and Zilpah, the servant of Leah, bore for Jacob a son.”]. Leah said, “How fortunate!” So she named him Gad.
The Pulpit Commentary	When Leah saw that she had left bearing (literally, stood from bearing, as in Genesis 29:35), she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her to Jacob to wife—being in this led astray by Rachel's sinful example, both as to the spirit of unholy rivalry she cherished, and the questionable means she employed for its gratification. And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh. בָּגַדְתִּי, for בָּגַדְתִּי, in or with good fortune; εἰς τὴν τύχην (LXX.); feliciter, sc. this happens to me (Vulgate), a translation which has the sanction of Gesenius, Furst, Rosenmóller, Keil, Kalisch, and other content authorities—the Keri, which is followed by Onkelos and Syriac, reading אָבַדְתִּי, fortune cometh. The Authorised rendering, supported by the Samaritan, and supposed to accord better with Genesis 49:19, is approved by Calvin, Ainsworth, Bush, and others. And she called his name Gad—i.e. Good Fortune.
The Voice	When it seemed Leah was not going to have any more children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob to be a wife as well. So Leah's servant Zilpah gave birth to a son for Jacob. Leah: Good fortune has arrived! This is why she named him Gad.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Le'ah ^[Weary] saw that she stood from bringing forth and she took Zilpah ^[Trickling] her maid and she gave her to Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] for a woman, and Zilpah ^[Trickling] the maid of Le'ah ^[Weary] brought forth for Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] a son, and Le'ah ^[Weary] said, fortune came, and she called out his title Gad ^[Fortune] ,...
Concordant Literal Version	<u>Footnote:</u> - <i>The phrase "in~Fortune" is in error for "he~did~come Fortune."</i> And seeing is Leah that she stays from bearing. And taking is she Zilpah, her maid, and is giving her to Jacob for a wife. And coming is Jacob to her, and Zilpah, Leah's maid, is pregnant and bearing for Jacob a son. And saying is Leah, "Coming is a raid!" And calling is she his name Gad.
Context Group Version	When Leah saw that she had left off bearing, she took Zilpah her slave, and gave her to Jacob as woman. And Zilpah Leah's slave bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, Fortunate! and she named him Gad.
Darby Translation	And when Leah saw that she had ceased to bear, she took Zilpah her maidservant and gave her to Jacob as wife. And Zilpah Leah's maidservant bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, Fortunately! and she called his name Gad.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	Then saw Leah, that she had left off bearing,—so she took Zilpah, her handmaid, and gave her to Jacob to wife. And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bare to Jacob a son: and Leah said, Victory hath come! So she called his name Gad.
English Standard Version	When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. And Leah said, “Good fortune has come!” so she called his name Gad.

NASB	When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad.
New King James Version	When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as wife. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "A troop comes!" So she called his name Gad.
Young's Updated LT	And Leah sees that she has ceased from bearing, and she takes Zilpah her maid-servant, and gives her to Jacob for a wife; and Zilpah, Leah's maid-servant, beares to Jacob a son. And Leah says, "A troop is coming;" and she calls his name Gad.

The gist of this passage: Since Leah finds herself no longer bearing children, she also gives her maid over to Jacob to have more children. The first child is named *Gad*.

Genesis 30:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
râ'âh (רָאָה) [pronounced <i>raw-AWH</i>]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to observe; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'âmad (עָמַד) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAHD</i>]	<i>to take a stand, to stand, to remain, to endure, to withstand; to stop, to cease</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5975 BDB #763
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #3205 BDB #408

Translation: Leah observed that she had ceased from bearing [children];...

Jacob appears to have continued normal marital relations with Leah during this time; and it is clear that she is no longer bearing children.

Genesis 30:9b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Zil ^e pâh (זִלְפָּה) [pronounced <i>zihl-PAW</i>]	<i>a trickling (as myrrh fragrant dropping) transliterated Zilpah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #2153 BDB #273
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046

Translation: ...so she took Zilpah her maid...

Because Rachel has involved her maid, Leah decides to do the same with her maid. She has Zilpah to do what she requests.

Genesis 30:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
The NET Bible: <i>The verbs "took" and "gave" are treated as a hendiadys in the translation: "she gave."</i> ¹⁴⁸			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>her, it; untranslated generally; occasionally to her, toward her</i>	sign of the direct object with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya ^c âqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-KOH^BV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

¹⁴⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

Genesis 30:9c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^{ee}]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʾishshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	<i>woman, wife</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #802 BDB #61

Translation: ...and gave her to Jacob for a wife.

She gives Zilpah, her maid, to Jacob, as his wife. This does not mean that Zilpah became Jacob's wife, as Rachel and Leah are; but that they will have intimate relations with the intent of raising up children.

Benson calls this approach absurd and preposterous¹⁴⁹; but surrogate births occur in today's culture; this is simply a surrogate birth, as it would occur in the ancient world. On the other hand, based upon Sarah and Hagar, we already know that this is a bad idea.

Application: Some people have actual examples before them of things which are a bad idea; and yet, they seem to think that, they might be able to make such a bad idea work. We have a very strong movement in the United States for socialism, despite the fact that everyone ought to know that socialism never works. I have known children who were raised by parents doing drugs; and they clearly understand that this was a very bad idea—but then, some of those same children start doing drugs.

Genesis 30:9 When Leah saw that she had quit bearing, she took her slave woman Zilpah and gave her to Jacob to wife.

Genesis 30:9 Leah observed that she had ceased from bearing [children]; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob for a wife. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Leah, while observing all of this, and certainly knowing that she is no longer producing children, decides, "Two can play at this game. If Rachel thinks that she is having children by her maid Bilhah, then I can have children by my maid Zilpah."

Therefore, she insists that Jacob impregnate her personal maid. Given all that has happened, neither Jacob nor Rachel could have come up with any reason to not to do this; so Jacob agrees to this.

Again, you will note that this is at the insistence of Leah, the wife. The Bible does not present women at completely and totally oppressed, under the thumb of their husbands.

Jacob is in no position to refuse; he granted Rachel's request; so logically, he must grant Leah's.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The rivalry between Rachel and Leah escalates as Leah gives Jacob her maid Zilpah as a concubine in response to Rachel giving Bilhah as a concubine for Jacob. There was no need for Leah to do this since she already had four children of her own with Jacob. There was no need to give her maid Zilpah to Jacob for a wife. Other than the fact that this was what Rachel had done.*

¹⁴⁹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:9. Wesley also uses these two adjectives. I think Wesley copied Poole and Benson may have copies from Wesley.

Wenstrom continues: *If Rachel can employ her maid in this contest, Leah feels that so can she. The situation has completely gotten out of hand now. Jacob could have found an excuse to accept Bilhah from Rachel, but there is none for his taking Zilpah. He must have known that he was the tool of his wives' jealousy, but evidently he does not care.*¹⁵⁰ Life can be quite difficult when you chose to go against your two wives.

Both of Jacob's wives are said to give their servants over to Jacob as wives.

The Status of the Maidservants When Given to Jacob (Many Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *The handmaids are subsidiary wives. There is no marriage contract, they but do the bidding of their mistresses. But their status and position improves.*¹⁵¹

From *Obscure Characters*: *Both Bilhah and Zilpah had their own tent in Jacob's camp (Genesis 31:33). They were considered concubines, or secondary wives of Jacob. Despite their sons being adopted by Rachel and Leah, the sons are associated with their birth mothers.*¹⁵²

Zilpah and Bilhah are always associated with their sons. Even though they were said to be surrogate mothers, neither Rachel nor Leah are ever said to be the mothers of Zilpah's and Bilhah's sons. It appears that they never acted as mistresses would, with an ongoing personal relationship with Jacob. Their intimate relations with him seem to be confined to 4 sons which they produced together.

Dr. Peter Pett: *The handmaids are subsidiary wives. There is no marriage contract, they but do the bidding of their mistresses. But their status and position improves.*¹⁵³

Their actual status is difficult to determine; but their sons will always be called their sons in the Bible.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:10

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
Zilpâh (זִלְפָּה) [pronounced <i>zihl-PAW</i>]	<i>a trickling (as myrrh fragrant dropping) transliterated Zilpah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #2153 BDB #273
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

¹⁵⁰ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 469); accessed September 9, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:3–4.

¹⁵² From <https://obscurecharacters.com/2013/11/28/maidservants-zilpah-and-bilhah/> accessed September 16, 2017.

¹⁵³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:3–4.

Genesis 30:10

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH ^B V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent</i> and is transliterated <i>Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob.

Jacob has relations with Zilpah and she bears a son to Jacob.

Even though, in Leah's mind (and by tradition), this is her child; the Bible always refers to this son as belonging to Zilpah. As a result, Jacob will have 4 wives with varying numbers of children from each.

Genesis 30:10 And Leah's slave woman Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

For some men, this may seem like a paradise. Jacob has married two sisters; and they each have young maids. And Jacob is required to have sex with all of them. I can guarantee you that the relationship between Leah and Rachel was not easy. Once and awhile, arguments would break out between them. This would not be pleasant. It is not impossible to imagine that months might pass during which these sisters are at odds with one another.

Some men have this idyllic notion of having more than one wife. Even here, the Bible does not really pass judgment against Jacob—but it makes it clear that life is not easy for Jacob. This is not fun. Few things are worse than listening to women argue, who are constantly trying to drag you into the argument and to take sides. And, even though Jacob was very much in love with Rachel originally, she has not been the easiest person to live with over the past few years. She originally blamed Jacob for her not being pregnant.

Throughout the Bible, even in portions written by men like David and Solomon (both of whom had many wives), a marriage between one man and one woman is always presented as ideal. Furthermore, this one right woman for a man is considered a great blessing to him. At no time are many wives presented as a great (or greater) blessing to any man. We *never* find the verse which reads, *If one wife is a blessing, two are even more so*. This is despite the fact that several polygamists wrote Scripture (Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon—because they are polygamists, they knew better).

When there is more than one wife, the Bible presents this objectively—but not in such a way as to suggest this ought to be the way things are done.

Jacob, David and Solomon all wrote Scripture and any one of them could have written: *a man with one wife is blessed; and a man with two wives is double-blessed*. But they did not. David appears to have confined himself to one wife at the very end of his life—to Bathsheba. Solomon never seems to be happy in marriage (he had 1000 wives and mistresses) and one book of the Bible is devoted to Solomon being unable to persuade woman #1001 that he is really attracted to, to become his wife (or lover).¹⁵⁴ And Jacob—we are now studying Jacob's life—finds himself involved in all of these arguments over having children—these arguments could not have been pleasant to him. What man wants to work all day and come home to strife?

Genesis 30:10 And Leah's slave woman Zilpah bore Jacob a son.

¹⁵⁴ We don't really know what number she was; but we know Solomon wanted her and did not get her.

So far, there are 4 sons by Leah, 2 by Bilhah, and now a 7th son by Zilpah.

Genesis 30:10 **Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
gâd (גַּד) [pronounced gawd]	<i>fortune, good fortune</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1409 BDB #151

BDB combines this with Strong's #1408 BDB #151, and spells it with the short *a*. However, Gesenius combines the two and spells them both with the long *a*. Furthermore, it is spelled with the long *a* in Genesis 30:11 and according to E-sword's BDB and Strong's dictionaries. The proper name *Gad* is also spelled with the long *a*.

Bear in mind that, originally, there were no vowels in the Hebrew writings. This is not some great controversy. I just mention it by way of information.

The NET Bible: *The statement in the Kethib (consonantal text) appears to mean literally "with good fortune," if one takes the initial ב:(bet) as a preposition indicating accompaniment. The Qere (marginal reading) means "good fortune has arrived."*¹⁵⁵

Translation: Leah remarked, "[This birth comes] by [good] fortune."

Leah and Rachel had been in competition at least since their marriage and likely before that. The number of children that their personal maids have is evidence of that. They see these children as their own (which is apparently true by custom; but not by the Biblical record).

Genesis 30:11 What Good Fortune! (A graphic); from **Biblesms**; accessed September 16, 2017.



¹⁵⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

Genesis 30:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Gâd (גַּד) [pronounced <i>gawd</i>]	<i>invader; troop; fortune; transliterated Gad</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #1410 BDB #151

The NET Bible: *The name Gad (גַּד, gad) means "good fortune." The name reflects Leah's feeling that good fortune has come her way, as expressed in her statement recorded earlier in the verse.*¹⁵⁶

Translation: Therefore, she named him *Gad*.

Leah names the child *Gad*, which means *invader; troop; fortune*. The idea of good fortune apparently is the understanding of his name.

How absolutely ridiculous! Leah had a relaxed mental attitude until she suddenly realized that she was no longer bearing children and that her sister may be gaining on her, in some fashion. So she does exactly what Rachel had done; she gave her maid to Jacob and Jacob, not having enough problems in his life, bows to her will and impregnates her maid. Jacob has been nagged into doing whatever these women want of him. Some men would think that this is a marvelous marriage to be in because they can only focus in on the occasional sexual escapade and don't realize that the constant tension has reduced Jacob into a "Yes, ma'am" husband. Whatever his wives want, he strives to fulfil, in hopes of gaining just a few more hours of peace.

Gad means *good fortune*. Individually, we know absolutely nothing about *Gad*; he is just one of Jacob's sons, just less distinguished. His descendants as a whole are mentioned often in the Bible, but there are no significant individuals who are *Gadites* of whom I am aware.

Genesis 30:11 And Leah said, "With fortune." And she called his name *Gad*.

Most say that *gad* means *good fortune*. However, it is possible that the word *gâd* means *troop*. Leah is either saying that this is good fortune that this child is born to her; or she may be suggesting that this is one in an army of children. And, do not put it past these women to use a name with a two-edged meaning.

Genesis 30:11 Leah remarked, "[This birth comes] by [good] fortune." Therefore, she named him *Gad*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

¹⁵⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

Genesis 30:11 And Leah said, "With fortune." And she called his name Gad.

The Meaning of Gad (Various Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The name "Gad" (gawd) comes from "What good fortune" and indicates that Leah attributes this child to fortune or good luck rather than God.*¹⁵⁷

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *[Leah] thinks this is blessing from God and she names him Gad, which means fortune.*¹⁵⁸

The College Press Bible Study: *Leah named the first one Gad (good fortune, or good fortune has come).*¹⁵⁹

Barnes: גַּד *gâd*, Gad, "overcoming, victory." גַּבְדָּ *bâgâd*, "in victory or" = אַבְדָּ *bâ' gâd*, "victory comes." דוּג *gûd*, "press down." דוּדָג *gedûd*, "troop."¹⁶⁰

Carroll: *Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore a son and he is named Gad. The literal Hebrew means "good fortune," but when we come to interpret it in chapter 49, it means "7 troop," i.e., four sons have already been born on the Leah side and here is another. That means there is going to be a troop of them.*¹⁶¹

Guzik: *Jacob's seventh son, born to him through Zilpah, the maid of Leah, is named Gad, meaning "troop" or "good fortune"; the wives of Jacob are still using their children as pawns in a power struggle within the home.*¹⁶²

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Heb. "A troop cometh." It is doubtful, however, whether the word really means troop. Most of the earlier versions give the sense of "luck, fortune, or prosperity." The Chal. has "fortune cometh." Alford remarks: "The A. V. has followed the Samaritan Pentateuch, which here reads a different word from the Hebrew. The familiar rendering of the latter seems the only expressive way of giving the sense. Where this is the case I have not shrunk from using the words. We need not dilute the meaning of the text because the words happen to be in trivial use among us."*¹⁶³

Benson: *Leah...called one [surrogate child] Gad, promising herself a little troop of children.*¹⁶⁴

The Cambridge Bible: *Gad seems to have been the name of an ancient Aramaean god of fortune, whose worship existed among the Canaanites. Cf. the names Baal-gad (Joshua 11:17), and Migdal-gad (Joshua 15:37). The Jews in Babylon made offerings to this god of good fortune; cf. Isaiah 65:11. In Judges 5:17, Gilead takes the place of Gad.*¹⁶⁵

Clarke: *She called his name Gad – This has been variously translated. גַּד *gad*, may signify a troop, an army, a soldier, a false god, supposed to be the same as Jupiter or Mars; for as Laban appears to have been, if not an idolater, yet a dealer in a sort of judicial astrology, (see Genesis 31:19), Leah, in saying גַּבְדָּ *bagad*, which we translate a troop cometh, might mean, By or with the assistance of Gad – a particular planet or star, Jupiter possibly, I have gotten this son; therefore she called him after the name of that planet or star from which she supposed the succor came.*

Clarke then adds: *The Septuagint translate it εὐτυχίᾳ, with good fortune; the Vulgate, feliciter, happily.*¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 469); accessed September 9, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017.

¹⁵⁹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁶⁰ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:11 (slightly edited).

¹⁶¹ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

¹⁶² *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:9–11.

¹⁶³ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:11.

¹⁶⁴ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:9.

¹⁶⁵ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:11.

¹⁶⁶ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:11.

The Meaning of Gad (Various Commentators)

Gill: *And Leah said, a troop comes,.... A troop of children, having bore four herself, and now her maid another, and more she expected; or the commander of a troop comes, one that shall head an army and overcome his enemies; which agrees with the prophecy of Jacob, Genesis 49:19; and she called his name Gad: which signifies a "troop", glorying in the multitude of her children, that she had or hoped to have.*¹⁶⁷

Poole: *A troop comes, or, good luck cometh; my design hath well succeeded; a happy star hath shone upon me; and such a star in the opinion of astrologers is that of Jupiter, which by the Arabians is called Gad. This may well agree to Leah and her heathenish education, and the manners of the Chaldeans, who were much given to the study of the stars.*¹⁶⁸

Whedon: *Hebrews, גַּד, in luck; with good fortune. So Sept. and Vulgate, Syriac and Chaldee. So she called his name Gad, as a memorial of her good fortune.*¹⁶⁹

The NEV Commentary: *[This] race for numbers is reflected in Leah getting Jacob to sleep with her maid, and naming the first child "A troop comes!". The names of the sons who were to be the basis of the people of God, Israel, were anything but spiritual. And yet God works through such unspirituality to form His people, as He does to this day. Indeed "Gad" was a local deity (as in Is. 65:11); even Leah, the more apparently spiritual, was caught up with paganism at this time. Perhaps Jacob alludes to this in his final comment upon Gad; that he would be overcome by a troop rather than leading a troop, although he would overcome at the last (Gen. 49:19).*¹⁷⁰

Tyche: *It is worth noting that Gad was the name of an Aramean and Phoenician god of Luck.*¹⁷¹

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:9–11 Leah observed that she had ceased from bearing [children]; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob for a wife. Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob. Leah remarked, "[This birth comes] by [good] fortune." Therefore, she named him *Gad*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:9–11 Leah saw that she had stopped bearing children; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as his wife. Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob. Leah remarked, "This birth comes by way of good fortune." Therefore, she named the child *Gad*. (Kukis paraphrase)

And so bears Zilpah (a maid of Leah) a son second to Jacob. And so says Leah, "In my happiness, for will call me happy daughters." And so she calls his name Asher.

Genesis
30:12–13

Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a second son to Jacob. Leah said, "By means of my happiness, the daughters will call me happy." Consequently, she named him Asher.

Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob another son. Leah exclaimed, "The daughters of Israel will call me happy and, by his birth, I am happy." Consequently, she named him Asher.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

¹⁶⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:11.

¹⁶⁸ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:11.

¹⁶⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:11.

¹⁷⁰ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

¹⁷¹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so bears Zilpah (a maid of Leah) a son second to Jacob. And so says Leah, "In my happiness, for will call me happy daughters." And so she calls his name Asher.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Zilpha the handmaid of Leah bare a second son to Jakob; and Leah said, Praise shall be mine; now will women praise me; and she called his name Asher ["Happiness."].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Zilpha the handmaid of Leah bare a second son to Jakob. And Leah said, Praise shall be mine: for the daughters of Israel will praise me, <u>as his children will be praised before the Lord for the goodness of the fruit of his land</u> ; and she called his name Asher.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Zelpha also bore another. And Lia said: This is for my happiness: for women will call me blessed. Therefore she called him Aser.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Ya'aqub a second son. Leah said, "Happy am I, for the daughters will call me happy." She named him Asher.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a second son. And Leah said, <u>The girls will sing</u> my praise, so she called his name Asher.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Zelpha the maid of Lea <u>conceived yet again</u> , and bore Jacob a second son. And Lea said, I am blessed, for the women will pronounce me blessed; and she called his name, Aser.

Significant differences: The Latin leaves out that Zilpah is Leah's maid; and that this is *Jacob's son*. The Greek adds in that *she conceived again*.

Regarding what Leah says, the Aramaic adds *The girls will sing* (or maybe not, as that is contradicted by the other Aramaic translation). Jonathan's targum adds additional text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Zilpah, Leah's servant, gave birth to a second son. 13 And Leah said, Happy am I! and all women will give witness to my joy: and she gave him the name Asher.
Easy English	Leah's servant gave Jacob another son. Leah said 'I am very happy! Women will call me happy.' So she called this baby Asher.
International Children's B.	Zilpah gave birth to another son. Leah said, "I am very happy! Now women will call me happy." So she named that son Asher.
<i>The Message</i>	When Leah's maid Zilpah had a second son for Jacob, Leah said, "A happy day! The women will congratulate me in my happiness." So she named him Asher (Happy).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When they had another son, Leah exclaimed, "I'm happy now, and all the women will say how happy I am." So she named him Asher.
The Living Bible	Then Zilpah produced a second son, and Leah named him Asher (meaning "Happy"), for she said, "What joy is mine! The other women will think me blessed indeed!"
New Life Version	A second son was born to Jacob through Zilpah, the woman who served Leah. Then Leah said, "I am happy! For women will say that I am happy." So she gave him the name Asher.
New Living Translation	Then Zilpah gave Jacob a second son. And Leah named him Asher, for she said, "What joy is mine! Now the other women will celebrate with me."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then ZelPha, LeAh's handmaid, got pregnant again and bore Jacob a second son. This time, LeAh said: 'I am blest, because the women will call me blest.' So she named him Asher (Blessings).
International Standard V	Later, Leah's servant Zilpah bore a second son for Jacob. She said, "How happy I am, because women will call me happy!" So she named him Asher [The Heb. name <i>Asher</i> means <i>happy</i>].
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Zelpha, too, bore Jacob a second son, and Lia said, Here is a blessing for me; women must needs call me blessed now; so she gave him the name of Aser, Blessedness.
Translation for Translators	Later Leah's slave, Zilpah, gave birth to another son for Jacob. Leah said, "Now I am very happy, and people will call me happy." So she named him Asher, <i>which means 'happy.'</i>

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Zilpah, Leah's maid servant was to bear forth to Jacob a second son. Leah was to say: The daughters are in happiness, for I am to have been made happy. She was to call his name Asher.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Zilfa the attendant of Leah also bore a second son to Jacob ; and Leah exclaimed, " I am blest, for the women will bless me," she therefore called his name Asher.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Silpha Leas maid bare Jacob another son. Then said Lea: happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed. And called his name Asser.
H. C. Leupold	And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore Jacob a second son and Leah said: Good fortune, for daughters shall call me fortunate—and she called his name Asher (Fortune).
Urim-Thummim Version	And Zilpah Leah's maid gendered Jacob a second son. And Leah said, I am happy for the daughters will call me blessed, and she called his name Asher.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Zilpa, Leah's maid, bore a second son for Jacob. And Leah said--- "In my joy (Be-Oshri), because the daughters have made me joyful (Ishruni);" so she named him Asher.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob a second son. And Leah said, I am happy, because the daughters will pronounce me upright, and she called his name Asher.
New American Bible (2011)	Then Leah's maidservant Zilpah bore a second son to Jacob; and Leah said, "What good fortune, because women will call me fortunate!" So she named him Asher [Asher : explained by the term be'oshri, lit., "in my good fortune," i.e., "what good fortune," and by the term ye'ashsheruni, "they call me fortunate."].
New Jerusalem Bible	Leah's slave-girl Zilpah gave birth to a second son by Jacob. Then Leah said, 'What blessedness! Women will call me blessed!' So she named him Asher.
Revised English Bible	Zilpah bore Jacob another son, and Leah said, "Happiness has come, for women will call me happy"; so she named him Asher.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Zilpah Le'ah's slave-girl bore Ya'akov a second son; and Le'ah said, "How happy I am! Women will say I am happy!" and called him Asher [happy].
The Complete Tanach	And Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, bore Jacob a second son. And Leah said, "Because of my good fortune, for women have declared me fortunate"; so she named him Asher.
exeGesés companion Bible	And Zilpah the maid of Leah

births Yaaqov a second son:
- and Leah says, Blithesome - I,
for the daughters call me blithed:
and she calls his name Asher.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	When Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, Leah declared, "What fortune!" meaning, "Women will deem me fortunate." So she named him Asher.
Kaplan Translation	Leah's handmaid Zilpah bore a second son to Jacob. 'It's my happiness (asher),' said Leah. 'Young girls will consider me happy!' She named the child Asher.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Zilpah shifchat Leah bore Ya'akov ben sheni. And Leah said, B'Ashri (Happy am I), for the banot will call me asher (blessed): so she called shmo Asher.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Zilpah, the slave girl of Leah, gave birth to another son, and Leah said, "I am very ·happy [or blessed]! Now women will call me ·happy [or blessed]," so she named him Asher [^C sounds like "happy/blessed" in Hebrew].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed; and she called his name Asher (the happy one). She believed that daughters, women, no matter where they might be, would consider her fortunate and happy in having brought her husband six sons. It seems that the Lord's blessing did not enter into Leah's calculations at this time. It was simply a race between herself and Rachel.
NET Bible®	Then Leah's servant Zilpah gave Jacob another son [<i>Heb</i> "and Zilpah, the servant of Leah, bore a second son for Jacob."]. Leah said, "How happy I am [The Hebrew statement apparently means "with my happiness."], for women [<i>Heb</i> "daughters."] will call me happy!" So she named him Asher.
The Pulpit Commentary	And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I,—literally, in my happiness, so am I ('Speaker's Commentary'); or, for or to my happiness (Keil, Kalisch)—for the daughters will call me blessed (or, happy): and she called his name Asher—i.e. Happy.
The Voice	Then Leah's servant Zilpah gave birth to a second son for Jacob. Leah named him Asher <i>to express her joy</i> . Leah: I am so happy! All of the women can see how happy I am!.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Zilpah [^{Trickling}], the maid of Le'ah [^{Weary}], brought forth a second son for Ya'aqov [^{He restrains}], and Le'ah [^{Weary}] said, I am in happiness given that the daughters are very happy for me and she called out his title Asher [^{Happy}],...
Concordant Literal Version	And pregnant is Zilpah, Leah's maid, and is bearing a second son for Jacob. And saying is Leah "Happiness is mine, for the daughters call me happy. And calling is she his name Ashur.
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	And Zilpah, Leah's handmaid bare a second son to Jacob; and Leah said, For my happiness, surely happy have daughters pronounced me. So she called his name, Asher.
Modern English Version	Zilpah, Leah's maid, gave Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "Happy am I, for women will call me happy." So she called his name Asher.
New King James Version	And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed." So she called his name Asher.
Young's Updated LT	And Zilpah, Leah's maid-servant, bears a second son to Jacob, and Leah says, "Because of my happiness, for daughters have pronounced me happy;" and she calls his name Asher.

The gist of this passage: Zilpah, Leah's personal maid, gives birth to a second son, whom Leah calls *Asher*.

Genesis 30:12			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
Zilpâh (זִלְפָּה) [pronounced <i>zihl-PAW</i>]	<i>a trickling (as myrrh fragrant dropping) transliterated Zilpah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #2153 BDB #273
shiph'châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
shênîy (שֵׁנִי) [pronounced <i>shay-NEE</i>]	<i>second, the second; two, both, double, twice; secondly; in addition, again. When only two items are named, it can be rendered [the] other</i>	adjective singular numeral ordinal	Strong's #8145 BDB #1041
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-KOH^{AV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a second son to Jacob.

Zilpah gives birth to another son, fathered by Jacob. She is Leah's maid and this is not outside of the traditions of that time.

Genesis 30:12 And Leah's slave woman Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.

So Jacob was pressed into service once again; and he impregnated Leah's personal maid once again.

Genesis 30:12 Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a second son to Jacob. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:13a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lê'āh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'ōsher (אֲשֵׁר) [pronounced <i>OH-sheer</i>]	<i>happiness</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #837 BDB #81
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
'āshar (אֲשַׁר) [pronounced <i>aw-SHAHR</i>]	<i>to go [straight] on, advance; to lead on (causative); to set [make] right; to pronounce happy [blessed, fortunate], call blessed</i>	3 rd person plural, Piel perfect	Strong's #833 BDB #80
bath (בָּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #1323 BDB #123

Translation: Leah said, “By means of my happiness, the daughters will call me happy.”

This is a little difficult to translate. Literally, this means, “By happiness because daughters call me happy [or, blessed].” Despite the difficulties with understanding exactly what she is saying, it appears to be related to happiness which Leah is claiming to enjoy at the birth of this child. Given the competition that these women appear to be engaged in, where Rachel has said, “I am vindicated by this child;” so Leah follows that up with, “Yeah, and I am happy as hell.”



Genesis 30:13 “How happy I am” (a graphic); from [Biblesms](#); accessed September 15, 2017

Genesis 30:13a Leah said, “By happiness because daughters call me happy [or, blessed].” Interestingly enough, the virgin Mary will also say, *all generations will call me blessed* in Luke 1:48. We find similar phrasing in Proverbs 31:28 Song of Songs 6:9.

Genesis 30:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
'Âshêr (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced aw-SHARE]	<i>happiness; transliterated Asher</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #836 BDB #81

The NET Bible: *The name Asher (אֲשֶׁר, 'asher) apparently means "happy one." The name plays on the words used in the statement which appears earlier in the verse. Both the Hebrew noun and verb translated "happy" and "call me happy," respectively, are derived from the same root as the name Asher.*¹⁷²

Translation: *Consequently, she named him Asher.*

Therefore, she names her child (by Zilpah), *Asher*, which means *happiness*.

There continues to be jealousy and competition between Leah and Rachel to the point where, they are putting their personal maids in competition to have children as well. God uses their jealousy and competition to build up the family of Jacob.

Asher means *happy* or *blessed*. He was the eighth son of Jacob. Alone, he is undistinguished, and there are none from his seed who are distinguished. The tribe as a whole had its ups and downs, receiving a marvelous blessing from Moses, but failing to ever take control of their portion of the land by defeating the Phœnicians. This son represents failure on the part of Leah. Leah, with her last son, seemed to have a handle on her position as a wife of Jacob and seemed to be able to deal with this. However, jealousy has again sprung up and she is meeting Rachel's act of jealousy (giving her maid to Jacob) tit for tat.

The way these sons have been born indicates that these were sequential births. First Leah had four children, then, Rachel, out of jealousy, gave her maid, Bilhah, to Jacob for two more children. Then Leah, jealous that her womb had been temporarily closed, gave her maid to Jacob to bear more children. This means that the time period that we are speaking of was a minimum of 6 years and a maximum of 14. This is all based upon Jacob first working 7 years for Laban in order to marry Rachel; and then working an additional 14 years after. For Leah to have 6 sons herself, all of this had to take place in no fewer than 6 years.

¹⁷² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 26, 2016.

Genesis 30:13 And Leah said, “I am happy, for the daughters will call me blessed.” And she called his name Asher.

Genesis 30:13 Leah said, “By means of my happiness, the daughters will call me happy.” Consequently, she named him *Asher*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Leah names the child by Zilpah *happiness*. Leah sees this as an extension of her own sons.

Leah’s attitude, over time, seems to have changed. At the beginning of her marriage, she was very much concerned about her relationship with Jacob and that she was not getting the full love from him that she believed that she deserved. However, with these past 3 sons, given their names, she seems to have a much better attitude toward life. Judah means *to be praised*; Gad means *great blessing*; and Asher means *happiness*. These are all good names which indicate a much better attitude.

On the one hand, I would agree that Leah, when she named Judah, was praising God as a result of this child; and she, for a time, freed herself from concern about Jacob. Here, it feels as though she is in competition with Rachel once again.

Genesis 30:12–13 Zilpah, Leah’s maid, bore a second son to Jacob. Leah said, “By means of my happiness, the daughters will call me happy.” Consequently, she named him *Asher*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:12–13 Zilpah, Leah’s maid, bore Jacob another son. Leah exclaimed, “The daughters of Israel will call me happy and, by his birth, I am happy.” Consequently, she named him *Asher*. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:12–13 Zilpah, Leah’s maid, bore Jacob another son. Leah exclaimed, “The daughters of Israel will call me happy and, by his birth, I am happy.” Consequently, she named him *Asher*.

The Name of Asher (Various Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The name “Asher”(aw-share) is from “women will call me happy” and indicates that Leah thinks she is to be envied by other women. The name of this child demonstrates that Leah’s happiness is based upon her success over her sister Rachel.*¹⁷³

The College Press Bible Study: *Leah...named the second Asher (the happy one, or the bringer of happiness).*¹⁷⁴

Carroll: *Her next son is named Asher, which means “happy” – happy in getting the advantage of Rachel.*¹⁷⁵

Guzik: *Jacob’s eighth son, born to him through Zilpah, the maid of Leah, is named Asher, meaning “happy”; Leah is more concerned about the status the child will bring her (all the daughters will call me blessed) than about the child himself.*¹⁷⁶

The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Heb. “Happy or blessed.” All would call her blessed, seeing she was so rich in sons. There are marked allusions to this. (Proverbs 31:28; Son. 6:9; Luke 1:48).*¹⁷⁷

Gill: *happy am I; or, “in my happiness”; or, “for my happiness”; that is, this child is an addition to my happiness, and will serve to increase it: for the daughters will call me blessed; the women of the place where she lived would speak of her as a happy person, that had so many children of her own, and others by her maid.*¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 469); accessed September 9, 2017.

¹⁷⁴ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁷⁵ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

¹⁷⁶ *David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:9–11.

¹⁷⁷ *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:13.

¹⁷⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:13 (and there is an additional citation there).

The Name of Asher (Various Commentators)

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *[Asher is] from the Hebrew word meaning "blessed" or "happiness." Notice that Leah is not focusing on the conflict, she is focusing on the fact that God has blessed her and she is happy. So we really see an insight into the character and the spiritual nature of these two women [by the names they give their children].*¹⁷⁹

The College Press Bible Study: *It is possible also that the name Asher is historically related to the Canaanite goddess Asherah, consort of El in Ras Shamra texts.*¹⁸⁰

Dr. Peter Pett: *The names reflect Leah's growing contentment. No longer torn at heart she now feels triumphant. She has done well by her husband.*¹⁸¹

I do not like Pett's use of the word *contentment*, as there is nothing in the narrative which follows which suggests that Leah is contented. This is something which happens when Bible doctrine is infused with our thinking. I think that she began to become content with the birth of Judah; but then got a little nutty when Rachel decided to use the surrogate card. I think that this is what Leah said; but that her happiness was short-lived (note how they will interact with the mandrakes, and note what Leah says).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Keil and Delitzsch: *Leah did not think of God in connection with these two births. They were nothing more than the successful and welcome result of the means she had employed.*¹⁸²

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Leah's speech betrays her here. Not once is God mentioned. In the heat of this battle between two wives, little thought is given to the ethics of their actions, only to the expected results. She who previously had viewed her children as a gift from the Lord now sees these sons as merely good fortune—"How lucky I am," "How fortunate," and "How happy am I." Devotion to the Lord has been thrown to the wind by Leah. The focus of her thinking has shifted from God's estimation of her actions to the praise she would be given by other women (verse 13).*¹⁸³

We cannot see the people in these narratives as static. We have observed that when Leah gave birth to Judah, it appeared that she was making great personal strides; her personal relationship with God was foremost. However here, it is clear that she is spiritually retrogressing.

All of these children are blessings from God; and it is unfortunate that they are not so recognized.

More Children Are Born (a graphic); from [Slide Player](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

¹⁷⁹ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017 (slightly edited).

¹⁸⁰ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁸¹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:9–13.

¹⁸² Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:9–13.

¹⁸³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 469); accessed September 9, 2017.

So far, if my arithmetic can be depended upon, so far, Leah has had 4 children of her own, her personal maid has bore 2 children for Jacob and Rachel's personal maid has given birth to 2 children for Jacob.


The first Mormons along with various offshoots of the Mormon cult supported polygamy. We are currently studying Jacob, who is clearly a polygamist, and his various wives will be the mothers for the 12 tribes


of Israel. Marriage Equality proponents often point to polygamy in the Bible in order to justify societal acceptance of gay marriage. For these reasons, we should stop for a moment and study the doctrine of Polygamy.


More Children Are Born

Lehi gives her maidservant to Jacob

Zilpah



Gad 

Asher 

She was the maidservant of Laban whom he gave to his daughter Leah upon the marriage of Leah and Jacob

She was given to Jacob by Leah as his wife to bare children

She bore two sons, Gad and Asher, and Leah names the children

According to Jewish tradition she is believed to be buried in the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Tiberias (Wikipedia)

Genesis 30:9-13 (3)

Jacob originally wanted to marry Rachel. He was deceived into thinking he consummated his marriage with Rachel, when it turned out to be Leah. Both women insisted that he impregnate their personal maids, so that Jacob ended up fathering children by 4 different women, all of whom lived together (but in separate tents).

A more complete [Doctrine of Polygamy \(HTML\)](#) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

- I. First, we must acknowledge that there are several instances of polygamy in Scripture:
 1. The first recorded instance of this is Genesis 8:19, where Lamech, also the writer of the first outlaw, bad-boy song, married two women. Lamech was a descendant of Cain, and he also killed another man. In other words, the first instance of polygamy is not a poster boy that we ought to emulate.
 2. Abraham had one wife Sarah, but her maid Hagar became his mistress, and Abraham fathered a child by her—at Sarah's insistence, by the way. The end result was a great deal of conflict and stress within the household, to the point where she and her child were sent away (once this son was old enough). This was very difficult for Hagar and her son Ishmael is called a *wild-ass of a man*. There are a lot of single mothers today who are raising the same kind of young man—this describes their sons to a T. Genesis 21
 3. Jacob obviously had two wives, and one might even find him more justified here than in any other case. He worked 7 years for his uncle Laban in order to take his daughter, Rachel, in marriage. Laban had Jacob marry the older sister, Leah, instead (apparently, Jacob did not find out until the next morning who he had been with). After marrying and having sex with a woman, even though Jacob did not realize who she was, means there were no *take-backs*, and Jacob was stuck with Leah, the older sister. He worked another 7 years for Rachel. When he separated from Laban entirely (given Laban's behavior with regards to his daughters, it is reasonable to suppose that Laban took advantage of Jacob in many ways), Jacob also ended up with the personal servant for each of his wives. Having children became more of a competition than the natural outgrowth of a marriage, and they ended up with 12 children, all 4 women participating as mothers. God still allowed these 12 sons to make up the Jewish race, but we are told that God is able to work all things together for good (Romans 8:28). To give you an idea as to how dysfunctional Jacob's family was, the brothers banded together to sell their youngest brother into slavery because they

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

did not like him. Genesis 35 37

4. It is not clear whether Moses was a polygamist or not. His first wife left him, then she returned; and then we don't hear about her at all. At an advanced age, Moses marries an Ethiopian woman (a Cushite), which irritates Miriam and Aaron no end (Moses' sister and brother—Num. 12:1). I think that it is likely that Moses' first wife had deserted him by this time or had died. Her father seemed to be spiritually mature, but there is no indication that Moses' first wife ever was. In any case, there appears to be nothing wrong with what Moses did; and God even upbraided Miriam for being snitty about this marriage (it is possible that she was just concerned that this Ethiopian woman was from a different race; however, this was not her call to make). I digress.
5. David had a number of wives. He married two women before ruling in Hebron; and he married several women in both Hebron and Jerusalem. Now, even though to a man, this might appear to be the life; David has power, he has money and he has several wives; this is not necessarily the case. It will be clear that many of David's problems came from his many children whom he sired but obviously did not spend much time raising. Obviously, as king, David is spread pretty thin; furthermore, he had 20 or so sons and daughters, which made things doubly difficult for him to have a fatherly influence over them. 2Samuel 3:1–5 5:13–16
 - 1) Okay, you are now convinced as to the importance of the nuclear family; now, *why does God allow David to have several wives?* God is a gentleman and He respects our volition. God allows us to sin; He allows us to make grave mistakes. With David, this is a matter of teaching by example: if David, a man of great spiritual integrity and with almost unlimited resources, cannot control a half-dozen kids by as many wives, then it should be clear to us that we will be unable to properly raise our own children outside God's pre-designed family unit. I am sure that this has been said before, but *it does not take a village to raise a child; it takes a mother and a father.*
6. The most famous example is Solomon, David's son, who has 1000 wives and mistresses. There were several problems: Solomon's foreign wives turned him away from God and to their own idols. Also, there was obviously little or no true happiness found here, as Solomon pines over the Shulamite woman in Song of Solomon. Can you imagine Solomon suffering from unrequited love when he has 1000 women to choose from? There is no possible way that Solomon could have gotten to know the souls of half of these women.
7. God does not completely restrict the free will of His people. That is, a person does not enter into marriage with a second wife and then immediately get struck down by lightning. However, simply because we find cases where God tolerates sin, that does not mean that it God sponsors sin. A simple example is: drunkenness is a sin, but many of us have the wherewithal to spend the remainder of our lives drunk. Now, God might remove us from this life via the sin unto death; but there would clearly be a period of time where God indulges our overindulgence. At no time should we interpret this lack of immediate discipline as God condoning this practice. So, simply finding instances of polygamy (and other sins) in Scripture does not condone polygamy or the other sins. The Bible is a book of true human history, and we observe man, warts and all, within its pages.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

II. Since it is obvious that God has allowed polygamy in the past, why can't we get some of that?

1. To summarize, just because men in the past have had multiple wives does not mean that God approves of polygamy or that polygamy is as valid a life choice as monogamy. God made Eve for Adam; God did not make Eve, Sally, Jessie, and Molly. By making and creating Eve, God established a precedent. Throughout Scripture, principles of marriage are applied to one man and one woman; and some categories of men, e.g., kings, are specifically prohibited from having multiple wives. Furthermore, despite what we men might see as advantages in having more than one wife, are clearly outweighed by the disadvantages. You may recall the wives of



Taken from: http://student.ucr.edu/~smara002/cs6/all_the_questions/the_thousand_wives.jpeg

Elkanah. First of all, he had a favorite wife, which is inevitable. Because of this, his second favorite wife gave his favorite a hard time—she found the one area in which she excelled and the favorite did not, and she rubbed that in. That caused continual tension in the household and the favorite wife was generally unhappy. When Elkanah's favorite wife was unhappy, Elkanah was also unhappy. These circumstances did result to the birth of Samuel, but it was not the circumstances of having two wives which actually led to this birth—that was God's will based upon a prayer of Hannah's. Our focus for this study is upon the obvious and continual tension within this household.

2. In my life, I have known a lot of women; and most of them appeared to be a handful, so to speak. I have even had two female roommates at one time, and, whenever one of them was out of kilter, the household was out of kilter as well. Knowing the little beasties as I do, women tend to get out of kilter quite a lot. When there are 2 or more women, the effect seems to be more exponential than cumulative. In other words, a man might have two or more wives and things just go along swimmingly, but then, one day, one of those women gets a bit out of kilter. This changes everything in the household. For every additional woman, that is one more person that can, at any moment, for any reason, suddenly get out of kilter. Do you see how this might not be much fun for the man?
3. As we will see later on in David's life, his having several wives did not cure him of having a roving eye; and he got himself in serious trouble over a married woman, despite the fact that he had 10 wives and 10 mistresses. The same was true of Solomon. Having a roving eye is a common male sin. Giving in to that temptation does not solve anything or make that sin go away. In many cases, in a monogamous relationship, it destroys the relationship. If this roving eye results in one more woman being added to the stable, ala polygamy, then, again, there are increased problems in the household (or households), and the roving eye is not quenched or satisfied.
4. Giving in to the lust pattern does not satiate the lust. This helps to explain the addictive nature of pornography.
5. We have also seen that, even with their unlimited resources, having several wives was still difficult for David or Solomon to manage.

III. Spirituality by imitation:

1. One of the principles of Scripture is, we don't simply pick a person in the Bible and copy them. This goes for the Old Testament, the gospels and the book of Acts. Some of the worst cults in history have been the result of simply copying the life or actions of this or that person in the Bible. The most prominent example of this is the charismatic crowd. They observe that a few people *get the ghost* in the book of Acts, that many of them speak in tongues, and so, they try to imitate this experience. Now, this may seem harmless enough; after all, *the men who spoke in tongues, who received the Holy Spirit, were great men, for the most part, and shouldn't we make an attempt to follow in their footsteps?* But here is where things fall apart:

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

- 1) Paul, in his epistles, does not tell any church or any individual, *you know, you have no real spiritual life; you need to get the Spirit*. Neither did John in the book of Revelation when addressing the lukewarm church. In fact, there are no mandates anywhere in any epistle for us to seek out God the Holy Spirit and to *get Him*. We are told to be *filled with the Holy Spirit*; and that is a command; but that is to be restored to fellowship. It is for those who already have God the Holy Spirit.
 - 2) Secondly, and this is completely ignored by charismatics, the means by which they get the *spirit* bears no resemblance whatsoever to the New Testament historical narrative. They want to have this experience; they want others to share this experience, so you have them leaning their heads back, just letting sounds come out of their mouth, until they feel it or get it. Sometimes there can be an intense group pressure to get the *spirit*; sometimes not. But, in any case, the mechanics never match with what we find in the book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, and there did not seem to be any sort of decision which they made to get the Holy Spirit.
2. Now, I have gone off on a tangent here, but the simple principle is, you obey the *mandates* of Scripture; you do not try to imitate this or that experience or this or that person. I can guarantee you that, between naming your sins to God, learning the Word of God from a good pastor, and obeying the mandates which you come across, there is not going to be any time for you to try to imitate anyone. It is going to be completely irrelevant to your life.
 3. In other words, even though you read that David had many wives and that David was a man after God's own heart, this does not mean that you will be a man after God's own heart if you marry several women. David had the husband of a Bathsheba murdered; a woman that David took in adultery. This is clearly anti-God; so, despite the fact that David was a man after God's own heart, we still do not get to commit adultery whenever we have a chance or kill off various people that will cause us inconvenience.
- IV. Causes of polygamy:
1. Simple sexual lust on the part of the man. David had a lot of things on his mind when he was king; so he did marry several women, but not as many as he could have. What appears to be his final marriage, to Bathsheba, is clearly preceded by lust for Bathsheba.
 2. When David appears to get his head straight, near the end of his life, he appears to have a singular marriage to Bathsheba. He continued having his other wives, but only in the sense that he supported them (actually, the state supported them).
 3. A large percentage of women, despite what we find in the media, desire a family and children. Under circumstances of war, particularly when a nation has been completely subdued in war, the women significantly outnumber the men. Either the men who have conquered them or the men (men of substance) who remain marry several women in order to fulfil the desire of the woman and to perpetuate the people. Even in these circumstances, all that I have said about polygamy still applies.

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

- V. Let me interject a general principle here: God has an ideal, and this ideal is designed both for individuals and for society as a whole. God does not rail against human pleasure, and therefore, bans everything that might be fun: polygamy, extra-marital sex, homosexuality, drugs, drunkenness, etc. There is a balance, and within that balance, there is room for relaxation and human pleasure. When satisfying human lust becomes the focus of a person's life, the end result is drug addiction, alcohol addiction, sexual addiction and a myriad of other addictions. These people who fall into these addictions, who attempt to satisfy their every lust, are not happy, they never satiate the lust which plagues them, they are a blight on society, they ruin their own personal lives, and they cause great dysfunction within their own extended families. Quite obviously, this does not occur all at once; it is a gradual process where pleasure becomes more and more the focus of one's life, to the exclusion of all else and all others. God puts parameters upon human conduct, which parameters serve to increase one's happiness, not decrease it. It's like a football game. You cannot have a game where anything goes. A team cannot just choose to have a 5th down because they really, really want it. A dozen men cannot physically brutalize a member of the opposite team to death, even if they really want to. Quarterbacks cannot take the ball into the stands, and run through the stands to make a touchdown. There are parameters to the game which makes it enjoyable to the sports fan and to the participants. Anytime these parameters are pushed or disregarded, there are problems. However, these parameters—these rules and regulations—are a part of what makes the sport enjoyable. You cannot simply put an arbitrary number of participants of varying sizes on a field, with arbitrary equipment (whatever they might have lying around the house), and then tell them to play ball (or whatever). There must be rules, guidelines, strategies, parameters. All of life is the same way. Although we stupidly blame oil companies when they make huge profits, this should not concern us. However, if these profits are achieved by lying, deceit, and murder, then we should become concerned. There must be parameters—ethics—in business. You simply cannot walk into the office of your biggest competitor and decimate their workforce. Even your diet and what you eat has parameters. I personally love deserts with chocolate, but, I cannot simply eat chocolate all day long. I would reduce my lifespan and suffer a myriad of health problems. There must be parameters on what I eat and when I eat. The same is true of marriage and family. Graphic from [Utopian Polygamy](#).
- VI. You might say, *you can't legislate morality!* (a misunderstood saying if there ever was one) Virtually all legislation is morality. With respect to the illustration of business above, there is legislation which determines what is fair and ethical in business. In fact, we have even determined that, even if a business does so well as to shut down all of its competition, we cannot allow a monopoly either. That is a moral decision our society has made. Taxation and who pays what, is a moral decision. Personally, I think our tax structure is immoral, and that the high tax brackets for the rich is incredibly immoral. Personally, I'd rather see all taxes to range from 10–20%, and that even the poorest among us would have to pay taxes, because I think that it is moral that if they think the government must pay for this and that, that they understand that some of that money is coming right out of their pockets. You may completely disagree, but, the key here is, we are making moral decisions here with regards to taxation. We are legislating what we believe to be moral and right. When we can kill and when we can't is a moral decision. Some believe that, with regards to medical care, if someone wants this or that procedure, no matter how slight the chance is for survival, they should get it, without regards to cost, and any hospital or insurance carrier which disagrees is bad. All attempts to preserve life should be allowed; however, we have tolerated, as a society, the destruction of fetuses/babies in the womb. Without any scientific evidence whatsoever, we have, as a society, supported the whim of a mother (*or right of a mother*) to kill her child (or, *to terminate her pregnancy*). The very language that we use is designed to make us sound correct in our own *moral* judgment that we make. So, yes, you can legislate morality, and yes, we do it with each and every law



The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

that we pass. Therefore, we even have legislation which deals specifically with marriage and family.

- VII. There have been other faiths which have believed in polygamy. Joseph Smith, a founder of the Mormons, claims that God gave him divine revelation concerning the rightness of plural marriage, which is found in Doctrines and Covenants 132:61–62: *And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.* This is not Scripture, by the way; this is Mormon Scripture, so-called. They have other *scriptures* which reject polygamy: Jacob 1:15 2:27 Ether 10:5.¹
1. We don't have confusion like that in the Bible; even though there are men who are polygamous and that is never hidden; neither is it justified or praised. As we will see in this doctrine, Scripture condemns polygamy.
 2. One of the fascinating things about the books which Joseph Smith transcribed, is that he wrote them in King James' English several hundred years after King James. This language was used in churches, but not among common people; so, Smith's *holy books* are also written in a church-y language.
- VIII. Biblical statements concerning polygamy: We have briefly looked at a few instances of polygamy, and, during narratives, rarely do we find a practice clearly disparaged in the narrative. However, in other areas of Scripture, we should be able to find Scripture which seems to support or reject polygamy.
1. God specifically designed one woman for one man. When Adam had been created, he observed, after naming the animals, that there was no corresponding creature for himself. God created a woman, a help designed for him, whom Adam named Eve. God created only one woman for Adam. God did not create several women for Adam nor did God create another man for Adam, thus precluding polygamy and homosexuality by divine precedent. Genesis 2:18–23
 2. Although the Bible records several instances of polygamy, in each and every case, where we know more about the relationship apart from it simply being polygamous, is that there were great problems as a result of polygamy.
 - 1) Sarah insisted that Abraham throw her maid and his son out of the house.
 - 2) Jacob's sons became so jealous as to sell their own brother into slavery.
 - 3) Even with many wives, David and Solomon both continued to lust after other women. David's sons and daughters caused huge problems for each other (including incest and murder) and for David; and it is clear that David was not there for them as a guiding light. Solomon's polygamy just about financially bankrupted Israel (along with his other projects).
 3. The person most able to have a polygamous marriage is the king of Israel, and early on—in fact, hundreds of years before Israel even had a king—God made it clear that kings could not have multiple wives. Deut. 17:17: **A king must not acquire many wives for himself so that his heart won't go astray. He must not acquire very large amounts of silver and gold for himself.** Two things a leader should not do: overtax and indulge his lusts. Here, here!
 4. Something which is rare in the Old Testament: narrative is combined with a moral judgment when it comes to Solomon's wives: **King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to Pharaoh's daughter: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women from the nations that the LORD had told the Israelites about, "Do not intermarry with them, and they must not intermarry with you, because they will turn you away from Me to their gods."** Solomon was deeply attached to these women and loved them (1Kings 11:1–2).² Much of the narrative in Scripture refrains from making moral pronouncements. In the case of Solomon, his violation was so flagrant as to require it. Furthermore, this should indicate to us that polygamy is against God's plan.
 5. Once a marriage was established, regardless of the number of participants, God did not break it up. That would have put the lesser wives in a vulnerable position. In the ancient world, if a woman was put out, this could prematurely end her life.
 6. The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" He

The Abbreviated Doctrine of Polygamy

answered them, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matthew 19:4–6 Genesis 2:24). Although our Lord is not dealing with polygamy directly here, but divorce, the principle is, the two (one man and one woman) become one flesh. *What God joins together, man should not separate.* This indicates that marriage is a divine institution, and that a man and a woman are meant to be permanently joined. This at least implies the exclusion of same-sex marriage, polygamy and divorce.

7. The one husband-one wife principle is upheld in the epistles of Paul: *But because of sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. A husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. A wife does not have authority over her own body, but her husband does. Equally, a husband does not have authority over his own body, but his wife does* (1Corinthians 7:2–4). Although Paul's topic here is not polygamy, it is clear that God designed one man for one woman and vice versa.
 8. Church leaders are to be the husband of *one wife* (1Timothy 3:2, 12).
 9. There is an obvious parallel between Christ and His bride, the church (and, in all analogous instances, the church is seen as one body). Ephesians 5:31–32
- IX. Other reasons for monogamy in marriage:
1. All populations produce approximately 50% males and 50% females. Even nature (which is the design of God) devised the human race to pair off.
 2. In a polygamous marriage, the wife is seen primarily as a sexual object, a breeder and the one to handle the children (as the husband will likely not have the time). Even liberated women would object to this sexist emphasis.
 3. According to ISBE, *Polygamous nations have never been industrial inventors, have contributed little to science. They have usually ruined the fertility of the lands they have occupied. They have been heavily weighted with the lethargy of a system that appeals to nothing but the most primitive instincts and vices of man.*³ I can't think of any polygamous nations off the top of my head. Perhaps there are scattered tribes or groups where this is the case? They add: *Rome conquered the world while she was monogamous, and lost control of it when she dropped to the moral level of the sex corruption of the peoples that she had conquered.*³ ISBE then notes two exceptions in civilization: *There may seem to be two exceptions - the establishment of the Mogul empire in India and the subjugation of Western Asia and Eastern Europe by the Turk. That in both cases there was great success in war is granted. They were authorized by their religion to exhibit the frenzy of bloodshed and indulge in lust. Indeed, enjoyment of the latter was a bright hope for the life to come. But when they had possession of a country, and massacres and ravishing were over, what then? For what is mankind indebted to them?*³
 4. For most men, the draw of a polygamous marriage is a sexual one. Sex should not be our motivating factor in marriage or to marry. It is obviously a factor, and one to which Paul defers (1Corinthians 7:2); but when one places personal sexual gratification at the top of one's priorities, the end result is not a union of any sort, but a vehicle for personal sexual gratification. We do not indulge sexual lust simply because we have it. Obviously, there are times when it is strictly forbidden: with children, with animals; and, in today's society, times when it ought to be forbidden: outside of marriage, with a person of the same gender. Paul counsels on sexual relations within a marriage one time—in 1Corinthians 7: the woman's body belongs to the man and the man's body belongs to the woman. All other marriage counseling which Paul does deals with the souls of the two participants.

¹ There is a list of Mormon contradictions here: http://www.mormonchallenge.com/ref_ldscontra.htm. Some are apt and some are not. The Scripture quotation came from the LDS website, and, surprisingly enough, I had to make two corrections in their text.

² The rest of this passage goes into detail about Solomon turning against God.

³ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Polygamy.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:9–13 [When Leah saw that he had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. And Leah's maid zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" so she named him Gad. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women will call me happy."](#)

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:9–13

1. Leah has already given birth to 4 sons as we saw in the previous chapter.
2. She was noted by God not to be receiving any true attention or affection from Jacob, and blessed with children.
3. She rightly attributes the births to the Lord, and mentions Him in connection with the children.
4. She was hoping to gain some favor in the eyes of Jacob, which likely did not occur.
5. After she stopped bearing children, she observed the course of action which Rachel had taken, and pursues the same course herself.
6. She learned from her opponent and resorted to the same sort of sinful trend of Adam activity to promote herself in the eyes of Jacob.
7. The rivalry between these women is only warming up.
8. Both of these women gave a female servant to Jacob, who acquiesced to their sinful trend of Adam whims.
9. This is all a violation of RM/RW, introducing polygamy into the family as some sort of accepted practice.
10. There is no doubt that this was accepted practice by the cosmos at that time.
11. The problems which arise in this family ought to make the CA believer stop and carefully consider any sort of cosmic viewpoint in regard to any matter.
12. Their conformity to the cosmos only serves to further inflame their sinful trends of Adam and create further problems in the family.
13. This family is loaded with sinful trend of Adam activity and it does not appear that any one of them applies any serious doctrine.
14. This is a lesson to believers today, family dissension and turmoil is not only unhealthy, it disrupts spiritual growth.
15. Some believers have become spiritual casualties due to a failure to properly deal with the issues related to the family.
16. Rachel's sinful trend of Adam activity brings forth sinful trend of Adam activity from Leah, and this continues to escalate, back and forth.
17. At some point, someone in the family has got to begin applying doctrine.
18. Each believer must be cognizant of the fact that they cannot change anyone in their family, you cannot change your husband or your wife.
19. You will, however, be evaluated for what you did with the doctrine that you have heard.
20. You are the only person you have a mandate to work spiritually, so you should concentrate diligently on your applications.
21. These two women are also an example of what happens when the man of the house is a wimp and does not deal with the sinful trend of Adam of his wife.
22. These two women were horsy bitches who created a climate of hostility and jealousy beyond belief.
23. This sort of home life is not what God has in mind for the believer.
24. God desires us to have peace in the home, but that is not going to happen as long as we cave in to the sinful trend of Adam under every test.
25. Rather than apply doctrine toward each other, they led with their stas and fought each other.
26. Rather than live together in peace, a state of war existed in the home.
27. God has provided a blueprint for happiness in the Word of God, but you have to follow the plan or you are destined for failure and misery.
28. The plan for the family includes:
 - 1) The man as the authority, to be obeyed as if he were God. IPet. 3:1ff
 - 2) This is true for the wife and for the children. Eph. 5:22, 6:1
 - 3) The wife as the helpmate, to be cared for by the man, not treated like a slave. IIPet. 3:7;

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:9–13

Ephesians 5:25-33

- 4) The parents teaching the principles of doctrine to the children by word and example. Deut. 4:10; Eph. 6:4
29. If these principles are neglected or disregarded, chaos results and the family becomes like this one, a nightmare.
30. Leah and Rachel both give a slave to Jacob, with whom he mistakenly has sex.
31. God does not condescend to their evaluation of their actions, since Rachel is the only woman who is called the wife of Jacob in the Word of God. Gen. 46:19
32. Marriage involves only one man and one woman, and their mutual decision to be husband and wife.
33. In the case of Leah and these two slaves, that was not true.
34. Leah's plan, like Rachel's before her, was successful; in that it resulted in the birth of two more boys.
35. Both of whom she took for her own and raised.
36. The first she named Gad, no longer reflecting the concept or idea that God was involved, but reflecting the Sinful trend of Adam viewpoint of good luck.
37. The second she named Asher, denoting the fact that she is now building her happiness on her children.
38. The woman who builds her happiness on her children is destined to end up miserable, since her true happiness in life should come only from her right man.
39. She also is infatuated by the fact that others around her were complimenting her on her success.
40. The compliments of the maladjusted should not in any way encourage or flatter the believer.
41. These things do not sustain you or keep you happy.
42. Children have nothing to do with whether or not a woman makes the maturity adjustment.
43. While the cosmos may smile and pat you on the back for being a prolific mother, God is only impressed by your acclimation to the authority of your right man.
44. Do you want to be a Sarah, or a Rebekah, Leah, or Rachel??????

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:9–13 [When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad.](#)

[Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women \[daughters\] will call me happy." So she named him Asher.](#)

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:9–13: Tit for Tat

1. Rachel's shallow triumphs were short-lived.
2. And once again we have someone seeing something ("[When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing](#)").
3. Leah rises to the challenge and anything her sister can do she can do even better.
4. Leah can bear children and she can play the maid card!
5. No background information is supplied as to how she convinced Jacob to take a fourth wife (v. 9).
6. Only that Leah presented Jacob with her maid Zilpah as a slave-wife.
7. Throughout the first half of the chapter Jacob is simply compliant with the manipulations of his two wives.
8. Jacob did not tell her that she has four sons and should be happy with that, so there was no pressing need for her to have surrogate children.
9. Upon the birth of the 7th patriarch of Israel Leah gives a very short declaration with less obvious emphasis on God (v. 11).
10. She simply declares "[Luck has come!](#)" the quere reading or "Good luck!" (ketib reading) translated here "[How fortunate!](#)"

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:9–13: Tit for Tat

11. Some translations read: "A troop comes!" (KJV, NKJ) (cp. NIV "What good fortune!").
12. "Gad" means fortune or luck.
13. As with the Bilhah-Jacob union that produced two sons so as things would have it Jacob and Zilpah have a second son (v. 12).
14. Her exuberant words "Happy am I!" suggests that she too was building her happiness on her ability to achieve her ends.
15. The second part of her statement upon the birth of Asher is that she will achieve notoriety from the women folk ("For women/daughters will call me happy.").
16. Asher who's name is built around the term 'happiness' is the 8th son and patriarch of Israel.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Mandrakes, an aphrodisiac, are discovered (vv. 14–16)

We are now up to 8 sons—4 by Leah, and two each by personal maids Zilpah and Bilhah. Leah began to bear sons immediately. And, although we are not given any specifics on it, Jacob has to take part when it comes to the conception of Leah's children. In the chapter, we are about to see interaction between the two wives of Jacob, to understand how they dealt with one another and their polygamous marriage.

As an aside, even though the sons are listed in this order—Leah had 4 sons, then Rachel's maid has 2 sons and Leah's maid has 2 sons, that does not mean that they all gave birth in just that order. It is very likely that there was a lot of overlap—and it is even possible that Leah first spoke of using her maid as a surrogate, and then Rachel jumped in and beat her to the punch. However, I would judge that Rachel's maid does not have any sons until after Leah has born 4 sons.

However, let's look back on Leah's 4 sons: Reuben (*behold, a son!*), Simeon (*to hear*), Levi (*joined to*) and Judah (*praised*); all from Leah. Essentially, we have the gospel message embedded in the names of these boys.¹⁸⁴ Behold, a son [the Son of God]! Hear (or *listen and obey*) [Him]; [with the result that we are] joined [to Him]; [with the result that we may] praise [Him].

Rachel has not yet given birth to any sons. Because of this, she has given her maid to Jacob, and her maid gave them two sons as a surrogate mother for Rachel (this was apparently a common custom in that era). When Leah stopped having children (which suggests that she spent time with Jacob, her husband), she offers up her maid. These maids are, essentially, secondary wives to Jacob. In a later passage, they will be called *Jacob's wives* (literally, *women of Jacob*).

So, we pick up this narrative at a point where Rachel has not given Jacob a child; and Leah appears to have stopped bearing children.

It is not completely clear that their personal maids have given birth to all 4 sons already, at the time of the mandrakes.

¹⁸⁴ Taken from <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/gab/view.cgi?bk=4&ch=34> (Arno Gaebelein's Annotated Bible); accessed May 25, 2015.

Keil and Delitzsch: *How thoroughly henceforth the two wives were carried away by constant jealousy of the love and attachment of their husband, is evident from the affair of the love-apples, which Leah's son Reuben, who was then four years old, found in the field and brought to his mother.*¹⁸⁵

And so goes Reuben in days of a harvest of wheats and so he finds mandrakes in the field. And so he brings them unto Leah, his mother. And so says Rachel unto Leah, "Give please to me from mandrakes of your son."

Genesis
30:14

During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and found mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel then said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. When Rachel heard, she asked for Leah to give her some of these mandrakes.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so goes Reuben in days of a harvest of wheats and so he finds mandrakes in the field. And so he brings them unto Leah, his mother. And so says Rachel unto Leah, "Give please to me from mandrakes of your son."
Targum (Onkelos)	And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes [Yavruchin. Hebrew, dudaim. Septuagint, "apples of mandrakes" ("atropa mandragira," Linnaeus). The Samaritan expression is as the Hebrew, and the Peschito as the Targum.] in the field, and he brought them to Leah his mother. And Rahel said to Leah, Give me now of thy son's mandrakes.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Reuben went <u>in the days of Sivan</u> , in the time of wheat harvest, and found (Yaveruchin) mandrakes in the field; and he brought them to Leah his mother. And Rahel said to Leah, Give me now of thy son's mandrakes.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Ruben, going out in the time of the wheat harvest into the field, found mandrakes: which he brought to his mother Lia. And Rachel said: Give me <u>part</u> of your son's mandrakes.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother, Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me <u>some</u> of your son's mandrakes."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Reuben went at the time of the wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought them; to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me <u>some</u> of your sons mandrakes.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Ruben went in the day of barley-harvest, and found apples of mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Lea; and Rachel said to Lea <u>her sister</u> , Give me of your son's mandrakes.
Significant differences:	The targum has additional text. The Latin leaves out <i>to Leah</i> when Rachel speaks to her. The Greeks adds in <i>her sister</i> . Although some of these translations use <i>some</i> of your son's mandrakes, the word <i>some</i> is not found in the Hebrew; but it can be interpreted in that way.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

¹⁸⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

Bible in Basic English	Now at the time of the grain-cutting, Reuben saw some love-fruits in the field, and took them to his mother Leah. And Rachel said to her, Let me have some of your son's love-fruits.
Easy English	It was the time to get the wheat in from the fields. Reuben went out into the fields. He found some mandrake plants. He brought them to Leah, his mother. Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give me some of the mandrake plants that your son gave to you.' Wheat is part of a plant. People use it to make flour. People thought that mandrake plants could help a woman become pregnant. Rachel thought that the plants would help her to have a child. That is why she wanted them. But only God could give her a child.
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the fields and found some special flowers. He brought them to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's flowers."
NIRV	While the wheat harvest was being gathered, Reuben went out into the fields. He found some mandrake plants. He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	During the wheat harvest, Reuben found some erotic herbs in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Give me your son's erotic herbs."
New Life Version	During the time of gathering grain, Reuben went out in the field and found some fruit. He brought it to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Give me some of your son's fruit."
New Living Translation	One day during the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes growing in a field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Rachel begged Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, when it came time to harvest the barley, Reuben went out to the field and found some mandrake apples [growing] there, and he brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to her sister, 'Give me some of your son's mandrakes!'
International Standard V	<i>Jacob and the Mandrakes</i> ¹⁸⁶ Some time later, during the wheat harvest season, Reuben went out and found some mandrakes in the field and brought them back for his mother Leah. Then Rachel told Leah, "Please give me your son's mandrakes."
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Once, at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and found some mandrakes, which he brought back to his mother Lia [The fruit of the mandragora or mandrake was anciently thought to be a specific for promoting conception in women.]; and Rachel said to Lia, Give me some of the fruit thy son has found.
Translation for Translators	During the time when they were harvesting wheat, Reuben went out into the fields and saw some ◀mandrakes/plants that women eat to help them to become pregnant▶. He brought some of them to his mother Leah. But Rachel saw them and said to Leah, "Please give me some of those plants that your son brought to you!"

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Reuben was to go out in the days of the wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and he was to bring them to his mother Leah. Rachel was to say to Leah: Be giving me of your son's mandrakes.
--------------------	--

¹⁸⁶ A good name for a band.

Conservapedia	Now Reuben went out, in the month of wheat harvest (Sivan), and discovered mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." The common mandrake (<i>Mandragora officinarum</i>) was a source of highly potent and dangerous alkaloids that once had a high medicinal value. The mandrake also had a reputation as an aphrodisiac. Reuben was blessed indeed that he did not poison himself through improper handling of these plants.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Ruben went out in the wheat harvest and found mandragoras in the fields, and brought them unto his mother Lea. Then said Rahel to Lea give me of your sons mandragoras.
Tree of Life Version	Now during the days of the wheat harvest, Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and he brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Reuben during the wheat harvest had found in the field mandrakes that excites sexual desire, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel asked Leah, give me of your son's mandrakes.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Reuben went out during wheat-reaping season and found some mandrake-seeds in the field, and he brought them to Leah his mother; and Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me from your sons' mandrakes."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Reuben walked in the days of wheat harvest, and there were love-apples in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. And Rachel said to Leah, Give me, please, of your son's love-apples.
New American Bible (2011)	One day, during the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and came upon some mandrakes in the field which he brought home to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." Mandrakes: an herb whose root was thought to promote conception. The Hebrew word for mandrakes, <i>duda'im</i> , has erotic connotations, since it sounds like the words <i>daddayim</i> ("breasts") and <i>dodim</i> ("sexual pleasure").
New Jerusalem Bible	One day, at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben found some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.'
Revised English Bible	Once at the time of the wheat harvest when Reuben was out in the open country he found some mandrakes and brought them to Leah his mother. Rachel asked Leah for some of her son's mandrakes, but Leah said, "Is it not enough to have taken away my husband, that you should take these mandrakes as well?" V. 15 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	(iv) During the wheat harvest season Re'uven went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Le'ah. Rachel said to Le'ah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes [so that I can be fertile]."
The Complete Tanach	Reuben went in the days of the wheat harvest, and he found dudaim in the field and brought them to Leah, his mother, and Rachel said to Leah, "Now give me some of your son's dudaim."

in the days of the wheat harvest: [This is] to tell the praise of the [progenitors of] the tribes. It was harvest time, and he did not stretch out his hand upon stolen property, to bring wheat or barley, but only upon an ownerless thing, which no one cares about. — [from Gen. Rabbah 72: 2]

dudaim: (Sanh. 99b) Sigli. This is an herb, [called] jasmine in Arabic.

exeGesese companion Bible	And Reu Ben goes in the days of wheat harvest and finds mandrakes in the field and brings them to his mother Leah: and Rachel says to Leah, Give me, I beseech you, of the mandrakes of your son.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Once, at the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben came upon some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."
Kaplan Translation	Reuben took a walk during the wheat harvest [In the late spring.] and he found mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, 'Please give me some of your son's mandrakes.'
	Mandrakes: (Targum; Ibn Ezra; Radak, Sherashim; Josephus). Dudaim in Hebrew, from the word dodim denoting passion or carnal love (Radak, Sherashim; cf. Ezekiel 16:8, 23:17, Proverbs 7:16). It was called this because of its use as an aphrodisiac and fertility potion (Midrash Ne'elam, Zohar 1:134b). The mandrake (<i>mandragora officinarum</i>) is a herb of the beladonna or potato family. It has a thick perennial root, often split down the middle, like the lower limbs of the human body. Stalkless, it has large leaves that straddle the ground and violet flowers (cf. Rashi). In the spring, its yellow fruit, the size of a tomato, ripens. This fruit can have an intoxicating fragrance (Song of Songs 7:14). The variety found by Reuben was a rare, extinct species that gives off deadly fumes when pulled from the ground (Midrash Aggadah on Genesis 49:14, quoted in Tzeror HaMor as Midrash HaGaluy; Toledoth Yitzchak on Genesis 49:14. Cf Niddah 31a; Josephus, Wars 7:6:3). In the Talmud, there appears to be a dispute as to whether Reuben brought home the violet flowers, the fruits or the roots (Sanhedrin 99b). Other sources indicate that he brought home two fruits (Tzava'ath Yissachar 1:3,5,7; Josephus, Antiquities 1:19:8). Obviously, the Patriarchs and Matriarchs knew how to use these plants in mystical ways (Genesis 30:37). Still, Rachel did not bear children because of the mandrakes, but because of her prayers (Genesis 30:2, 30:22; cf. Zohar 1:157b). According to one ancient source, Rachel did not eat the mandrakes, but offered them to God (Tzava'ath Yissachar 2:6).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Reuven went in the yemei ketzir chittim, and found duda'im (mandrakes) in the sadeh, and brought them unto Leah immo. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, now, of the duda'im of thy ben.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	During the wheat harvest Reuben went into the field and found some mandrake plants [^c an aphrodisiac, also thought to increase fertility] and brought them to his mother Leah. But Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."
Kretzmann's Commentary	Verses 14-21 The Last Children of Leah And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Little Reuben, at that time about four or five years old, found the berries of the mandrake in the field. These berries are yellow, strong, but sweet-smelling, about the size of a nutmeg, and were generally believed to promote fruitfulness and to take the place of a love-potion. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes. This shows to what point the mutual jealousy of the two women had grown, in placing their trust even in such supposed remedies.

NET Bible® At the time [*Heb* “during the days.”] of the wheat harvest Reuben went out and found some mandrake plants [*Mandrake plants* were popularly believed to be an aphrodisiac in the culture of the time.] in a field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, “Give me some of your son’s mandrakes.”

The Pulpit Commentary And Reuben (at this time four or five years old) went (probably accompanying the reapers) in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes—*תִּיבְרָיִם, מְלֵא מַדְרָגוֹרֹוֹן*, (LXX; Josephus), apples of the mandragora, an herb resembling belladonna, with a root like a carrot, having white and reddish blossoms of a sweet smell, and with yellow odoriferous apples, ripening in May and June, and supposed, according to Oriental superstition, to possess the virtue of conciliating love and promoting fruitfulness—in the field (when at his childish play), and brought them unto his mother Leah (which a son of more mature years would not have done). Then Rachel (not exempt from the prevailing superstition) said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son’s mandrakes (in the hopes that they would remove her sterility).

The Voice When it came time to harvest the wheat, Reuben went out and found some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel *heard about this and* approached her sister.
Rachel: Would you please give me some of the mandrakes your son found?.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and Re’uven ^[See a son] walked in the days of the wheat harvest and he found mandrakes in the field and he brought them to Le’ah ^[Weary] his mother and Rahhel ^[Ewe] said to Le’ah ^[Weary], please give me from the mandrakes of your son,...

Concordant Literal Version And going is Reuben in the days of wheat harvest and finding mandrakes in the field, and is bringing them to his mother, Leah. And saying is Rachel to Leah, her sister, "Give to me, pray, of your son's mandrakes.

Context Group Version And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I beg of you, of your son's mandrakes.

Green’s Literal Translation And in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went out and found love-apples in the field. And he brought them to his mother Leah. And Rachel said to Leah, Please give to me from the love-apples of your son.

Webster’s Bible Translation And Reuben went, in the days of wheat-harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

Young’s Updated LT And Reuben goes in the days of wheat-harvest, and finds love-apples in the field, and brings them in unto Leah, his mother, and Rachel says unto Leah, “Give to me, I pray you, of the love-apples of your son.”

The gist of this passage: Reuben finds some mandrakes out in the field and brings them to his mother, Leah. Rachel asks to have some of them.

Genesis 30:14a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (l) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

Genesis 30:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הלך) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
R ^e ûwbên (רובן) [pronounced roo-BANE]	<i>behold a son; transliterated Reuben</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #7205 BDB #910
yâmîym (ימי) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
qâtsîyr (ריצק) [pronounced kaw-TZEER]	<i>harvesting, harvest; process of harvesting; crop, what is harvested or reaped; time of harvest</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7105 BDB #894
chîttâh (חתת) [pronounced kheet-TAW]	<i>wheat, wheat stalks</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #2406 BDB #334

Translation: During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out...

Some time passes. Reuben is a very young man—he is perhaps 4 or so. If we accept this chapter as being in chronological order—and there is no reason to think otherwise—Jacob and Laban discuss a salary for Jacob in vv. 25–34. They would be discussing a salary at the end of 14 years service for Leah and Rachel. Since Jacob married both women at the end of 7 years, then Reuben would be 6 years old at the end of 14 years of service. In fact, given the sons born after this mandrakes incident, Reuben would have been younger than 6 years—perhaps 4 years old.

Now, did Leah send Reuben out to find these *love-apples*? My guess is, Reuben went out meandering about, as children do, saw the apples (whatever kind of fruit they are), and picked them and brought them home. Or his mother sent him out to pick fruit for dinner. Rachel perhaps saw Reuben carrying them, and then went to Leah to speak to her about it.

The wheat is being harvested, but it does not sound as if Reuben went out to harvest the wheat himself. He is certainly too young to be working in the fields.

There are some critics who attack the Bible for every and any little thing; here, the problem, as they see it, is this is a nomadic people, and yet the text speaks of the wheat harvest. (1) The what harvest mere identifies the time of year that this is taking place (it does not mean that Jacob or Laban are raising wheat). (2) It is not inconceivable that Laban, even though he might be primarily a rancher, that he might also do some growing as well. This would insure that his family always had bread. (3) Finally, we know from Scripture that the patriarchs, at least on occasion, planted and harvested grain (Genesis 26:12).¹⁸⁷

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The Gezer calendar gives us insight as to when the wheat harvest took place. The Gezer calendar dating about 925 B.C was discovered by R. A. S. Macalister in his excavations at Gezer, which guarded the primary route into the Israelite hill country and was one of the most strategic cities in the Canaanite and Israelite periods. Gezer is a prominent 33-acre site that*

¹⁸⁷ Paraphrased from *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

overlooked the Aijalon Valley and the road leading through it to Jerusalem. The Gezer calendar reveals that the wheat harvest took place from mid-April to mid-May. Therefore, during the spring time, Genesis 30:14 records the oldest son of Leah and Jacob roaming the fields and finding some mandrakes for his mother.¹⁸⁸

The mandrakes appear to be found before Leah gives birth to her 5th son; so Reuben would be at most 5 or 6 years old.

Genesis 30:14b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
dûwdâ'îym (דוּדְאִיִּם) [pronounced doo-daw-EEM]	mandrakes, love-apples; as exciting sexual desire, and favouring procreation	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1736 BDB #188
Oriental superstition believes that these apples are related to sexual power or potency.			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sâdeh (שָׂדֶה) [pronounced saw-DEH]	field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961

Translation: ...and found mandrakes in the field.

Mandrakes are otherwise known as *love-apples*. First of all, you are wondering what are these mandrakes. These are some kind of fruit, sometimes identified with *love apples*, which are known for the aphrodisiac properties. There are differences in opinion as to exactly what modern-day plant is being referred to. Further, even if its reputation as a sexual stimulant is unfounded, 90% of sex is in the head anyway; so the mere suggestion of it to those already predisposed would be stimulating.

What has happened is that these two women are killing the goose that lays the golden eggs. In their desire to have Jacob as their own, they have turned him into a meek man among them. Their gain is that he can be told what to do; however, their loss is his reduced sexual desire for them. Their constant bickering and jealousy would tend to cool any man's ardor, so what has happened is that Jacob is no longer having sex with either wife. They have robbed him of his authority (for which he is equally responsible) and that robs him of his masculinity. Usually what would happen is a woman will become bored and not stimulated by such a man; however, with Jacob, he is the one to provide them with children to receive a more favored status as a woman and with him (who is showing signs of being potentially very prosperous).

¹⁸⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (pp. 469–470); accessed September 9, 2017.

H. C. Leupold: *By this time Reuben may have been a lad of about four years, just old enough to toddle out into the field after the reapers. Childlike, he gathers what especially attracts the eye, the yellow berries of the mandrake about of the size of a nutmeg. The Hebrew knows them as dūda'īm, which according to its root signifies "love-apples."*¹⁸⁹

Genesis 30:14a-c **During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and found mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Let's first see what we are dealing with here.

Mandrakes	
Commentator	Commentary
Easton	Mandrakes [come from the] Hebrew dudaim; i.e., "love-plants", occurs only in Genesis 30:14–16 and Son. 7:13. Many interpretations have been given of this word dudaim. It has been rendered "violets," "Lilies," "jasmynes," "truffles or mushrooms," "flowers," the "citron," etc. The weight of authority is in favour of its being regarded as the <i>Mandragora officinalis</i> of botanists, "a near relative of the night-shades, the 'apple of Sodom' and the potato plant." It possesses stimulating and narcotic properties (Genesis 30:14–16). The fruit of this plant resembles the potato-apple in size, and is of a pale orange colour. It has been called the "love-apple." The Arabs call it "Satan's apple." It still grows near Jerusalem, and in other parts of Palestine. ¹⁹⁰
Fausset	Mandrakes [are] <i>The Atropa mandragore</i> , of the order Solanaceae, allied to the deadly nightshade (<i>Atropa belladonna</i>); a stupefying narcotic with broad dark green leaves, flowers purple, and green apples which become pale yellow when ripe, with a tuberous bifid (forked) root. Still found ripe in wheat harvest (May) on the lower parts of Lebanon and Hermon (Genesis 30:14). The apples produce dizziness and exhilaration. The ancients believed them calculated to produce fecundity. Their Hebrew name, duwdaim, "love apples," agrees with their being used as aphrodisiacs to conciliate love; Rachel had this superstitious notion (Genesis 30:14–17). The odor is too strong to be agreeable to Europeans, but Orientals value strong-smelling things; Dioscorides calls the apples "sweet-scented." Son. 7:13, "the mandrakes give a smell." The root was fancied to resemble man, and to form a potent magical spell, and to emit a human groan on being torn from the ground! ¹⁹¹
ISBE	Mandrakes [come from the Hebrew word] מַדְדַּיִם, du ⁻ dha ⁻ i ⁻ m; μανδραγόρας, mandragóras (Genesis 30:14 f; Son. 7:13); the marginal reading "love apples" is due to the supposed connection of du ⁻ dha ⁻ i ⁻ m with דוּדַיִם, do ⁻ dhi ⁻ m, "love"): Mandrakes are the fruit of the <i>Mandragora officinarum</i> , a member of the Solanaceae or potato order, closely allied to the <i>Atropa belladonna</i> . It is a common plant all over Palestine, flourishing particularly in the spring and ripening about the time of the wheat harvest (Genesis 30:14). The plant has a rosette of handsome dark leaves, dark purple flowers and orange, tomato-like fruit. The root is long and branched; to pull it up is still considered unlucky (compare Josephus, BJ, VII, vi, 3). The fruit is called in Arabic baiḍ el-jinn, the "eggs of the jinn"; they have a narcotic smell and sweetish taste, but are too poisonous to be used as food. They are still used in folklore medicine in Palestine. The plant was well known as an aphrodisiac by the ancients (Son. 7:13). ¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

¹⁹⁰ M.G. Easton M.A., D.D., *Illustrated Bible Dictionary*; 1897; from e-Sword, topic: mandrakes.

¹⁹¹ Andrew Robert Fausset, *Fausset's Bible Dictionary*; from e-Sword, topic: Mandrakes.

¹⁹² *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*; James Orr, Editor; ©1956 Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Corinth.; © by Hendrickson Publishers; from E-Sword; Topic: Mandrakes.

Mandrakes	
Commentator	Commentary
Smith	Mandrakes are mentioned in Genesis 30:14; Genesis 30:16, and in Son. 7:13. The mandrake, <i>Atropa mandragora</i> , is closely allied to the well-known deadly nightshade, <i>Atropa belladonna</i> , and to the tomato, and belongs to the order Solanaceae, or potato family. It grows in Palestine and Mesopotamia.
Smith continued	(It grows low, like lettuce, which its leaves somewhat resemble, except that they are of a dark green. The flowers are purple, and the root is usually forked. Its fruit, when ripe, (early in May), is about the size of a small apple, 24 inches in diameter, ruddy or yellow, and of a most agreeable odor, (to Orientals more than to Europeans), and an equally agreeable taste. The Arabs call it "devil's apple", from its power to excite voluptuousness. Dr. Richardson, ("Lectures on Alcohol," 1881), tried some experiments with wine made of the root of mandrake, and found it narcotic, causing sleep, so that the ancients used it as an anaesthetic. Used in small quantities like opium, it excites the nerves, and is a stimulant. -- Editor). ¹⁹³
College Press Bible Study	<p>According to the story of Genesis 30:14–16, Reuben, when a boy of some four or five years of age, brought to his mother a plant found in the fields, of the kind known as <i>Mandragora officinarum</i>. This is described as a narcotic, laxative perennial of the nightshade family, related to the potato and the tomato. Out of the small white—and green flowers of this plant, according to the Son. 7:13, there grows at the time of the wheat harvest, yellow, strong, but sweet-smelling apples, of the size of a nutmeg. These were thought to promote fruitfulness. "The fruit of the plant is still considered in the East to have aphrodisiac properties" (ABG, 231), hence the common designation, love-apples.</p> <p>Mandrakes—Fertility Plant (a photograph); from HubPages; accessed September 16, 2017. This picture certainly looks quite different from the various descriptions that I have read.</p>
The College Press Bible Study continues	Theophrastus (who took over the Lyceum after the death of Aristotle) tells us that love-potions were prepared from the plant's roots. It was held in such high esteem by the ancients that the goddess of love, in some areas, was known as <i>Mandragoritis</i> . Mandrakes are still used by Arabs as a means of promoting child-bearing



¹⁹³ Dr. William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*; 1894; from e-Sword, topic: Mandrakes.

Mandrakes

Commentator

Commentary

The College Press Bible Study continues

“As for mandrakes themselves something may be said. Reuben gathered them in wheat-harvest, and it is then that they are still found ripe and eatable on the lower ranges of Lebanon and Hermon, where I have most frequently seen them. The apple becomes of a very pale yellow color, partially soft, and of an insipid, sickish taste. They are said to produce dizziness; but I have seen people eat them without experiencing any such effect. The Arabs, however, believe them to be exhilarating and stimulating, even to insanity, and hence the name tuffah el jan—‘apples of the jan’” (Thomson, LB, 577).¹⁹⁴

Let me make a couple of points: (1) People do have superstitions. The Bible does not support superstition but it does not ignore it when it is germane to the narrative. (2) Some things really do function as aphrodisiacs or as drugs which can encourage pregnancy.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:14a-c [During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah.](#)

There were commentators who believed that mandrakes actually worked; or they took no position on their efficacy.

The non-Skeptical View of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

Dr. Thomas Constable: *The mandrake, a member of the potato and tomato family, is a plant that bears bluish flowers in winter and yellowish plum-size fruit in summer. The fruit has a strong, pleasant fragrance, and was thought to help barren women conceive. Some Arabs still use it as an aphrodisiac and call it "devil's apple" (cf. Son. 7:13).*¹⁹⁵

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *[M]andrakes [are] a small orange fruit. They had a reputation of being an aphrodisiac and also helping in fertility. Rachel is trying to use human viewpoint techniques of trying to improve her own fertility so that maybe she would get over the problem of being barren, but Leah drives a bargain.*¹⁹⁶

Guzik: *The mandrake is a root, called “love-apples” in Hebrew. They were thought (and still are among some peoples) to increase fertility in women. Because Leah had the mandrakes, she knew Jacob would have relations with her, believing there was a greater likelihood she would become pregnant.*

Guzik continues: *We don't know if the effect of the mandrakes was something biological, or if it functioned more as a placebo. But under the guiding hand of God, the mandrakes seemed to “work” in the case of Leah and Jacob. Whatever strange agencies God may allow to be used (such as mandrakes), the real factor is His sovereign will.*¹⁹⁷

We actually do not know whether or not Leah used the mandrakes herself. She did trade at least some of them to Rachel for a night with Jacob. In any case, it is God who hears Leah and gives her a child.

¹⁹⁴ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

¹⁹⁵ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–20.

¹⁹⁶ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017 (slightly edited).

¹⁹⁷ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:14–18.

The non-Skeptical View of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

Chuck Smith: *Now a mandrake was a little orange-colored fruit that grew on bushes. And the mandrakes were thought to have had aphrodisiac types of powers and also fertility powers. And they were thought, they were called love apples and they were thought to have fertility powers.*¹⁹⁸

Matthew Henry offers about the least skeptical view of mandrakes: *Note, The God of nature has provided, not only for our necessities, but for our delights; there are products of the earth in the exposed fields, as well as in the planted protected gardens, that are very valuable and useful. How plentifully is nature's house furnished and her table spread! Her precious fruits offer themselves to be gathered by the hands of little children. It is a laudable custom of the devout Jews, when they find pleasure, suppose in eating an apple, to lift their hearts, and say, "Blessed be he that made this fruit pleasant!" Or, in smelling a flower, "Blessed be he that made this flower sweet." Some think these mandrakes were jessamine flowers.*¹⁹⁹

James Burton Coffman: *Mandrake (Mandragora officinarum), called "The Love Apple," is a stemless perennial of the night shade family, having emetic, purgative, and narcotic qualities. The forked, torso-like shape of the tap-root gave rise to many superstitions. Aphrodisiac properties were ascribed it. The plant grew widely in Palestine.*²⁰⁰

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Wenstrom on Mandrakes

"Mandrakes" is the noun *dudha'im* (דַּדְחָאִים) (doo-dah-ee), which were plants common to southern Palestine and other areas of the world and were used as an aphrodisiac in the ancient world and were thought to promote fertility.

The mandrake has been called the "love-apple" and in the West, the "May-apple." Mandrakes are from the nightshade family, the mandrakes leaves are dark green and the flowers are purple or greenish yellow. The plant bears a reddish or orange colored fruit that resembles a small tomato and which has a strong smell and sweet, though poisonous, taste.

The mandrake is grown in fields and rough ground of Palestine and the Mediterranean region and is reputed to have emetic, purgative, narcotic qualities. Its fruit exudes a heady, distinctive fragrance.

Mandrakes can interfere with the transmission of nerve impulses and the ancient world considered the plant an aphrodisiac and was thought to promote fertility. The plant's thick root is often forked with extra side roots giving the appearance of arms and legs.

Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty and sex, was called "Lady of the Mandrake."

In Song of Solomon 7:10-13 the female spouse enticed her husband to lovemaking by describing the preparations she had made, including the pleasant fragrance of the mandrake.

Song of Solomon 7:13, "The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits, both new and old, which I have saved up for you, my beloved."

¹⁹⁸ Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14.

¹⁹⁹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14–24.

²⁰⁰ From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017. He appears to be quoting R. K. Harrison.

From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 470); accessed September 9, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:14a-c During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah.

Theories on the Identity of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

Benson: *The word $\pi\alpha\delta\alpha\iota\mu$, thus rendered, is only found here and Song of Songs 7:13; and it is not agreed among interpreters whether it signifies a fruit or a flower. It is thought, however, by many, that mandrake-apples are here meant, which, according to Pliny, are of the size of filberts. They were pleasant to the smell, (Song of Songs 7:13,) and probably also desirable for food.*²⁰¹

The Geneva Bible: *[The mandrake] is a kind of herb whose root has a likeness to the figure of a man.*²⁰²

Gill: *This plant is said to excite love, provoke lust, dispose for, and help conception; for which reasons it is thought Rachel was so desirous of these "mandrakes", which seem to have their name "dudaim" from love: the word is only used here and in Song of Songs 7:13; where they are commended for their good smell, and therefore cannot be the plant which goes now by that name; since they neither give a good smell, nor bear good fruit, and are of a cold quality, and so not likely to produce the above effects ascribed unto them.*²⁰³

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Mandrakes are] the yellow apples of the alraun (*Mandragora vernalis*), a mandrake very common in Palestine. They are about the size of a nutmeg, with a strong and agreeable odour, and were used by the ancients, as they still are by the Arabs, as a means of promoting child-bearing.*²⁰⁴

Dr. Peter Pett: *The mandrake is a perennial herb of the nightshade family which grew in fields and rough ground (compare Song of Songs 7:13). It had large leaves, mauve flowers during the winter, and these were followed by the development of fragrant round yellow fruits of the type found by Reuben.*²⁰⁵

Poole: *[The mandrake] is a plant or fruit of pleasant smell, such as the mandrake is said to be by Dioscorides and Levinus Lemnius, and by St. Austin upon his own experience. If it be said this was too early for mandrakes to be ripe, it being now but wheat-harvest; it may be replied, that fruits ripen much sooner in those hot countries than elsewhere, and that they are not here said to be ripe, but only to be gathered.*²⁰⁶

Trapp: *And found mandrakes.] Some render it, lovely flowers; others, violets; others, lilies; others again, cherries of Jury; the Greek, and most interpreters, mandrakes, or mandrake apples. It is a plant very amiable, according to the name, {a} both for sweetness of smell, {Song of Songs 7:13} the loveliness of the flower resembling a man; and for the peculiar virtue it hath, to cause sleep, affection, and conception.*²⁰⁷

Hasselquist: *What I found most remarkable at this village was the great number of mandrakes which grew in a vale below it. I had not the pleasure of seeing this plant in blossom, the fruit now (May 5th, O. S.) hanging ripe on the stem, which lay withered on the ground. From the season in which this mandrake blossoms and ripens fruit, one might form a conjecture that it was Rachel's dudaim. These were brought her in the wheat harvest, which in Galilee is in the month of May, about this time, and the mandrake was now in fruit.*²⁰⁸

²⁰¹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14.

²⁰² Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:14.

²⁰³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14.

²⁰⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

²⁰⁵ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:14.

²⁰⁶ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14.

²⁰⁷ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:14.

²⁰⁸ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:14.

Theories on the Identity of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

*The Abbee Mariti describes it as growing "low like a lettuce, to which its leaves have a great resemblance, except that they have a dark green colour. The flowers are purple, and the root is for the most part forked. The fruit, when ripe in the beginning of May, is of the size and colour of a small apple, exceedingly ruddy, and of a most agreeable odour. Our guide thought us fools for suspecting it to be unwholesome."*²⁰⁹

*Whedon: The fruit here named is believed to be the Mandragora officinalis, described by Tristram as "one of the most striking plants of the country, with its flat disk of very broad primrose-like leaves, and its central bunch of dark blue bell-shaped blossom. The perfume of the flower we found by no means disagreeable, though it is said by some to be fetid. It has a certain pungency which is peculiar. We found it not uncommon in every part of Palestine, but chiefly in marshy plains."*²¹⁰

I don't think that we can clearly identify this plant; nor is that important.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:14a-c **During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah.**

The Skeptical View of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

*The Pulpit Commentary: Rachel obviously shared the popular belief that Reuben's fragrant herbs would have an influence in removing her sterility. It is useless inquiring how such a notion originated. Superstitions commonly arise from mistaking as cause and effect what are only coincident occurrences. Of more importance it is to note that Rachel was of mature years, had been born and nurtured in what may be regarded as a religious home, was now the wife of an intelligent and pious (if also encompassed with infirmities) man, and yet she was the victim of delusive beliefs. In this Rachel was perhaps scarcely to be charged with blame. Superstition is essentially a fault of the intellect resulting from defective information. But Rachel erred in calling superstition to her aid in her unholy rivalry with Leah; all the more when she knew that God alone could remove her reproach.*²¹¹

*The College Press Bible Study: It must be understood that the mere recording of magical theories and practices, and popular superstitions, of any period, as historical facts, does not mean that they are Biblically sanctioned.*²¹²

*Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: Rachel's faith in the pagan superstition about the mandrakes is indicated by the fact that she was willing to exchange a night with Jacob for the mandrakes in the hopes that the mandrakes would help her get pregnant. On the other hand, Leah placed her faith in God, which is indicated by the statement that "God gave heed to Leah," implying that Leah prayed to God to enable her to get pregnant.*²¹³

The NEV Commentary: The evidence seems to be that until he left home, Jacob was influenced by the idolatrous thinking of the surrounding world. For the next 20 years, he more tacitly went along with these things being practiced in his family. The mandrakes used by Leah were not just aphrodisiacs, but were believed to have the magical ability to induce fertility. This pagan nonsense was believed by Leah and Reuben, and tacitly gone along with by Jacob- although God worked through these wrong ideas, apparently uncorrected, in order to bring about His purpose. And yet from these mixed up women God built the house of Israel.

²⁰⁹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:14.

²¹⁰ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:14 (additional citation there).

²¹¹ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–24 (Homiletics).

²¹² *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

²¹³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 471); accessed September 9, 2017.

The Skeptical View of Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

The NEV continues: *The love apples were understood to induce a man to sleep with a woman. This would suggest that Jacob had stopped sleeping with his wives, perhaps in response to their endless desire to keep trying to get pregnant in their race for numbers of children, when both had fertility problems and both had already produced children for Jacob, even if fictively in Rachel's case.*²¹⁴

We actually have no idea as to the intimate relationship between Jacob and Rachel. We know that they had words (Genesis 30:1–2), which is not out of the ordinary for a married couple. Whether this meant a reduced ardor, we have no idea. Apparently, based upon the trade which Leah will suggest in v. 15, Jacob had stopped having intimate relations with her.

The key here is not whether mandrakes are effective or not; the key is, this is a human viewpoint solution, and therefore, no-solution.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:14a-c **During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah.**

More comments about Mandrakes.

Concerning Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

Verse by verse ministries: *Reuben probably brought the mandrakes to his mother, Leah, as a simple gift like any son might bring a flower to his mother. However, when Rachel sees it, she immediately recognizes it as the plant that might solve her infertility problem.*²¹⁵

Wesley: *It is uncertain what they were; the critics are not agreed about them: we are sure they were some rarities, either fruits or flowers that were very pleasant to the smell, Song of Songs. 7:13. Some think these mandrakes were Jessamin flowers. Whatever they were, Rachel, could not see them in Leah's hands, but she must covet them.*²¹⁶

Kidner: *The outcome was ironical, the mandrakes doing nothing for Rachel, while Leah gained another son by parting with them.*²¹⁷

Everett: *Because Rachel has not given birth to any children of her own, she is therefore quite envious of her sister. Consequently, she said to Jacob, "You must give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons."*²¹⁸

Clarke: *Hasselquist, the intimate friend and pupil of Linne, who traveled into the Holy Land to make discoveries in natural history, imagines that the plant commonly called mandrake is intended; speaking of Nazareth in Galilee he says: "What I found most remarkable at this village was a great number of mandrakes which grew in a vale below it. I had not the pleasure to see this plant in blossom, the fruit now (May 5th, O. S.) hanging ripe to the stem, which lay withered on the ground. From the season in which this mandrake blossoms and ripens fruit, one might form a conjecture that it was Rachel's dudaim. These were brought her in the wheat harvest, which in Galilee is in the month of May, about this time, and the mandrake was now in fruit."*

²¹⁴ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

²¹⁵ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_30a.pdf accessed September 8, 2017 (and slightly edited).

²¹⁶ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:14.

²¹⁷ Dr. John Constable *The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable*; ©2012; from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–20.

²¹⁸ Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–18 (mistakenly called Genesis 29 in my e-sword).

Concerning Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

Clarke continues: *Both among the Greeks and Orientals this plant was held in high repute, as being of a prolific virtue, and helping conception; and from it philtres were made, and this is favored by the meaning of the original, loves, i.e., incentives to matrimonial connections: and it was probably on this account that Rachel desired them. The whole account however is very obscure.*²¹⁹

But Clarke also says: *What these were is utterly unknown, and learned men have wasted much time and pains in endeavoring to guess out a probable meaning. Some translate the word lilies, others jessamine, others citrons, others mushrooms, others figs, and some think the word means flowers, or fine flowers in general.*²²⁰

Now, I would think that this fruit is associated with barrenness rather than with sexual stimulation, based upon the fact that Rachel wants to have children by Jacob. On the other hand, it is possible that Jacob's ardor is waning, given Rachel's bitchiness exhibited in v. 1.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to take in, to bring [near, against, upon], to come in with, to carry, to cause to come [in], to gather, to bring to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>them; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to them, toward them</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
'êm (אֵם) [pronounced aim]	<i>mother [humans, animals]; grandmother used figuratively for an intimate relationship, for a nation; a metropolis, a great and leading city; metaphorically for the earth; point of departure or division</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #517 BDB #51

Translation: [He brought them to his mother Leah.](#)

²¹⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14.

²²⁰ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14.

Reuben may have picked these apples simply because they looked good; they may have been attractive to him. So he brings them to his mother. What son does not, when given the opportunity, bring a present to his mother.

Wesley: *Reuben, a little lad of five or six years old, playing in the field, found mandrakes.*²²¹

Dr. Peter Pett: *Reuben is by this time just a few years old, four or five at the most. He discovers in the fields little, strongly smelling yellow fruits and he brings them to his mother. We do not know whether he knew what they were, but his mother knew immediately. They were mandrakes, well known for their supposed aphrodisiac qualities. They have been loosely called 'love-apples' because they look like small apples. Rachel, on seeing them, pleads for some so that she can quicken her sexual drive and effectiveness.*²²²

Genesis 30:14d			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced lay-AW]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>give, grant, place, put, set; make; deliver [over, up]; yield</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
nâ' (אָנֹכִי) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

²²¹ John Wesley; *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:14.

²²² Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:14.

Genesis 30:14d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dûwdâ'îym (דוּדְאִיִּם) [pronounced doo-daw-EEM]	<i>mandrakes, love-apples; as exciting sexual desire, and favouring procreation</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1736 BDB #188
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...Rachel then said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

Rachel has not had any children of her own. When she hears about these mandrakes, she desires them for herself. She goes to Leah and asks to have some of them.

Utley: Rachel wanted these and hoped that she would conceive and bear a son (again the covenant family trying to help God). The tension between these two sisters becomes obvious in this account. What amazes me is how Jacob was so easily manipulated by the strife of these two women.²²³

Genesis 30:14d (a graphic); from god-en-gebed.blogspot; accessed September 15, 2017.

Personally, I am not amazed by Jacob being manipulated by his two wives. Women can be the most amazing creatures and, at times, the most frustrating and difficult of genders. When a woman is responding to her right man, there is nothing greater; when her soul is in revolt and when she is involved in unwarranted competition, then she can be a very difficult creature indeed. Jacob is dealing with two women like that, in competition with one another; and so often, a man simply wants some peace and ease at home. It is clear that Jacob has given in to the demands of his two wives. They say jump and he jumps.



The Bible is not saying that there is some great cure out there in Haran for barrenness. This is simply what Rachel and Leah both believed. No doubt, it existed; but, no doubt, it did not work, as it apparently did not cause Rachel to become pregnant.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: Reuben's innocent discovery of an ancient "love-producing potion" provided the occasion for another confrontation and contest between Jacob's two wives, Rachel and Leah. When Rachel sees that Reuben has found some mandrakes that were considered an

²²³ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

*aphrodisiac and fertility drug in her day, she requests the mandrakes thinking they would solve her problem of infertility.*²²⁴

Rachel here appears to be making a request, rather than a demand; and, further, she does not ask for all of the mandrakes but for some of them, allowing her sister to use them as well. Given that she has no child at this time (apart from adoption), she does not play that card in order to make use of all of the mandrakes. The request offered as it is suggests a more cooperative relationship between the two sisters (and, no doubt, these women sometimes struggled with jealousies and sometimes they were able to make things work).

In saying that Leah and Rachel were able to make things work is not an argument in favor of polygamy. We all know how women are; and when there are two women together, sometimes finding that place where both women are calm and cooperative, is not always easy. The woman is given to the man to counterbalance him. When there are two women given, there is some confusion in this balance of the two partners.

On the one hand, this is not to say that some functional level of cooperation can be found with more than one wife; still, this is not God's best when it comes to a relationship between men and women.

Genesis 30:14 And Reuben went out in the days of the wheat harvest, and found love-apples in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. And Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's love-apples."

Genesis 30:14 During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and found mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel then said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:14 During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field. He brought them to his mother Leah. When Rachel heard, she asked for Leah to give her some of these mandrakes. (Kukis paraphrase)

Jacob will continue working for Laban for a total of 20 years. He is given Leah after 7 years of work. Therefore, Reuben must be less than 12 years old (subtract 7 years of work + 1 year of pregnancy from the 20 years he will serve Laban). Since Leah will have two more children before Jacob leaves, subtract off two more years. So Reuben is perhaps 4 or 5 years old here. This is assuming that Jacob and Laban's salary discussion did not occur on the first day of year 15 (once Jacob had worked for both wives).

Concerning these *love-apples*, Keil and Delitzsch write: *The yellow apples of the alraun (Mandragora vernalis), [also known as the] mandrake very common in Palestine. They are about the size of a nutmeg, with a strong and agreeable odour, and were used by the ancients, as they still are by the Arabs, as a means of promoting child-bearing.*²²⁵ There is actually a great deal of discussion in commentaries about these apples, but I don't see it as being that important.

We do not know if this particular fruit had any sort of stimulative effect or not. Based upon the narrative, I would assume that it did. We know that there are some natural products which are stimulative. Furthermore, when a food is thought to have such properties, there is an added psychological affect when it is eaten.

You will recall that there was a tiff between Rachel and Jacob because Rachel blamed Jacob for not having any children. Like many men, when faced with an accusation, that, on its face, is irrational, Jacob was frustrated and argued with Rachel because of it. It is even possible that relations between the two had broken off for awhile.

At this point, Jacob has been married to Leah and Rachel for about 4–7 years (he has 4 sons by Leah and 2 by Zilpah and 2 by Bilhah), so there is newness which has gone out of their marriage. Jacob has also been having

²²⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 470); accessed September 9, 2017.

²²⁵ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

problems with Laban (which will be discussed later, but would have been ongoing). All the children and the 3 other partners would also be a factor.

Having a lot of children was what was done in the ancient world. In fact, children have been seen as a blessing from God until most recently. Therefore, we would expect Leah to want to have more children. Jacob would not be opposed to this, even though he had been hoodwinked by his Uncle Laban to marry Leah in the first place.

With this incident, we further understand more about the interplay between the two sisters in the marriage arrangement, something we really have not seen until this chapter. Obviously, Jacob is having relations with both wives, as Leah has had 4 sons by Jacob; and Leah and Rachel, at this point, are not having children. The way this is presented is, it is not for a lack of trying.

God allowed for polygamy in this era, but, as we have studied, it is never presented as God's best. One man with one woman is presented as God's best. However, once a polygamous marriage is established, there is no Biblical procedure or encouragement to dissolve it. Later in the Law, a man is not allowed to simply cast his least favored wife aside (Deut. 21:15–17).²²⁶

James Burton Coffman makes an interesting comment: *When Rachel saw Reuben with the mandrakes, she evidently supposed that, at last, she had found out Leah's secret for bearing children, so she traded one night with Jacob to Leah for the mandrakes.*²²⁷ I don't know that this is necessarily true. Some women tend to be designed to have lots of babies. Did Rachel believe this to be Leah's secret? Nothing like that is recorded in Scripture.

And so she says to her, “[Is it] small your taking away of my man and so you have taken also mandrakes of my son?” And so says Rachel, “For so he will lie with you the night in exchange for mandrakes of your son.”

Genesis
30:15

Leah [lit., she] said to her, “[Is it] a small [matter that] you have taken away my husband, and [now] you have also taken the love-apples of my son?” And Rachel answered, “[Let me suggest this:] he will lie down with you tonight in exchange for your son's love-apples.”

Leah said to her, “Is this a small matter that you have taken my husband, but now you also want to take my son's love-apples?” And Rachel answered, “How about you give me the love-apples and he will spend the night with you?”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so she says to her, “[Is it] small your taking away of my man and so you have taken also mandrakes of my son?” And so says Rachel, “For so he will lie with you the night in exchange for mandrakes of your son.”

Targum (Onkelos)

And she said to her, Is it a little that thou hast taken my husband, and thou wilt take also my son's mandrakes? And Rahel said, Therefore shall he lie with thee at night for thy son's mandrakes.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And she said to her, Is it a little thing that thou hast taken my husband, and thou seekest to take also my son's mandrakes ? And Rahel said, Therefore shall he lie

²²⁶ This passage actually deals with inheritance of the firstborn, but the husband cannot favor the firstborn of his newer, more favored wife, the implication would be, he cannot simply cast his first wife aside.

²²⁷ From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

with thee this night for thy son's mandrakes. [JERUSALEM. For a week he shall consort with thee.]

Revised Douay-Rheims	She answered: do you think it a small matter, that you have taken my husband from me, unless you take also my son's mandrakes? Rachel said: He shall sleep with you this night, for your son's mandrakes.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	She said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes, also?" Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes."
Peshitta (Syriac)	But <u>Leah</u> said to her, Is it not enough for you that you have taken away my husband? And would you take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, He may lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes.
Septuagint (Greek)	And <u>Lea</u> said, Is it not enough for you that you have taken my husband, will you also take my son's mandrakes? And Rachel said, Not so: let him lie with you to-night for your son's mandrakes.
Significant differences:	Leah's name is not found in the Hebrew. We find it in the English translation from the Syriac and the Greek. The targum inserts some additional words.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	But Leah said to her, Is it a small thing that you have taken my husband from me? and now would you take my son's love-fruits? Then Rachel said, You may have him tonight in exchange for your son's love-fruits.
Easy English	But Leah said to Rachel 'You took my husband. Was not that enough? Now you want my son's mandrakes too!' Rachel said, 'You must give me some of your son's mandrakes. Then Jacob can sleep with you tonight.'
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	Leah answered, "You have already taken away my husband. Now you are trying to take away my son's flowers." But Rachel answered, "If you will give me your son's flowers, you can sleep with Jacob tonight."
<i>The Message</i>	Leah said, "Wasn't it enough that you got my husband away from me? And now you also want my son's mandrakes?" Rachel said, "All right. I'll let him sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son's love-apples."
New Simplified Bible	Leah replied: »Is it not enough that you took my husband? Are you also going to take my son's mandrake plants?« Rachel responded: »Very well, Jacob can go to bed with you tonight in return for your son's mandrake plants.«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Leah replied, "Isn't it enough that you've taken my husband? Now you want to take my son's erotic herbs too?" Rachel said, "For your son's erotic herbs, Jacob may sleep with you tonight."
Contemporary English V.	During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben found some love flowers and took them to his mother Leah. Rachel asked Leah for some of them, but Leah said, "It's bad enough that you stole my husband! Now you want my son's love flowers too." "All right," Rachel answered. "Let me have the flowers, and you can sleep with Jacob tonight." V. 14 is included for context.
The Living Bible	But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough to steal my husband? And now will you steal my son's mandrakes too?" Rachel said sadly, "He will sleep with you tonight because of the mandrakes."
New Berkeley Version	She replied to her, "Is your taking my husband a trifle, and would you take away my son's May-apples as well?" Rachel said, "Then for your son's Map-apples you can have him tonight."

New Century Version	Leah answered, "You have already taken away my husband, and now you are trying to take away my son's mandrakes." But Rachel answered, "If you will give me your son's mandrakes, you may sleep with Jacob tonight."
New Living Translation	But Leah angrily replied, "Wasn't it enough that you stole my husband? Now will you steal my son's mandrakes, too?" Rachel answered, "I will let Jacob sleep with you tonight if you give me some of the mandrakes."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And LeAh replied: 'Isn't it enough that you've taken my man... would you also take my son's mandrakes?' And RachEl said: '[I'll] allow you to [sleep] with [Jacob] tonight for your son's mandrakes.'
Beck's American Translation	Isn't it enough you took my husband?" she asked her, "And are you also going to take my boy's love apples?" "He'll sleep with you tonight for your boy's love apples." Rachel said.
International Standard V	In response, Leah asked her, "Wasn't it enough that you've taken away my husband? Now you also want to take my son's mandrakes!" But Rachel replied, "Okay, let's let Jacob sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes."
Revised Knox Bible	What, answered she, are you not content with stealing my husband from me? Must you have my son's mandrake fruit as well? And Rachel said, Jacob shall sleep with you to-night, if I may have some of your son's mandrake-fruit.
Translation for Translators	But Leah said to her, "No! ◀It was bad that you stole my husband!◀Is it not bad enough that you stole my husband?▶ [RHQ] ◀Now are you going to take my son's mandrake plants?/You want to take my son's mandrake plants also, so that you can become pregnant!▶" [RHQ] So Rachel said, "All right, Jacob can sleep with you tonight, if you give me some of your son's mandrake plants." ◀So Leah agreed/gave her some▶.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	She was to say: Is it a small thing, you is to take my husband - is you to take my son's mandrakes? Rachel was to say: He was to lie down with you tonight, because of your son's mandrakes.
Conservapedia	And she said to her, "Do you think so little of having taken my husband's affections from me? Now you want to take my son's mandrakes, too?" So Rachel said, "All right, so Jacob will take you to bed tonight, in exchange for your son's mandrakes." Rachel probably made a bad bargain.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But she said, " Is it a trifle that you have taken my husband, and would you also take the apples of my son ? " When Rachel replied ; — " Come, now, — he shall sleep with you to-night, in exchange for your son's apples."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Lea answered: Is it not enough, that you have taken away my husband, but would take away my sons mandragoras also? Then said Rahel: well, let him sleep with you this night, for your sons mandragoras.
HCSB	But Leah replied to her, "Isn't it enough that you have taken my husband? Now you also want to take my son's mandrakes?" "Well," Rachel said, "you can sleep with him tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes."
Tree of Life Version	But she said to her, "Wasn't it enough that you took my husband away? You'd also take away my son's mandrakes?"

	So Rachel said, "That being so, let him lie with you tonight, in exchange for your son's mandrakes."
Unlocked Literal Bible	Leah said to her, "Is it a small matter to you, that you have taken away my husband? Do you now want to take away my son's mandrakes, too?" Rachel said, "Then he will sleep with you tonight, in exchange for your son's mandrakes."
Urim-Thummim Version	But she said to her, isn't taking my husband enough for you? And would you take away my son's mandrakes too? And Rachel replied, OK, he will sleep with you tonight for your son's mandrakes.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And she said, "Is it not enough that you have taken my husband, will you also take my son's mandrakes?" And Rachel said, "So he will lay with you tonight, for your son's mandrakes."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011)	Leah replied, "Was it not enough for you to take away my husband, that you must now take my son's mandrakes too?" Rachel answered, "In that case Jacob may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes."
New Jerusalem Bible	Leah replied, 'Is it not enough to have taken my husband, without your taking my son's mandrakes as well?' So Rachel said, 'Very well, he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	She answered, "Isn't it enough that you have taken away my husband? Do you have to take my son's mandrakes too?" Rachel said, "Very well; in exchange for your son's mandrakes, sleep with him tonight."
The Complete Tanach	And she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken my husband, that [you wish] also to take my son's dudaim?" So Rachel said, "Therefore, he shall sleep with you tonight as payment for your son's dudaim."

that [you wish] also to take my son's dudaim?: This is a question: and [do you wish] to do this also, to take also my son's dudaim? The Targum for this is לְמַלְאָכָה, and to take.

Therefore, he shall sleep with you tonight: Tonight's cohabitation belonged to me, but I will give it to you in lieu of your son's dudaim. Since she treated the cohabitation of the righteous man lightly, she did not merit to be buried with him. — [from Gen. Rabbah 72:3]

exeGesés companion Bible	And she says to her, Is it petty that you took my man? And you also take the mandrakes of my son? And Rachel says, So he lies with you tonight for the mandrakes of your son.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	But she said to her, "Was it not enough for you to take away my husband, that you would also take my son's mandrakes?" Rachel replied, "I promise, he shall lie with you tonight, in return for your son's mandrakes."
Kaplan Translation	'Isn't it enough that you have taken away my husband?' retorted Leah. 'Now you even want to take my son's mandrakes!' 'All right,' replied Rachel. '[Jacob] will sleep with you tonight in exchange for your son's mandrakes.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my ish? And wouldest thou take away the duda'im of beni also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee halailah (tonight) for the duda'im of thy ben.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	Leah answered, “·You have already [^L Is it a minor matter that you have] taken away my husband, and now you are trying to take away my son’s mandrakes.” But Rachel answered, “If you will give me your son’s mandrakes, you may ·sleep [^L lie] with Jacob tonight.”
Kretzmann’s Commentary	And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? And wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? Thus Leah was smarting under the sense of being unloved or merely suffered as a wife: Is a small matter thy taking of my husband? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to-night for thy son's mandrakes. So these were the conditions of the trade: Rachel was to have the mandrakes, and she, in return, yielded Jacob to Leah for this one time.
NET Bible®	But Leah replied [<i>Heb</i> “and she said to her”; the referent of the pronoun “she” (Leah) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], “Wasn’t it enough that you’ve taken away my husband? Would you take away my son’s mandrakes too?” “All right [<i>Heb</i> “therefore.”],” Rachel said, “he may sleep [<i>Heb</i> “lie down.”] with you tonight in exchange for your son’s mandrakes.”
The Pulpit Commentary	And she (Leah) said unto her,—stomachose (Calvin)—Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband?—literally, Is it little thy taking away my husband? meaning that Rachel had been the cause of Jacob’s forsaking her (Leah’s) society—and wouldest thou take away (literally, and to take also = wouldst thou take? expressive of strong surprise) my son’s mandrakes also? Calvin thinks it unlikely that Jacob’s wives were naturally quarrelsome; sod Deus conflagere eas inter se passus est ut polygamiae puma ad posteras extaret. And Rachel said (in order to induce Leah’s compliance with her request), Therefore he shall be with thee tonight for thy son’s mandrakes.
The Voice	Leah: You know it is no small matter that you’ve stolen <i>the attentions of my husband</i> . Now you want my son’s mandrakes too? Rachel: Then he can sleep with you tonight in exchange for <i>some of your son’s mandrakes!</i>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.	...and she said to her, is it a small thing for you to take my man and also to take the mandrakes of my son and Rahhel [^{Ewe}] said, because of this he will lay down with you tonight under the mandrakes of your son,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying is Leah to her, "No! Is it little of you to take my husband, then to take, moreover, my son's mandrakes? And saying is Rachel, "Not so! He shall lie with you this night, for your son's mandrakes.
Green’s Literal Translation	And she said to her, <i>is your taking my husband a little thing? Will you also take my son's love-apples? And Rachel said, So he shall be with you tonight, for your son's love apples.</i>
Modern English Version	Leah said to her, “Is it a small matter that you have taken my husband? Would you take away my son’s mandrakes also?” So Rachel said, “All right, he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son’s mandrakes.”
World English Bible	Leah said to her, “Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son’s mandrakes, also?” Rachel said, “Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son’s mandrakes.”
Young’s Updated LT	And she says to her, “Is your taking my husband a little thing, that you have taken also the love-apples of my son?” And Rachel says, “Therefore does he lie with you tonight, for your son’s love-apples.”

The gist of this passage: Leah and Rachel negotiate for the mandrakes. Rachel will get some of the mandrakes and, in exchange, Leah would sleep with Jacob that night.

Genesis 30:15a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
hă (ה) [pronounced <i>heh</i>]	interrogative particle which acts almost like a piece of punctuation, like the upside-down question mark which begins a Spanish sentence. The verb <i>to be</i> may be implied. This can be used in an indirect interrogation and translated <i>whether</i> .		Strong's #none BDB #209
m ^e aṭ (אט) [pronounced <i>m^e-GAHT</i>]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4592 BDB #589
lâqach (לקח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'îysh (איש) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: Leah [lit., *she*] said to her, “[Is it] a small [matter that] you have taken away my husband,...

We find out here two things: (1) Things are not happy and swell at the home of Jacob, Leah and Rachel; and (2) Jacob has apparently chosen Rachel over Leah and is spending all of his time with her. Leah will trade her mandrakes for another night with Jacob.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Leah's strong retort reminds us that, in her mind, it was Rachel who had stolen her husband from her. She viewed herself as Jacob's legitimate wife rather than Rachel, who was merely his romantic preference.*²²⁸

Note the female logic found in this passage. Leah has accused Rachel of taking away her husband! Jacob worked for seven years for Rachel but Leah was sent to his wedding bed in the dark instead. She became his wife because they consummated their marriage, although Jacob did not know who it was. Leah supplanted Rachel in the beginning; and the narrative suggests that she was a willing participant in the deception of Jacob. Even had she simply spoken, Jacob would have known who she was; but she did not speak during their entire wedding night. So, point in fact, Leah stole Jacob. So how could she possibly accuse Rachel of stealing her husband? She can do that because she is a woman.

Interestingly enough, the Mosaic Law does not forbid polygamous marriage (except to kings²²⁹), but it does take into consideration men who have married more than one wife; and the fact that a man will favor one woman over the other. Deut. 21:15–17

As far as we can figure out from the beginning, Jacob was deceived into marrying Leah, when he thought that he was marrying Rachel—and most likely, both sisters were in on this deception. However, soon thereafter—very likely, a week later, Rachel was given to Jacob as well, but on credit for 7 more years of labor.

Quite obviously, each sister has taken an illogical stance. At the beginning of this chapter, Rachel blamed Jacob for not giving her a child. The way that we might understand this is, both of the sisters feel this way—Rachel feels as if Jacob is not giving her a child and Leah feels as if Rachel has taken her husband from her. They feel these things, even though they are not logical. As we discussed earlier, Rachel may have come off irrational in order to get Jacob to do what she wanted him to do.

We are never told exactly what Laban said in order to get his daughters to do what they did on Jacob's wedding night. Jacob expected Rachel, but he got Leah. If Leah sees Jacob as her legitimate husband—and this is apparently how she understands the situation—could Laban have told her that Jacob requested her as his bride? I still lean towards the theory which I proposed in the previous chapter—that Laban told his daughters, “You have 7 years to figure this out. But, no matter what, Leah must marry before Rachel.” That being the requirement did not leave any options for the girls other than to have Leah marry Jacob initially. Perhaps, since she married Jacob first and had all of his male children, she saw herself as Jacob's true wife?

Because Leah had given birth to 4 sons and it had become apparent that she was no longer having children, she obviously had time with Jacob even after Rachel became a part of the marriage. However, for the most part, Jacob spent his time with Rachel, whom he loved the most. Based upon the history of Isaac and Rebekah; and based upon the favoritism that Jacob would later show for Joseph (and then for Benjamin), his favoritism was not hidden. Furthermore, this is natural for a man to cling to one woman and not the other (setting aside promiscuity, for the moment). Jacob clearly had a soul-bond with Rachel—a fellowship, if you will—that he did not share with Leah.

H. C. Leupold gives us a good summary of this event: *The ancients and, perhaps, the early Hebrews, too, regarded this fruit as an aphrodisiac and as promoting fertility. Had that thought not been involved here, this innocent episode could hardly have given rise to such a clash between the sisters. Reuben, as little children will, presents the mandrakes to his mother. Rachel, present at the time and much concerned as usual about her sterility, thinks to resort to this traditional means of relieving the disability and asks for "some of the mandrakes" (min—"some of") of Reuben. She had hardly thought that this harmless request would provoke, such an outbreak on her sister's part. For Leah bitterly upbraids her with not being content to have withdrawn her husband from her, but, she petulantly adds, Rachel even wants to get the mandrakes of her son Reuben. Apparently, her hope that her husband*

²²⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 470); accessed September 9, 2017.

²²⁹ Before there were any kings over Israel.

would love her after she had born several sons (see 29:32) had not been fully realized. Childless Rachel still had the major part of his affection. Quite unjustly Leah charges Rachel with alienation of affection where such affection had perhaps never really existed. Leah still was being treated with more or less tolerance. So Leah certainly begrudges her sister the mandrakes, lest they prove effective and so give her sister a still more decided advantage.²³⁰

Several commentators are all over Jacob, saying that he should have just married Leah; and that working an additional 7 years for Rachel was a mistake. I have problems with this view.

Is the problem that Jacob just married too many women? A discussion.

Admittedly, I do a lot of speculation from time to time. Many times, I am just thinking out loud, and considering various options. I have read a number of authors who have said, in one way or another, the Jacob should have just married Leah—and they make that assertion, and talk about Jacob's various options with just one wife. These discussions have bothered me, and I have had a difficult time putting my finger on why exactly.

For instance, the NEV Commentary reads: *I have argued throughout Gen. 29 that God intended Jacob to marry Leah and return to the promised land; his obsession with Rachel made his path home so much harder. If indeed he did become more attached to Leah, then this would really demonstrate that all too late, he was accepting God's rightness in the matter.*²³¹ (This is not the only commentary to take such a stand.)

On the one hand, when a man marries more than one woman, that is a problem for him. Most ancient men (not all) married just one woman. The precedent seems to have been set with Adam and the woman in the first 3 chapters of Genesis, but there is no clear cut commandment—even in the Law of Moses—that a man can only marry one woman. Let me suggest, that is the prudent thing to do and that most men figured this out.

In the Bible, when more than one woman was involved in a marriage (even like Hagar, the maid of Abraham's wife), there were problems. As a result, there are no commandments in the Old Testament to only marry one woman, no matter what.

Jacob was tricked; he was played. When he woke up to his first day of marriage, Leah was in bed with him and not Rachel—the woman he wanted to marry. Let me suggest that, there was no way that Jacob was simply going to accept that. He is not going to say, "Oh, I ended up married to Leah and not to Rachel. Okay, I'm cool with that." There was simply no way he was *not* going to marry Rachel.

At the same time, despite being deceived, Jacob understood that he had taken Leah's virginity from her (and probably impregnated her on night one). So Jacob was not going to desert Leah.

Let me suggest to you that, God allowed Laban to play Jacob—he did to Jacob pretty much what Jacob did to his own father. Jacob had to be on the receiving end of this kind of deceptive, manipulative behavior. *That* was Jacob's real problem. When he got played—maybe that made an impression on him?

In other words, I don't see Jacob as really having a choice—and any man who has been in love would testify that they would do almost anything for that love. In this case, accept Rachel's sister as a part of the deal.

My point is, polygamy is not some great sin that Jacob has committed and he is going to pay for it the rest of his life. He ended up in a polygamous marriage because of his Uncle Laban. God simply worked with that. Let me give you 3 reasons why God accepted Jacob's marriage to two women: (1) Judah; (2) Joseph; and (3) Levi. Two of Leah's sons are fundamental to the Jewish race and Jewish traditions. Judah will be the line of the Savior and Levi will be the priestly line (Moses and Aaron were both Levites). *And*, the Jews will be protected and isolated in Egypt because of Joseph (Rachel's son—who has a unique upbringing).

²³⁰ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

²³¹ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017. This same commentary somehow determined that it was God's will for Jacob to marry Leah *only* and then to immediately return to Canaan. God actually came and spoke to Jacob and told him when it was time to return to Canaan, and that was 20 years after he arrived.

Is the problem that Jacob just married too many women? A discussion.

So, Jacob, because he is in a polygamous marriage, is going to have problems with two wives as long as they are both alive. This chapter simply shows this to be true. However, Jacob is not being punished by God for marrying more than one woman. Laban, on the other hand, may be suffering some discipline for having pulled this stunt on Jacob.

Most commentators who were concerned about Jacob's bigamy, generally take the position that, once Jacob married Leah—no matter how this occurred—that was the end of it. No more wives. This theory seems to be shot down in Genesis 31:4, where God the Holy Spirit records these words: **So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was...** (ESV). Notice who is named first and, therefore, given preeminence. Now obviously, Jacob (the human author) lists Rachel first because that is the sister that he loves; and God the Holy Spirit allows for this, because she was Jacob's preeminent wife at the time that this is written.

There were a few commentaries that really came down hard on Jacob for this polygamous relationship. You may ask, *If there was no clear, absolute ban against polygamy, why didn't every man in the ancient world marry 2 or 3 or 10 women?* Let me suggest several reasons:

1. There is a normalcy issue; marriage between one man and one woman was simply the norm. Similarly, we do not have homosexual marriage anywhere in Scripture. The idea of establishing that sort of relationship is only a recent invention of several degenerate societies.
2. There are financial concerns—only the most successful man could afford to have more than one wife. It was not easy supporting a wife and a number of children; much more difficult to support 2 or more wives and possibly twice the number of children.
3. The stability of a household was also a factor. Today, my guess is, when a man considers being married to more than one woman, his thoughts are about one thing primarily and that is sex. There is much more to marriage than sex. As we have studied in this chapter, two women exponentially increased the conflicts. There was little or no peace in the polygamous household.



There were very important sons from each mother. Reuben was also important, as he protected Joseph so that his other brothers did not kill him.

A Man's Day – A Woman's Day emoji (a graphic); from [Redbubble](#); accessed September 12, 2017.

An equally important question for today: why don't men today get to marry two or more women?

1. We know from our study of Genesis 1–2 that God provided exactly one woman for Adam in the Garden; so, that is our divine precedent.
2. We know from genetics that about 50% of the babies born are female; so God does not provide us with an excess of females to marry.
3. Both Jesus and Paul confirm the concept that marriage is a lifetime commitment between one man and one woman. Exactly what Jesus said and Paul wrote can be found in our examination of **polygamy**.
4. We know from this case history of Jacob (and David and Solomon) that having two wives is not an ideal situation.

I write this based upon the very real possibility that the United States may legalize polygamy over the next decade or so (if gay marriage is accepted as a legal and legitimate form of marriage, then polygamy cannot be too far behind).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:15b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced law-KAHKH]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	2 nd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
gam (גַּם) [pronounced gahm]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
dûwdâ'îym (דוּדְאִיִּם) [pronounced doo-daw-EEM]	<i>mandrakes, love-apples; as exciting sexual desire, and favouring procreation</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1736 BDB #188
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...and [now] you have also taken the love-apples of my son?"

What Leah is saying is this: "So, you have taken my husband; and now you want to take away my son's love-apples?" Or, to express this in a slightly different way, "Is there anything of mine you don't want to take from me?"

Matthew Poole: *Jacob either did equally divide the times between his two wives; or rather, had more estranged himself from Leah, and cohabited principally with Rachel, which occasioned the foregoing expostulation.*²³²

Leah and Rachel are sisters who willingly entered into a polygamous relationship with Jacob. As discussed in the previous chapter, I believe that both women were a part, to a limited degree, of the deception of Jacob.

This chapter provides us with information and insight to the relationship between these two sisters and their interaction with Jacob.

²³² Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:15.

A discussion of the relationship between Rachel and Leah

The College Press Bible Study overstates the situation: *The incident of the mandrakes shows how thoroughly the two wives were “carried away by constant jealousy of the love and attachment of their husband.” When Rachel requested that Leah give her some of the mandrakes, the latter bitterly upbraided her with not being content to have withdrawn (alienated?) her husband from her, but now wanting to get possession of the mandrakes which her little son had brought in from the field.*²³³

There are clearly problems with the two sisters; and much of this is related to having a polygamous marriage. The narrative will suggest that the women lived in separate domiciles (probably tents) and that Jacob primarily stayed with Rachel. The separation of the women and their separate sleeping quarters no doubt eased some of the tension.

I am certainly not making a case for polygamy; nor am I attempting to share ways to make it work. I am simply stating that despite there being tension between the sisters; they were not *constantly carried away by jealousy*. There were undoubtedly hours, days and even weeks when things were difficult; but there were certainly times of calm. This whole mandrake narrative tells us that these women were able to work with one another, come to agreements and arrangements within this marriage; and to do this without starting WWII.

Leah is not happy about this whole marriage situation; but she surely knew that Jacob loved her sister in the first place. When a woman is about to get married, she is going to talk about it non-stop. So Leah is not some innocent bystander here. She literally took her sister's husband-to-be.

These women, I believe, entered into this marriage with open eyes. Although Jacob was deceived, I do not believe that either sister was deceived. I do not think that they entered into this marriage to be engaged in unwarranted competition with one another, but that is how it ended up. Man (I use that term in the generic sense) was not designed to be in a polygamous relationship.

There is another point to be made: if these women are talking to one another like this, they are obviously not happy women. If you have ever lived with an unhappy woman, you will certainly find that she will see to it that you are unhappy as well. A woman does not want to be unhappy alone.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

The NEV Commentary provides an interesting observation: *One is hard pushed to find women-only scenes in contemporary literature written during Biblical times. The women are presented in terms of the men with whom they inter-relate. Yet Elizabeth and Mary are recorded as having a conversation with no male present (Lk. 1:39-45); and there are other such passages in Scripture (Gen. 19:32,34; 30:14,15; Ex. 2:1-10; Judges 5:28-30; Ruth 1:6-2:2; 3:16-18; 4:14-17; 2 Kings 5:2,3). The narrative of the women at the tomb and the resurrection is another example (Lk. 23:55-24:4). In all these passages, the reader is invited to share the woman's perspective.*²³⁴

This also provides us with some inside information on marriage to two or more wives. In our over-sexualized society, men might think that this is the greatest thing ever, to have two different attractive women as his wives; but the reality is much different.

Interestingly enough, even though the Bible does not clearly condemn multiple wives in the Old Testament; the times when we are able to examine such marriages close up, the more clear it is that, these are not generally happy marriages.

²³³ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

²³⁴ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017. Apparently *hard pushed* is equivalent to *hard pressed*.

Because of the nature of the woman's soul, she does not want to feel as if she is in competition for her husband for the entirety of their marriage—but that is exactly how Rachel and Leah both feel. Now the man may think, “Well, you ladies do whatever you want, just don't tell me about it,” cannot really make that sort of philosophy stick. Whether these women try to hide their feelings and competition; most of the time, there is going to be one woman who is not happy about the situation; and that pall of gloom is cast over the entire household.

Much of the time, neither Rachel nor Leah were happy. Leah clearly knows that Jacob loves Rachel more than her; and sees Rachel as having horned in on her marriage. Rachel, on the other hand, feels terrible that she has not provided her husband with children; and she feels like a second-class woman for not being able to give birth to a son for Jacob.

Regardless of what the future holds; regardless of what the man says—these women are going to feel what they are going to feel. And, very often, they are going to either make their feelings known; or they are going to act on their feelings.

Based upon what we read and study here, it is unclear who is the actual head of the household. Obviously, there are shared types of authority, and the husband is not required to assume every ounce of authority in the household; but, it is not clear if Jacob has any authority. Even when he decides to leave Laban's ranching business, he discusses that with his wives more than lays down the law. That does not mean that a man needs to assert his authority at every juncture; but this was how Jacob's multi-wived marriage worked.

Genesis 30:15a-b And she [Leah] said to her [Rachel], “Is it a small matter that you have taken my husband? And would you also take my son's love-apples?”

Genesis 30:15a-b Leah [lit., *she*] said to her, “[Is it] a small [matter that] you have taken away my husband, and [now] you have also taken the love-apples of my son?” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

We are never clear in what Laban did behind the scenes with Leah and Rachel. Here, Leah accuses Rachel of taking her husband. What Leah says could refer to Rachel marrying Jacob soon after her marriage to Jacob; or it could be a reference to recent events. Given the conversation, it appears that this is somewhat recent, and that Jacob spends most of his free time with Rachel. At the same time, remember how the woman's mind works. When discussing problems, the woman will often go back to the very beginning, which could then refer to Rachel marrying Jacob soon after Leah did.

I don't think that Leah is referring to their overall marriage, but to her lack of contact with Jacob at this particular time. I read this and understand it that, Jacob is spending all of his time—particularly his nights—with Rachel, and Leah was being ignored.

I proposed the theory in the previous chapter that Laban, exercising his authority over his daughters, convinced them to agree to deceive Jacob, and that Leah was sent in to him. One of the reasons I believe this to be true is, these two sisters are not eaten up with bitter anger towards one another. Now, there are problems—clearly—but they also seem to find a way to work things out (recall that Sarah sent Hagar packing?).

I think Laban told Rachel (and Leah), “Listen, the younger sister cannot be married before the older...so when this 7 years is up, there will be no marriage if Leah is not married yet. If you two can come up with a solution to this problem, I am all ears.” The only logical solution, since Leah did not marry during those 7 years, was to marry her to Jacob; and then for Rachel to be given in marriage as well. All 3 probably agreed that Jacob would not be open to this, so it was done with deceit, almost certainly involving Leah's cooperation (since she does not speak a word during their wedding night). Now, had Rachel been left out of the overall process, then it would be easy to see their polygamous marriage as a constant battle between the women. However, if both sisters agreed to Laban's plan (or even came up with the plan themselves), the normal jealousy found in their marriage accompanied with some form of cooperation makes complete sense.

Furthermore, at some point in the future, the two wives will side with Jacob against their father, and become a united front. When Jacob tells his wives, "It is time for us to go; God has so instructed me." Both women were in agreement and onboard. They also gave personal testimony that their father was not going to give them anything by way of an inheritance. So there was no reason for them to remain there in Paddan-aram. Genesis 31:4–16

Of course, these women were in a difficult situation; but the way that they work through things suggests that neither Leah nor Rachel were deceived prior to entering into the marriage.

As we have discussed previously, there were probably a great many arguments in this household, because polygamy does not work. And, as most men have experienced, often an argument with a woman will involve her going back to the beginning of your relationship and bringing up anything that you have done wrong for however many years it has been. Here we have two sisters, whose history therefore, predates Jacob. So, during an argument, they no doubt have a great deal to discuss. The Bible mercifully spares us most of what they have to say.

Leah is saying, "You've taken my husband and now you want my son's love-apples?" The interpretation is, *this is unfair and you need to take me into consideration.*

Regarding these love apples, Dave Guzik writes: *We don't know if the effect of the mandrakes was something biological, or if it functioned more as a placebo. But under the guiding hand of God, the mandrakes seemed to "work" in the case of Leah and Jacob. Whatever strange agencies God may allow to be used (such as mandrakes), the real factor is His sovereign will.*²³⁵ God's will is expressed by: **And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.** (Gen 30:17; ESV)

It will become apparent that the mandrakes do not work; but God's will continues to be sovereign.

Genesis 30:15c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

²³⁵ David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:14–18.

Genesis 30:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kên (כֵּן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, therefore, thus; then, afterwards; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, the lamed preposition and kên mean <i>therefore, according to such conditions, that being so; certainly, truly</i> .			
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAH^BV</i>]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011
The NET Bible: <i>The expression "lie down with" in this context (here and in the following verse) refers to sexual intercourse. The imperfect verbal form has a permissive nuance here.</i> ²³⁶			
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
lay ^ê lâh (לַיְלִיל) [pronounced <i>LAY-law</i>]	<i>night; that night, this night, the night</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
tachath (תַּחַת) [pronounced <i>TAH-khahth</i>]	<i>underneath, below, under, beneath; instead of, in lieu of; in the place [in which one stands]; in exchange for; on the basis of</i>	preposition of location or foundation	Strong's #8478 BDB #1065
dûwdâ'îym (דֹּוּדָאִיִּם) [pronounced <i>doo-daw-EEM</i>]	<i>mandrakes, love-apples; as exciting sexual desire, and favouring procreation</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1736 BDB #188
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: And Rachel answered, "[Let me suggest this:] he will lie down with you tonight in exchange for your son's love-apples."

So Rachel makes a deal with Leah: "You give me the love-apples and I will give Jacob to you for the night."

Notice that Jacob really has no say in this matter. These two sisters have negotiated for time with Jacob, and whatever they decide, he is subject to.

Also notice who runs the show here. These women decide who Jacob will sleep with. Rachel calls the shots in that regard, mostly. With this many women, Jacob is no longer the aggressive male but he is the passive, *what-would-you-like-my-dear?* male. He has capitulated to peace at any price. It is clear by this verse that he will sleep

²³⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

with his own wife Leah only under the direction of his wife Rachel. In exchange for these mandrakes to awaken his desire, Rachel will send Jacob to the bed of Leah. Who's the man of the house? Rachel.

Genesis 30:15 Leah [lit., *she*] said to her, “[Is it] a small [matter that] you have taken away my husband, and [now] you have also taken the love-apples of my son?” And Rachel answered, “[Let me suggest this:] he will lie down with you tonight in exchange for your son’s love-apples.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:15 Leah said to her, “Is this a small matter that you have taken my husband, but now you also want to take my son’s love-apples?” And Rachel answered, “How about you give me the love-apples and he will spend the night with you?” (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:15 Leah said to her, “Is this a small matter that you have taken my husband, but now you also want to take my son’s love-apples?” And Rachel answered, “How about you give me the love-apples and he will spend the night with you?”

The Bargain for Mandrakes (Various Commentators)

Clarke: *It appears probable that Rachel had found means to engross the whole of Jacob’s affection and company, and that she now agreed to let him visit the tent of Leah, on account of receiving some of the fruits or plants which Reuben had found.*²³⁷

Dr. Peter Pett: *Certainly he [Jacob] seemingly refuses to sleep with her, preferring Rachel. So Rachel, aware of her power over him enters into a contract that if she receives the mandrakes Leah can sleep with Jacob that night.*²³⁸

The Pulpit Commentary: *On the part both of Rachel and Leah it was a miserable compact; and a pitiable spectacle it surely was, that of two rival wives contracting with one another about their husband’s society. Rachel disposes of Jacob for a night in consideration of a handful of mandrakes, and Leah counts herself entitled to Jacob’s favors as a boon which she had purchased with Reuben’s yellow apples.*²³⁹

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Rachel proposed an exchange with Leah, believing that the mandrakes would enable her to get pregnant. Leah exploited Rachel’s desperate desire to get pregnant by offering to give her the mandrakes in exchange for a night with Jacob.*

Wenstrom continues: *The fact that Rachel was willing to make such an offer with Leah reveals how much Jacob favors her over Leah in that she is prepared trade a night of sex with Jacob for the mandrakes, which she hopes will enable her to conceive. It also reveals how desperate Rachel is to have children in that she would make a deal with Leah, exchanging a night of sex with Jacob for the mandrakes.*

Wenstrom continues: *Rachel is again demonstrating a lack of faith in the Lord who alone can cause women to conceive. The fact that Rachel believes that the mandrakes will enable her to conceive and have a child indicates that she still is not free from her pagan background since only the Lord can enable her to have children. Rachel was so lacking in faith that she put her trust in mandrakes rather than the God Who made them.*²⁴⁰

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

²³⁷ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:15.

²³⁸ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:15.

²³⁹ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–24 (Homiletics).

²⁴⁰ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 470); accessed September 9, 2017.

Trapp: *[Jacob] is bought and sold by his emulous wives: which was no small affliction to him, and a punishment of his polygamy.*²⁴¹ I do not think that God is specifically punishing Jacob; I think that he is simply facing the natural results of being in a polygamous marriage. God does not have to do anything to make that a difficult situation.

Trapp is not the only commentator to think that Jacob went way off base to engage in polygamy, and that God is bearing down hard on him for that. However, there is no indication whatsoever that God's hand is involved in any of the negative aspects of this polygamous union.

Genesis 30:15c And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's love-apples."

Rachel acknowledges that this is unfair, so she agrees that she will get the love-apples and Jacob would stay with Leah that night.

This implies that weeks or even months might go by where Jacob and Leah were not intimate. Given that not many years have passed, since Jacob married Rachel, she is probably no less physically attractive, but Rachel's anger and frustration has no doubt cooled Jacob's desire for her.

Rachel, making this decision, suggests that she seemed to have much of the say in this marriage. It is an interesting dynamic, as Rachel feels badly because she has not produced a child; yet, at the same time, she appears to be determining who Jacob will cohabit with.

Interestingly enough, the Law of God will forbid the marrying of sisters at the same time (Leviticus 18:18: **And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is still alive.**). That is obviously quite interesting, as the children of Israel, for the most part, came from two sisters. I think one reason to state this law in particular—even though it is something that would rarely happen—is based upon the fact that two-thirds of Israel came from the two sisters who are married to Jacob. This would prevent anyone from using this as a rationalization to marry two sisters. Let me suggest, that, apart from this particular commandment, some men would have actually used this very rationalization in almost a cultic way (as Mormons originally did when it came to polygamous marriages). This command prevents men from establishing *Jacobian communes*.

God's ideal then, as it is now, is a lifetime marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24).

And so comes Jacob from the field in the evening and so Leah goes out to meet him. And so she says, "Unto me you will come for hiring I have hired you in mandrakes of my son." And so he lay with her in the night the that."

Genesis
30:16

Jacob came in from the field in the evening and Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You will come in to me for I have definitely hired you by means of my son's love-apples." Consequently, he laid with her that night.

Jacob came in from the field that evening and Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You will come in to me, for I have paid for your services tonight with my son's love-apples." Consequently, he laid with her that night.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

²⁴¹ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:15.

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so comes Jacob from the field in the evening and so Leah goes out to meet him. And so she says, "Unto me you will come for hiring I have hired you in mandrakes of my son." And so he lay with her in the night the that."
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob came in from the field at evening, and Leah went out to anticipate him, and said, With me thou wilt go in, because with hire have I hired thee, with the mandrakes of my son; and he lay with her that night.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob came from the field at evening. <u>And Leah heard the voice of the braying of the ass, and knew that Jakob had come</u> , and Leah went forth to meet him, and said, Thou wilt enter with me, because hiring I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes <u>from Rahel my sister</u> . And he lay with her that night.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And when Jacob returned at even from the field, Lia went out to meet him, and said: you shall come in unto me, because I have hired you for my son's mandrakes. And he slept with her that night.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, "You must come in to me; for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." He lay with her that night.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And when Jacob came home from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him, and said, You must come in unto me; for surely I have hired you with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob came in out of the field at even; and Lea went forth to meet him, and said, You shall come in to me this day, for I have hired you for my son's mandrakes; and he lay with her that night.

Significant differences: There is additional text in one of the targums.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	In the evening, when Jacob came in from the field, Leah went out to him and said, Tonight you are to come to me, for I have given my son's love-fruits as a price for you. And he went in to her that night.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Jacob came in from the fields that night. Leah saw him and went out to meet him. She said, "You will sleep with me tonight. I have paid for you with my son's flowers." So Jacob slept with Leah that night.
<i>God's Word</i> ™	As Jacob was coming in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You are to sleep with me," she said. "You are my reward for my son's mandrakes." So he went to bed with her that night.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When Jacob came in from the fields in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You are going to sleep with me tonight, because I have paid for you with my son's mandrakes." So he had intercourse with her that night.
International Children's B.	When Jacob came in from the field that night, Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You will have intimate relations with me tonight. I have paid for you with my son's mandrakes." So Jacob slept with her that night.
<i>The Message</i>	When Jacob came home that evening from the fields, Leah was there to meet him: "Sleep with me tonight; I've bartered my son's mandrakes for a night with you." So he slept with her that night.
NIRV	Jacob came in from the fields that evening. Leah went out to meet him. "You have to sleep with me tonight," she said. "I've traded my son's mandrakes for that time with you." So he slept with her that night.
New Simplified Bible	Jacob came in from the fields that evening. Leah went out to meet him. »You are to sleep with me,« she said. »You are my reward for my son's mandrake plants.« So he went to bed with her that night.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	When Jacob came back from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must sleep with me because I've paid for you with my son's erotic herbs." So he slept with her that night.
The Living Bible	That evening as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me tonight!" she said; "for I am hiring you with some mandrakes my son has found!" So he did.
New Berkeley Version	That evening as Jacob came in from the field, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You are to come home with me, for I have definitely hired you with my son's May-apples"; so he lay with her that night.
New Life Version	When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, Leah went to meet him. She said, "You must sleep with me tonight. For I have paid for you with my son's fruit." So he lay with her that night.
New Living Translation	So that evening, as Jacob was coming home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You must come and sleep with me tonight!" she said. "I have paid for you with some mandrakes that my son found." So that night he slept with Leah.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

International Standard V	When Jacob came in from the field that evening, Leah went to meet him and told him, "You're having sex with me tonight. I traded my son's mandrakes for you!" So he slept with her that night.
Revised Knox Bible	So, when Jacob came back from work at evening, Lia went out to meet him; you are to share my bed to-night, she told him; I have paid your hire with the mandrake fruit which my son found. So he slept with her that night; and now God listened to her prayers, so that she conceived again and bore a fifth son. V. 17 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	When Jacob returned from the wheat fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You must sleep with me tonight, because I gave Rachel some of my son's <i>that enables women to become pregnant</i> , to pay her for allowing us to do that." So Jacob slept with her that night.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob was to come in from the field, in the evening, Leah was to go out to meet him, and was to say: You was to come in to me, for I am to have hired a hiring of you, with my son's mandrakes. He was to lie down with her that night.
Conservapedia	Jacob came out of the field that evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, "You need to take me to bed tonight. I have rented you with my son's mandrakes." So he took her to bed that night. The Hebrew phrase "to hire, I have hired you" is repeated for emphasis. "Hire" can mean "rent" or "engage for wages."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah met him, and said to him ; " You must come, for I have hired you with the love apples of my son, so sleep with me to-night."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And when Jacob came from the fields at even, Lea went out to meet him, and said: come in to me, for I have bought you with my sons mandragoras. And he slept with her that night.
H. C. Leupold	And Jacob came from the field toward evening and Leah went forth to meet him, and she said: To me shalt thou come in, for I have indeed hired thee for my son's mandrakes. So he lay with her that night.
Tree of Life Version	So when Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him, and she said, "You must come to me. For I've actually hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that very night.

Urim-Thummim Version	And Jacob came from the field at sunset, and Leah went out to meet him and said, you must come in to me because I have hired you with my son's mandrakes. So he made love with her that night.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob returned from the field in the evening, and Leah came out towards him and said: "You'll come to me, because I have paid a price for you in my son's mandrakes;" and he lay with her that night.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And Jacob came out of the field in the dusk, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, You must come in to me, because hiring, I have hired you with my son's love-apples. And he lay with her that night.
New American Bible (2002)	That evening, when Jacob came home from the fields, Leah went out to meet him. "You are now to come in with me," she told him, "because I have paid for you with my son's mandrakes." So that night he slept with her, and God heard her prayer; she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. V. 17 is included for context.
New Jerusalem Bible	When Jacob came back from the fields that night, Leah went out to meet him and said, 'You must come to me, for I have hired you at the price of my son's mandrakes.' So he slept with her that night.
Revised English Bible	In the evening, when Jacob came in from the country Leah went out to meet him. "You are to sleep with me tonight," she told him. "I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." He slept with her that night, and God heard Leah's prayer, so that she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah said, "God has rewarded me, because I gave my slave-girl to my husband"; so she named him Issachar. Vv. 17–18 are included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	When Ya'akov came in from the field in the evening, Le'ah went out to meet him and said, "You have to come and sleep with me, because I've hired you with my son's mandrakes." So Ya'akov slept with her that night.
The Complete Tanach	When Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah came forth toward him, and she said, "You shall come to me, because I have hired you with my son's dudaim," and he slept with her on that night.

I have hired you: I gave Rachel her payment. — [from Targum Jonathan]

on that night: Heb. אֹהֶב הַלֵּיל. The Holy One, blessed be He, assisted that Issachar should be born from that union. — [from Niddah 31a]

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov comes from the field in the evening and Leah goes out to meet him and says, You must come in to me; for in hiring, I hired you with the mandrakes of my son. - and he lies with her that night.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov came in from the sadeh ba'erev, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with duda'im of beni. And he lay with her that night.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	When Jacob came in from the field ·that night [in the evening], Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You will ·have sexual relations with [·come to] me tonight because I have ·paid for [bought; hired] you with my son's mandrakes." So Jacob ·slept [·lay] with her that night.
--------------------	---

Kretzmann’s Commentary And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son’s mandrakes. So Leah insisted upon her bargain. And he lay with her that night.

NET Bible® When Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must sleep [*Heb* “must come in to me.”] with me because I have paid for your services [*Heb* “I have surely hired.”] with my son’s mandrakes.” So he had marital relations with her that night.

The Pulpit Commentary And Jacob came out of the field in the evening,—i.e. the harvest-field (Genesis 30:14)—and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me (the Samaritan codex adds "this night," and the LXX. "today"); for surely I have hired thee (literally, hiring; I have hired thee) with my son’s mandrakes. And (assenting to the arrangement of his wives) he lay with her that night.

The Voice So when Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him. **Leah:** Tonight you must sleep with me because I have hired you *for a good price*—some of my son’s mandrakes. So he slept with her that night.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov [*He restrains*] came from the field in the evening and Le'ah [*Weary*] went out to meet him and she said, you will come to me given that I surely hired you with the mandrakes of my son and he laid down with her in that night,...

Concordant Literal Version And coming is Jacob from the field in the evening, and forth is faring Leah to meet him. And saying is she, "To me are you coming tonight, for I hired, yea, hired you with my son’s mandrakes. And lying is he with her in that night.

Modern English Version When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must sleep with me, because I have paid for you with my son’s mandrakes.” And he slept with her that night.

World English Bible Jacob came from the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, “You must come in to me; for I have surely hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” He lay with her that night.

Young’s Updated LT And Jacob comes in from the field at evening; and Leah goes to meet him, and says, “Unto me will you come in, for hiring I have hired you with my son’s love-apples;” and he lies with her during that night.

The gist of this passage: When Jacob comes in from working in the fields, Leah goes out to meet him and informs him that he will be staying with her that night, as a part of a bargain struck between the sisters.

Genesis 30:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wāw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
bôw’ (וָב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #935 BDB #97
Ya’ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH</i> ^{BV}]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #3290 BDB #784

Genesis 30:16a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, off, out from, of, out of, away from, on account of, since, than, more than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
sâdeh (שָׂדֵה) [pronounced <i>saw-DEH</i>]	<i>field, land, country, open field, open country; an unpopulated area</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #7704 BDB #961
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
‘ereb (בְּרֵעַ) [pronounced <i>GEH-re^{bv}</i>]	<i>evening, sunset</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6153 BDB #787

Translation: [Jacob came in from the field in the evening...](#)

Jacob is still working for his Uncle Laban. Very likely, he has little to show for it beyond his wives and their servant-girls.

Jacob married Rachel and Leah after 7 years was up; and that he did not wait for the 14 years to be up in order to marry Rachel. However, he continued to work for Laban all of this time, as per his agreement with him. Laban would not have really cared one way or the other, as long as he was prospered in this deal. Laban allowed Jacob to marry his younger daughter as well, on credit; fairly certain that he could depend upon Jacob's personal integrity to fulfill his obligation.

Genesis 30:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsâ' (יָצָא) [pronounced <i>yaw-TZAWH</i>]	<i>to go [come] out, to go [come] forth; to rise; to flow, to gush up [out]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3318 BDB #422
lâmed (לְ) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7121 BDB #894

Translation: [...and Leah went out to meet him.](#)

What is very likely is, Rachel would come out to meet Jacob in the evening when he returned from work. For the most part, Jacob was pretty much exclusively with Rachel. There does not appear to be a situation where he slept around with his two wives and their maids in some sort of a rotation. Therefore, Leah coming out to meet him was somewhat out of the ordinary (I am theorizing this—it is not stated exactly this way in the Hebrew text). I think that my understanding and explanation here are correct.

Genesis 30:16c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
bôw' (בָּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
The NET Bible: <i>The imperfect verbal form has an obligatory nuance here. She has acquired him for the night and feels he is obligated to have sexual relations with her.</i> ²⁴²			
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
sâkar (שָׂכַר) [pronounced saw-KAHR]	<i>to hire; to recompense; to bribe</i>	Qal infinitive absolute	Strong's #7936 BDB #968
The infinitive absolute has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add <i>ing</i> to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form. ²⁴³			
sâkar (שָׂכַר) [pronounced saw-KAHR]	<i>to hire; to recompense; to bribe</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7936 BDB #968
The NET Bible: <i>The infinitive absolute precedes the finite verbal form for emphasis. The name Issachar (see v. 18) seems to be related to this expression.</i> ²⁴⁴			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

²⁴² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

²⁴³ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

²⁴⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

Genesis 30:16c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dûwdâ'îym (דוּדְאִיִּם) [pronounced doo-daw-EEM]	<i>mandrakes, love-apples; as exciting sexual desire, and favouring procreation</i>	masculine plural construct	Strong's #1736 BDB #188
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: She said, "You will come in to me for I have definitely hired you by means of my son's love-apples."

Leah tells Jacob that he will spend that night with her. Jacob just went along with whatever program his wives suggested. Even though these two sisters were often at odds with one another, they were still able to double-team Jacob—meaning they could unite on what they expected him to do, and so he would do it.

Dr. Bob Utley: "I have surely hired you" This is an infinitive absolute and perfect verb of the same root (BDB 968, KB 1330), which denotes intensity. Jacob was willingly sexually manipulated by his first two wives.²⁴⁵

Gill: [Leah] had hired that night's lodging with him of Rachel, with the mandrakes her son Reuben had brought out of the field. Jacob made no objection to it; but consented, being willing to please both his wives, who he perceived had made this agreement between themselves.²⁴⁶

Jacob lived with a powder keg of a marriage. We do not know when Leah or Rachel would become upset about their part in this marriage. So when Jacob's wives said, "Let's do this or do that," that was what Jacob would do.

Genesis 30:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced shaw-KAH ^{BV}]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "Lay" is the verb shakhav (shaw-kahv), which is used as a euphemism for sex and is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex: Lot's daughters with Lot (19:32-35); the Philistines with Rebekah (26:10); Shechem with Dinah (34:2, 7); Reuben with Bilhah (35:22); Potiphar's wife with Joseph (39:7, 10, 12, 14).²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:16.

²⁴⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:16.

²⁴⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 471); accessed September 9, 2017.

Genesis 30:16d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘îm (עִם) [pronounced <i>geem</i>]	<i>with, at, by, near; like; from</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
lay ^l âh (לַיְלִיל) [pronounced <i>LAY-law</i>]	<i>night; that night, this night, the night</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3915 BDB #538
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

In the NET Bible: *So he had marital relations with her that night.* The NET Bible: *This is the same Hebrew verb (שָׁכַב, shakhav) translated “sleep with” in v. 15. In direct discourse the more euphemistic “sleep with” was used, but here in the narrative “marital relations” reflects more clearly the emphasis on sexual intercourse.*²⁴⁸

Translation: Consequently, he laid with her that night.

Jacob usually spent his nights with Rachel. The emphasis is upon his having relations with Leah—that was the point of that night.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *This is actually the fourth exchange that has taken place in the life of Jacob: (1) Exchange of birthright with Esau for a bowl of red lentil soup (2) Exchange of blessing (3) Exchange of wives, Rachel and Leah (4) Exchange of Jacob as a husband between Rachel and Leah for sex by hire.*²⁴⁹

Genesis 30:16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening. And Leah went out to meet him, and said, “You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's love-apples.” And he lay with her that night.

Genesis 30:16 Jacob came in from the field in the evening and Leah went out to meet him. She said, “You will come in to me for I have definitely hired you by means of my son’s love-apples.” Consequently, he laid with her that night. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:16 Jacob came in from the field that evening and Leah went out to meet him. She said, “You will come in to me, for I have paid for your services tonight with my son’s love-apples.” Consequently, he laid with her that night. (Kukis paraphrase)

We have no idea as to exact the sleeping arrangements. His two wives had their own living quarters (probably their own tents). Their personal maids were probably living with them in those tents. At this time, Jacob was not particularly fond of Leah and he was probably a little mad at Rachel.

²⁴⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

²⁴⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 471); accessed September 9, 2017.

Their personal servants were used only as surrogates; Jacob would not have slept with them for companionship. Jacob would have had relations with their maids only when prompted to—based upon this chapter, twice each maidservant.

What was likely the case is, Jacob, Leah and Rachel each had their own tents. However, it is less clear what happened once Leah has had children; and once the maids were brought into the picture. Were the maids in charge of all the children? Leah certainly was involved in the raising of her own sons, as little Reuben brings the mandrakes to her. Yet, they are all close enough, so that Rachel knows about the mandrakes.

As agreed to by the sisters, Leah met Jacob and told him that he would be staying in her tent that evening. The words, *in that night* suggest that he only stayed with her that particular night.

Poole: *He ratified their agreement, that he might preserve peace and love amongst them.*²⁵⁰ I believe this to be a very apt and accurate observation.

It is certainly possible that these mandrakes are a sexual stimulant of sorts; and possibly even helpful to a woman desiring to become pregnant. The actual efficacy of this fruit is unknown to us; but, what we do know is, Leah had another son—and maybe she did use the mandrakes; and Rachel did not have any children and she definitely used the mandrakes.²⁵¹ Why was Leah able to have another child? The Bible tells us: **And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.** (Genesis 30:17; ESV) The mandrakes were, for all intents and purposes, a non-issue when it came to the fertility of Leah or Rachel. In both cases, it was God Who oversaw the conceptions which followed. The mandrakes are a human viewpoint solution to a destiny which God controlled. And a human viewpoint solution is no-solution.

The Pulpit Commentary: *That the mandrakes could not remove sterility he demonstrated by allowing Rachel's barrenness to continue at least two years longer, though she had made use of Reuben's apples, and by opening Leah's womb without them.*²⁵²

Clarke: *[T]he Jewish women an intense desire of having children; and it seems to have been produced, not from any peculiar affection for children, but through the hope of having a share in the blessing of Abraham, by bringing forth Him in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.*²⁵³

It is God who gives life. Just as Jacob said back in v. 2: **"Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"** (ESV) Giving life, of whatever sort, appears to be the purview of God.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:14–16 **Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also?" So Rachel said, "Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes." When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he had sex with her that night.**

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:14–16

1. The incident which is here recorded gives even more shocking proof of the rivalry which had become full-blown between the two sisters.
2. This passage also further confirms the evils and problems which exist due to bigamy or polygamy.

²⁵⁰ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:16.

²⁵¹ Although this is not specifically stated, it is a reasonable assumption, given the bargain that was struck.

²⁵² *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–24 (Homiletics).

²⁵³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:16.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:14–16

3. The conflict continues even though the two women are sisters, or perhaps all the more on that account.
4. The time of the wheat harvest is used merely to fix the time of year in which this incident occurred.
5. It does not suggest that Jacob or anyone in his family was harvesting wheat, since we have been told that his profession was that of shepherd.
6. A small point of isagogics which further lends authenticity to the text is the fact that the wheat harvest and the ripening of the mandrakes occurs roughly during the same time of the year.
7. The first-born of Leah, Reuben would have been about 4 years old by the time this happened.
8. Typical of a child, he sees that which attracts the eye and gathers some and takes them to his mother as a present.
9. The yellow berries of the mandrake would naturally get his attention.
10. When he arrives home to give his mother a present, Rachel was present and observed what he
11. She is frustrated with God due to her lack of children, and now turns to hocus pocus and mystical cures for her barrenness.
12. There is no doubt that the ancient cosmos considered the mandrake a plant which was an aphrodisiac, as well as one which promoted fertility.
13. It certainly is a plant which was attractive, gave off a pleasing fragrance, and had a pleasant, but acquired taste.
14. It has a near relation, *Atropa belladonna* which is the source of atropine, which has decided medicinal qualities.
15. With these types of properties, it came to be regarded as a stimulant to sexual activity.
16. There is no indication that it had any sexual properties at all, it was merely the result of baseless
17. Rachel is past the point of relying on God for her prosperity, so she resorts to this superstitious approach.
18. She asks her sister for some of the mandrakes in order to alleviate her problem of barrenness.
19. This results in an angry attack from Leah, who was obviously frustrated with her lot as well.
20. For all her children, she obviously had not gained the affection of Jacob which she so earnestly desired.
21. She accuses Rachel of alienation of affection, but the fact is that she never had Jacob's affection.
22. There is no way in hell that Jacob possessed any desire for Leah, or any inclination to marry her.
23. She, with the blessing of her father, had manipulated the situation and bagged herself a husband.
24. She may have gotten what she wanted, but she could not make Jacob love her.
25. When she observed the obvious love and affection which Jacob possessed for Rachel, she became jealous and vindictive.
26. She explodes under her Sinful trend of Adam bitterness, and charges Rachel with attempting to pilfer what was rightfully hers.
27. Leah certainly begrudges her sister the mandrakes, since she was aware of their alleged qualities.
28. She has no desire to do anything which may further enhance her sister's lot with Jacob.
29. If Rachel were to get pregnant and have children, she would gain even more favor, or so Leah thinks.
30. Leah takes advantage of her situation, and strikes a bargain for the mandrakes.
31. If Rachel is going to get the mandrakes, she wants a shot at another conception.
32. This implies that she had not been sleeping regularly with Jacob, and she views this as an opportunity to advance herself.
33. When Jacob returns home that evening, Leah gleefully meets him away from the house and informs him of his lot for the evening.
34. It is difficult to imagine that Jacob continued to go along with their Sinful trend of Adam activity, but he did.
35. He manifests a sinful acquiescence to the whims of these two horsy bitches.
36. He does not attempt to run the home like a man, but just goes to work each day and tries to make the best of it.
37. Keep in mind that he is in this situation because he did not stand up to Laban in the first place.
38. Jacob's lot is a tough job, working for low pay, working for a deceitful boss, and a horrible home life.
39. But like a dutiful wimp, he has sex that night with Leah.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Leah gives birth to 2 sons and a daughter (vv. 17–21)

And so listens Elohim unto Leah and so she conceives and so she bears to Jacob a son a fifth. And so says Leah, “Has given Elohim my hire which I gave my maid to my man.” And so she calls his name Issachar.

Genesis
30:17–18

Elohim heard Leah and she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, “Elohim has given my remuneration in which I have given my maid to my husband.” Consequently, she named him *Issachar*.

God heard Leah and she conceived and then bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, “God has remunerated me because I had given my maid to my husband.” Therefore, she named him *Issachar*.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so listens Elohim unto Leah and so she conceives and so she bears to Jacob a son a fifth. And so says Leah, “Has given Elohim my hire which I gave my maid to my man.” And so she calls his name Issachar.
Targum (Onkelos)	And the Lord <u>received the prayer</u> of Leah, and she conceived, and bare to Jakob a fifth son. And Leah said, The Lord hath given me my <u>reward</u> , because I gave my handmaid to my husband. And she called his name Issakar [“Wages.”].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the Lord <u>heard the prayer</u> of Leah, and she conceived, and bare to Jakob a fifth son. And Leah said, The Lord hath given me my <u>reward</u> , for that I gave my handmaid to my husband; <u>even so shall his children receive a good reward, because they will occupy themselves with the law</u> . And she called his name Issakar.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And God heard <u>her prayers</u> : and she conceived and bore the fifth son, And said: God has given me a <u>reward</u> , because I gave my handmaid to my husband. And she called his name Issachar.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	God listened to Leah, and she conceived, and bore Ya'aqub a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband." She named him Issachar.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And God hearkened to Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God has rewarded me, because I have given my maid to my husband; so she called his name Issachar.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God listened to Lea, and she conceived, and bore Jacob a fifth son. And Lea said, God has given me my reward, because I gave my maid to my husband; and she called his name Issachar, <u>which is, Reward</u> .

Significant differences: The targums have *received [heard] the prayer* rather than *listens*. The Latin also adds in the words *her prayers*. The targums have *reward* rather than *hire*; but it is a reasonable translation from the Hebrew. *Leah* is found twice in the Hebrew; once in the Latin. The targum has additional text. The Greek has some additional text.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And God gave ear to her and she became with child, and gave Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, God has made payment to me for giving my servant-girl to my husband: so she gave her son the name Issachar.
Easy-to-Read Version–2006	Then God allowed Leah to become pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son. She said, “God has given me a reward because I gave my slave to my husband.” So she named her son Issachar.
<i>The Message</i>	God listened to Leah; she became pregnant and gave Jacob a fifth son. She said, “God rewarded me for giving my maid to my husband.” She named him Issachar (Bartered).
Names of God Bible	Elohim answered Leah’s prayer. She became pregnant and gave birth to her fifth son for Jacob. Leah said, “Elohim has given me my reward because I gave my slave to my husband.” So she named him Issachar [Reward].
NIRV	God listened to Leah. She became pregnant and had a fifth son by Jacob. Then Leah said, “God has rewarded me because I gave my female servant to my husband.” So she named the boy Issachar.
New Simplified Bible	God answered Leah’s prayer. She became pregnant and gave birth to her fifth son for Jacob. Leah said: »God has given me my reward, because I gave my slave to my husband.« So she named him Issachar.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God responded to Leah. She became pregnant and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. Leah said, “God gave me what I paid for, what I deserved for giving my servant to my husband.” So she named him Issachar.
Contemporary English V.	That evening when Jacob came in from the fields, Leah told him, "You're sleeping with me tonight. I hired you with my son's love flowers." They slept together that night, and God answered Leah's prayers by giving her a fifth son. Leah shouted, "God has rewarded me for letting Jacob marry my servant," and she named the boy Issachar. V. 16 is included for context.
The Living Bible	And God answered her prayers and she became pregnant again, and gave birth to her fifth son. She named him Issachar (meaning “Wages”), for she said, “God has repaid me for giving my slave girl to my husband.”
New Berkeley Version	The LORD heard Leah; she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son; she said, “God has allowed me my reward because I have my husband my maid” and she named him Issachar [Issachar—there is hire].
New Century Version	Then God answered Leah’s prayer, and she became pregnant again. She gave birth to a fifth son and said, “God has given me what I paid for, because I gave my slave girl to my husband.” So Leah named her son Issachar.
New Life Version	And God heard Leah and she gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. Leah said, "God has given me my pay because I gave my husband the woman who serves me." So she gave him the name Issachar.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	So that evening, when Jacob came in from the field, LeAh went out to meet him and said: 'You will [sleep] with me tonight, because I've hired you for my son's mandrakes.' So he slept with her that night, and God listened to LeAh, so she got pregnant and bore a fifth son to Jacob. And LeAh said: 'God has rewarded me for giving my handmaid to my man.' So she named him IshSachar (Reward). V. 16 is included for context.
International Standard V	God heard what Leah had said, so she conceived and bore a fifth son for Jacob. Then Leah said, “God has paid me for giving my servant to my husband as his wife.” So she named him Issachar [The Heb. name <i>Issachar</i> means <i>wages</i>].

New Advent (Knox) Bible	So he slept with her that night; and now God listened to her prayers, so that she conceived again and bore a fifth son. Whereupon she said, God has paid me too my hire, for the maid-servant I lent to my husband, and she called the boy Issachar, Reward. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.
Translation for Translators	God answered Leah's prayers, and she became pregnant and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my slave to my husband to be another wife for him." So she named him Issachar, <i>which sounds like the Hebrew word that means "reward."</i> •

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	He of mighty ones was to listen to Leah, and she was to conceive, and was to bear forth to Jacob, a fifth son. Leah was to say: He of mighty one is to have given me my wages; that which I am to have given my maid servant to my husband. She was to call his name Issachar.
Conservapedia	God listened to Leah, and she fell pregnant, and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. Leah said, "God has paid me my wages for giving my handmaid to my husband!" So she named the boy Issachar [Which in Hebrew means "rent" or "wages."].
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And God heard Leah, so she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah is therefore said, " God has paid me wages, because I gave my servant to my husband." She therefore called his name Issakar [Meaning in Hebrew " Wages." — F. F.].
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And God heard Lea, that she conceived and bare unto Jacob the fifth son. Then said Lea: God has given me my reward, because I gave my maiden to my husband, and she called him Isachar.
HCSB	God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my slave to my husband," and she named him Issachar.
H. C. Leupold	And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived and bare Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said: God hath given me my reward, because I gave my handmaid to my husband. And she called his name Issachar (Reward).
Urim-Thummim Version	And Elohim listened to Leah, and she became pregnant, and gendered Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, Elohim has given me my hire because I have given my slave girl to my husband, and she called his name Issachar.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Yahweh heard Leah, and she conceived and she bore Jacob a fifth son. And Leah said, "God has give me my wages due (Sechar), for which I gave my maid to my husband, to be a wife," and called him Yisashchar (Issachar).

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Yahweh heard Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my reward because I gave my maidservant to my husband." She named the child Issachar.
The Heritage Bible	And God heard Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God has given me my pay, because I have given my maid to my husband, and she called his name Issachar.
New American Bible (2011)	That evening, when Jacob came in from the field, Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You must have intercourse with me, because I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So that night he lay with her, and God listened to Leah; she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah then said, "God has given me my wages for giving my maidservant to my husband"; so she named him Issachar [Issachar : explained by the terms, sekari, "my reward," and in v. 16, sakor sekartika, "I have hired you."]. V. 16 is included for context.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	God listened to Le'ah, and she conceived and bore Ya'akov a fifth son. Le'ah said, "God has given me my hire, because I gave my slave-girl to my husband." So she called him Yissakhar [hire, reward].
The Complete Tanach	And God hearkened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. And God hearkened to Leah: That she desired and was seeking means to increase the number of tribes. — [from Gen. Rabbah 72:5]
exeGesés companion Bible	And Leah said, "God has given [me] my reward for I have given my maidservant to my husband"; so she named him Issachar. And Elohim hearkens to Leah and she conceives and births Yaaqov a fifth son. And Leah says, Elohim gave me my hire, because I gave my maid to my man: and she calls his name Yissachar.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	God heeded Leah, and she conceived and bore him a fifth son. 18And Leah said, "God has given me my reward for having given my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar.
Kaplan Translation	God heard Leah's [prayer], and she became pregnant, giving birth to a fifth son to Jacob. Leah said, 'God has given me my reward (sakhar) because I have given my handmaid to my husband.' She named the child Issachar. Yissakhar in Hebrew. The name can be interpreted as yesh sekhar - 'there is reward' (Radak). The name also alludes to Leah's paying for Jacob's services (Genesis 30:16).
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Elohim paid heed unto Leah, and she conceived, and bore Ya'akov ben chamishi. And Leah said, Elohim hath given me my hire, because I have given my shifchah to my ish; and she called shmo Yissakhar.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	God listened <i>and</i> answered [the prayer of] Leah, and she conceived and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has given me my reward because I have given my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar.
The Expanded Bible	Then God ·answered Leah's prayer [^L heard Leah], and she ·became pregnant [^L conceived] again. She gave birth to a fifth son and said, "God has given me what I ·paid for [bought; hired], because I gave my slave girl to my husband." So Leah named her son Issachar [^C sounds like "paid for" in Hebrew].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. So it was not the natural remedy of the mandrakes which produced fruitfulness, but the blessing of the Lord, the God of creation. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband; and she called his name Issachar (he who brings reward). She believed this son to be the reward of God for her having yielded her servant to her husband.
NET Bible®	God paid attention [<i>Heb</i> "listened to."] to Leah; she became pregnant [Or "she conceived" (also in v. 19).] and gave Jacob a son for the fifth time [<i>Heb</i> "and she bore for Jacob a fifth son," i.e., this was the fifth son that Leah had given Jacob.]. Then Leah said, "God has granted me a reward [<i>Heb</i> "God has given my reward."] because I gave my servant to my husband as a wife." [The words "as a wife" are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied for clarity (cf. v. 9).] So she named him Issachar.
The Pulpit Commentary	And God hearkened unto Leah,—i.e. unto Leah's prayers (Onkelos, Jerome, Rosenmóller, Murphy), which Calvin thinks doubtful—quis enim putaret, dum odiose sorori suae negat Lea fructus a puero collectos, et hoc pretio noctem mariti mercatur, ullum esse precibus locum. The historian employs the term Elohim to

show that Leah's pregnancy was not owing to her son's mandrakes, but to Divine power (Keil, Lange)—and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son—or, counting Zilpah's, the seventh; while, reckoning Bilhah's, this was Jacob's ninth child. And Leah said, God—Elohim; a proof of the lower religious consciousness into which Leah had fallen (Hengstenberg), though perhaps on the above hypothesis an evidence of her piety and faith (Keil, Lange)—hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband:—i.e. as a reward for my self-denial (Keil, Murphy); an exclamation in which appears Leah's love for Jacob (Lange), if not also a tacit acknowledgment that she had her fears lest she may have sinned in asking him to wed Zilpah (Rosenmóller)—and she called his name Issachar—"There is Reward," or "There is Hire;" containing a double allusion to her hire of Jacob and her reward for Zilpah

Syndein/Thieme

{Verses 17-18: Jacob/Israel's Ninth born - Issachar (Mother - Leah (5th))

And God listened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maiden to my husband." And she called his name Issachar {name means 'there is recompense'}. So he slept with her that night. God listened to Leah and showed her His favor, and after many years she again conceived and gave birth to her fifth son for Jacob.

The Voice

Leah: God has paid me my wages, since I gave my servant to my husband.

This is why she named her son Issachar. A portion of v. 16 is included for context.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Elohiym ^[Powers] heard Le'ah ^[Weary] and she conceived and she brought forth for Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] a fifth son, and Le'ah ^[Weary] said, Elohiym ^[Powers] gave my wage because I gave my maid to my man and she called out his title Yis'sas'kar ^[He will lift up the wage] ,...

Modern English Version

God listened to Leah, and she conceived and gave Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, "God has given me my reward because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name Issachar.

NASB

God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar.

New European Version

God listened to Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob a fifth son. Leah said, God has given me my hire, because I gave my handmaid to my husband. She named him Issachar.

Third Millennium Bible

And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, "God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband." And she called his name Issachar [that is, A hire].

Young's Updated LT

And God hearkens unto Leah, and she conceives, and bears to Jacob a son, a fifth, and Leah says, "God has given my hire, because I have given my maid-servant to my husband;" and she calls his name Issachar.

The gist of this passage:

God listened to Leah's prayer and she gave birth to a 5th son for Jacob. Leah believes that this is a result of giving her personal servant to Jacob to have children by. Leah names the child *Issachar*, which means *wages*.

Genesis 30:17a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâma' (שמע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ʿel (ל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521

Translation: Elohim heard Leah...

Leah's desire was to have another child. God hears this desire. God does not grant the desire of Leah to have Jacob alone as her husband. That involves Jacob's volition. Leah placed herself in this position by inserting herself into Jacob and Rachel's relationship.²⁵⁴ This is something which would affect her for the rest of her life.

It is the opinion of most that Leah prayed to God and God heard her. Although that is most likely the case, she may have simply been talking to her personal maid. One of the fascinating things about the first few chapters of Exodus is, God hears the cries and complaints of His people, who had been enslaved by Egypt. However, I have not found a verse in Exodus where *they prayed to God*.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Again and again we see that it is God who is clearly involved in her fertility and pregnancy.*²⁵⁵

Whether this was by direct prayer or God simply heard a conversation between Leah and her personal maid, God is in the business of giving life.

²⁵⁴ I see two possible scenarios: (1) Laban oversees the entire deception using his two daughters; (2) Laban oversees the entire deception, fooling his daughters as well (for instance, telling his daughters that Jacob wants to marry Leah and not Rachel). In the latter case, there are way too many moving parts for this to work out as Laban wants it to work out. And I have already describe how Laban could have worked this out using his two daughters. That way, Jacob is the only variable.

²⁵⁵ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017.

Genesis 30:17b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעִי) [pronounced <i>yah-ăguh-KOH^BV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
chămiyshîy (חַמִּישִׁי) [pronounced <i>khuh-mee-SHEE</i>]	<i>fifth</i>	masculine singular numeral ordinal	Strong's #2549 BDB #332

Translation: ...and she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob.

God does give Leah another child; and this is a result, we may assume, of her deal with Rachel.

Genesis 30:17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived, and bore Jacob the fifth son.

One of the many things that we learn by statements like this is, God allows life and creates life individually. Leah has possibly been praying to have another son, and God answers her prayer.

As a result of their union—perhaps it had been awhile since they cohabited—Leah became pregnant and bore Jacob another son. This is his fifth son *by Leah*.

Genesis 30:17 Elohim heard Leah and she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:18a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
sâkâr (שָׂכָר) [pronounced <i>saw-KAWR</i>]	<i>remuneration, hire, wages</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7939 BDB #969
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where; in that, in which, in what</i>	relative pronoun; sometimes the verb <i>to be</i> is implied	Strong's #834 BDB #81
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35

Translation: Leah therefore said, “Elohim has given my remuneration in which I have given my maid to my husband.”

This is interesting. We may assume that Leah is making a public announcement but what she is saying here seems odd. For that night with Jacob, she gave the mandrakes (love-apples) to her sister. However, here she says, God gave her a child because she gave her maid to Jacob. However, I do not quite get the significance of this. Somehow, the exchange for love-apples is not as respectable as the exchange for her maidservant (in her

eyes)? Maybe giving her maid was seen as a greater personal sacrifice? Or, more likely, Leah speaks this publicly, which includes her maid (and possibly Rachel). So she mentions her maid; sort of like someone at the Academy Awards naming someone to thank, as they are there at the ceremony.

Somehow, in Leah's mind, because she was generous enough to allow her maid to bear two sons of Jacob, she believed that God a blessing her by giving her another son. Note that this is not confirmed by the Bible. The extent of the inspiration of the Bible includes the fact that the quotations of the persons in the Bible are accurate recollections of what were said. Inspiration does not in any way indicate that any quotation found in the Bible is somehow seconded or authorized by God. This is Leah's idea thought up entirely on her own. God did not in any way indicate that this idea was doctrinally accurate.

Although she may view the giving of her maidservant as a great sacrifice on her part (God did not see it that way), if she believed this to be an exchange of some sort, then it would seem more logical that the love-apples were the things that were exchanged (because of the proximity in time).

Genesis 30:17–18a **God heard Leah and she conceived and then bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, "God has remunerated me because I had given my maid to my husband."**

You have to read all that God the Holy Spirit records.

Why did God give Leah a 5th son? A discussion.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that God is said to have given heed to Leah clearly implies that she prayed to get pregnant by Jacob again and God answered her...Leah placed her trust in God to enable her to get pregnant.*²⁵⁶

We have to be careful, as we have two perspectives here—God's and Leah's.

Leah says: **"God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband."** (Genesis 30:18b, ESV)

It ought to be clear to most believers that, Leah giving her personal servant to Jacob in order to rack up more children is not from some divine imperative, but because of her inordinate competition with her sister.

The NET Bible: *Leah seems to regard the act of giving her servant Zilpah to her husband as a sacrifice, for which (she believes) God is now rewarding her with the birth of a son.*²⁵⁷

God's perspective: **And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.** (Gen 30:17; ESV)

Was Leah praying to God for a child? Probably; but her perception of the event is still incorrect.

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Leah has erroneously interpreted the meaning of her fifth son since the birth of Issachar was a gift of God's grace and a demonstration of His compassion in response to her adverse circumstances. Leah erroneously chose to interpret this son as evidence of God's approval and blessing of her giving her maid Zilpah to Jacob. In actuality, God "rewarded" Leah's faith in Him.*

Wenstrom concludes: *Therefore, God in His grace heard Leah's prayer for a child and rewarded her faith in Him by giving her another son by Jacob. Grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon on our faith in the merits of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.*²⁵⁸

Given what Leah said about Judah, we gave her proper credit at that time. However, here, she is apparently retrogressing in the spiritual life.

²⁵⁶ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 471); accessed September 9, 2017.

²⁵⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

²⁵⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 472); accessed September 9, 2017.

I do not use a discussion to upbraid any particular commentator; but just to examine more carefully the meaning of the passage. Unlike a person who is not out there teaching and unlike a commentator who allowed himself a single rewrite, I spend over a month on most individual chapters, and I am able to read dozens of commentators. Furthermore, I pass through a particular verse a dozen or two dozen times. This gives me a much better chance to settle on the most exact understanding possible, which is always my intent and certainly the intent of many commentators who have come before me.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (אָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
shêm (שָׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Yis ^e sâkâr (יִשָּׂאֵר) [pronounced yis ^e -saw-AWR]	<i>he will bring a reward; there is recompense; transliterated Issachar</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong's #3485 BDB #441

Issachar comes from the word sâkâr (שָׂאֵר) [pronounced saw-KAWR], which means *remuneration, hire, wages*. (Strong's #7939 BDB #969).

The NET Bible: *The name Issachar (יִשָּׂאֵר, yishakhar) appears to mean "man of reward" or possibly "there is reward." The name plays on the word used in the statement made earlier in the verse. The Hebrew noun translated "reward" is derived from the same root as the name Issachar. The irony is that Rachel thought the mandrakes would work for her, and she was willing to trade one night for them. But in that one night Leah became pregnant.*²⁵⁹

Translation: Consequently, she named him *Issachar*.

Issachar means *wages, remuneration*. Leah believes that, because she gave her personal servant to Jacob in order to have more children, that this is how she is paid back by giving her another son.

Issachar as an individual and as a tribe was fairly undistinguished. His name is a combination of the Hebrew word for *man* and for *wages*. Hence he is a *man who has been paid for* (rather than a *hired man*). One of the few persons of note in this line was Deborah, of Judges 5, one of the few women who rose to power over the Jews during their days of severe apostasy following Joshua's tremendous leadership.

Genesis 30:18 And Leah said, "God has given me my hire, because I gave my slave to my husband." And she called his name *Issachar*.

²⁵⁹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

The name *Issachar* comes from the word *sākâr* (רַכְשִׁי) [pronounced *saw-KAWR*], which means *remuneration, hire, wages*. Strong's #7939 BDB #969. So, Leah did pay for the night with her husband; with her love-apples. However, she announces that this is because she gave her personal maid (her slave) to Jacob.

She says, "...because I gave my slave to my husband." Obviously, this refers to her personal maid Zilpah, who had 2 children for Jacob. Bear in mind, what Leah says is not necessarily divine commentary on what is going on. Leah gave her maid, Zilpah, to Jacob. Two sons were born to Zilpah as a result. So Leah appears to be saying that God has blessed her because she gave her maid to Jacob. I realize that her reasoning may not make a great deal of sense; but also bear in mind that this is a pregnant woman who has just given birth. Furthermore, the Laban women are not known for their clear thinking or logic. Recall that Rachel was very mad at Jacob for not giving her a son; and yet, he had impregnated Leah and Rachel's maid. It should have been obvious that Jacob was not the problem. In short, Leah was not fully squared away on God's thinking. God tells us why He allowed her to conceive: *God listened to Leah*. Leah spoke to God, He heard and He answered her prayer.

Matthew Poole: *Thus she mistakes the answer of her prayers for a recompence of her error.*²⁶⁰

Genesis 30:18 Leah therefore said, "Elohim has given my remuneration in which I have given my maid to my husband." Consequently, she named him *Issachar*. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:18 And Leah said, "God has given me my hire, because I gave my slave to my husband." And she called his name *Issachar*.

The Meaning of *Issachar* (Various Commentators)

Dr. Bob Utley: *Isaachar's name...reflects this sad event...The name Issachar...is related to the Hebrew word "wages" or "recompense"...Leah hired Jacob's love with Reuben's mandrakes!*²⁶¹

The Cambridge Bible: *Leah "hires" Jacob with the mandrakes given to Rachel; in Genesis 30:18 she calls Issachar the "hire" or wage, which she receives for giving Zilpah to Jacob.*²⁶²

Clarke: *And she called his name Issachar, רכשתי, This word is compounded of שי yesh, Is, and רכש sachar, Wages, from רכש sachar, to content, satisfy, saturate; hence a satisfaction or compensation for work done, etc.*²⁶³

Barnes: *רכשתי yîsâskâr, Jissakar, "reward." The second Hebrew letter (ש s) seems to have been merely a full mode of writing the word, instead of the abbreviated form רכשי yîsâkâr.*²⁶⁴

Barnes (again): *Leah...calls him "Issakar," with a double allusion. She had hired her husband with the mandrakes, and had received this son as her hire for giving her maid to her husband; which she regards as an act of generosity or self-denial.*²⁶⁵

The College Press Bible Study: *[T]he first she named Issachar ("hire," "reward"), that is to say, "there is reward" or "he brings reward."*²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:18.

²⁶¹ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:16, 18.

²⁶² *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:18.

²⁶³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:18.

²⁶⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:18 (slightly edited).

²⁶⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14–21.

²⁶⁶ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

The Meaning of *Issachar* (Various Commentators)

Guzik: *Jacob's ninth son, born to Leah, is named Issachar, meaning "reward"; Leah saw this son as a reward from God because she was "generous" enough to offer her maid to Jacob.*²⁶⁷

Keil and Delitzsch: *Leah saw in the birth of her fifth son a divine reward for having given her maid to her husband - a recompense, that is, for her self-denial; and she named him on that account Issaschar, רַכְשָׁשׁ, a strange form, to be understood either according to the Chethib רַכְשָׁשׁ "there is reward," or according to the Keri רַכְשָׁשׁ "he bears (brings) reward."*²⁶⁸

Matthew Henry: *[Leah] called Issachar (a hire), reckoning herself well repaid for her mandrakes, nay (which is a strange construction of the providence) rewarded for giving her maid to her husband.*²⁶⁹

Gill: *And Leah said, "God has given me my hire (sachar) because I gave my handmaid to my husband." And she called his name Is-sachar (hired man).' Leah clearly has a sense of humour. Personally she sees the name as resulting from her hiring of Jacob with the mandrakes, but in God's eyes and in the eyes of others she sees it as her reward for allowing her handmaid to bear children on her behalf.*²⁷⁰

I believe that, despite this name, Leah is back in competition with her sister. She seemed to reach a good place with Judah; but now, it was *game on*, again.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Giving names like this could simply mark a point in time in their lives. Perhaps Leah was saying, in part, that this child Issachar came along *after* she gave her personal maid to Jacob. The name might mark a period of time as well as anything else.

At this point, the love-apples are no longer a part of this narrative. We have no idea about their use; and we can only infer from the text that very shortly after Leah was with Jacob, that Jacob returned to Rachel. Rachel will bear a child; but we have no idea if this is related to the love-apples or not.

Genesis 30:17–18 [Elohim heard Leah and she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, "Elohim has given my remuneration in which I have given my maid to my husband." Consequently, she named him *Issachar*.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:17–18 [God heard Leah and she conceived and then bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, "God has remunerated me because I had given my maid to my husband." Therefore, she named him *Issachar*.](#) (Kukis paraphrase)

Meanwhile, Leah will have another son by Jacob.

And so conceives again Leah and so she bears a son a sixth to Jacob. And so says Leah, "Has endowed me Elohim to me a gift good. The time will honor me my man for I have born to him six sons." And so she calls his name Zebulun. And after she bears a daughter and so she calls her name Dinah.

Genesis
30:19–21

Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. She [lit., *Leah*] then said, "Elohim has bestowed upon me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me, for I have given him [lit., *born to him*] six sons." And she named him Zebulun. Afterwards, she bore a daughter and she named her Dinah.

²⁶⁷ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:14–18.

²⁶⁸ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

²⁶⁹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14–24.

²⁷⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:16–18.

Leah conceive yet again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. She then said, “God has bestowed upon me a good gift. Surely now my husband will honor me and live with me, for I have given him six sons.” And she named her son Zebulun. Afterwards, she gave birth to a daughter and she named her Dinah.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so conceives again Leah and so she bears a son a sixth to Jacob. And so says Leah, “Has endowed me Elohim to me a gift good. The time will honor me my man for I have born to him six sons.” And so she calls his name Zebulun. And after she bears a daughter and so she calls her name Dinah.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Leah conceived again, and bare a sixth son to Jakob. And Leah said, The Lord hath given me a good <u>portion</u> [Sam. Vers. "God hath helped me with good help."]. This time <u>will the habitation</u> of my husband be with me, because I have born him six sons: therefore she called his name Zebulun ["Habitation."]. And afterward she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah ["Judgement."].
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Leah conceived again, and bare a sixth son to Jakob; and said, The Lord hath endowed me with a good <u>dowry by children</u> . This time <u>will the habitation</u> of my husband be with me, because I have borne him six sons: and thus shall his children receive a good portion. And she called his name Zebulun. <u>And afterward she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah; for she said, Judgement is from before the Lord, that there shall be from me a half of the tribes; but from Rahel my sister shall go forth two tribes, even as they shall proceed (in like manner) from each of the handmaids. And the prayer of Leah was heard before the Lord; and the infants were changed In their wombs; and Joseph was given to the womb of Rahel, and Dinah to the womb of Leah. And the remembrance of Rahel came before the Lord, and the voice of her prayer was heard before Him; and He said in his Word that He would give her sons.</u>
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Lia conceived again, and bore the sixth son, And said: God has endowed me with a good <u>dowry</u> : this turn also my husband will <u>be with</u> me, because I have borne him six sons: and therefore she called his name Zabulon. After whom she bore a daughter, named Diana.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Leah conceived again, and bore a sixth son to Ya'aqub. Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good <u>dowry</u> . Now my husband will <u>live</u> with me, because I have borne him six sons." She named him Zebulun. Afterwards, she bore a daughter, and named her Dinah.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Leah conceived again, and bore Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God has enriched me exceedingly; now my husband will surely have more affection for me, because I have borne him six sons; so she called his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Lea conceived again, and bore Jacob a sixth son. And Lea said, God has given me a good gift in this time; my husband will <u>choose me</u> , for I have born him six sons: and she called his name, Zabulon. And after this she bore a daughter; and she called her name, Dina.
Significant differences:	<i>To Jacob</i> is missing in the Latin. Leah's name is not found a 2 nd time in the Latin as it is in the Hebrew. Where the Hebrew has <i>gift</i> , one targum has <i>dowry by children</i> . The Latin and possibly the Aramaic have <i>dowry</i> rather than <i>gift</i> (which is apparently a reasonable translation from the Hebrew).

We have *will the habitation* in the targum; *will honor* in the Hebrew. The Latin, Aramaic and Greek all have something different than *will honor*.

There is all kinds of additional text in Jonathan's targum.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And again Leah became with child, and she gave Jacob a sixth son. And she said, God has given me a good bride-price; now at last will I have my husband living with me, for I have given him six sons: and she gave him the name Zebulun. After that she had a daughter, to whom she gave the name Dinah.
Easy English	Leah became pregnant again. And she gave Jacob a 6th son. Leah said 'God has given me this valuable gift. Now my husband will want to stay with me because I have given him 6 sons.' She called this son Zebulun. Some time passed. And Leah became pregnant again. She gave birth to a daughter. She called her daughter Dinah.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Leah became pregnant again and bore Jacob a sixth son. She said, "God has given me a fine gift. Now my husband will accept me, because I have borne him six sons"; so she named him Zebulun. Later she bore a daughter, whom she named Dinah.
<i>The Message</i>	Leah became pregnant yet again and gave Jacob a sixth son, saying, "God has given me a great gift. This time my husband will honor me with gifts—I've given him six sons!" She named him Zebulun (Honor). Last of all she had a daughter and named her Dinah.
NIRV	Leah became pregnant again. She had a sixth son by Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has given me a priceless gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor. I've had six sons by him." So she named the boy Zebulun. Some time later she had a daughter. She named her Dinah.
New Simplified Bible	She became pregnant again and gave birth to her sixth son for Jacob. Leah said: »God has presented me with a wonderful gift. This time my husband will honor me, because I have given him six sons.« So she named him Zebulun. Later she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When Leah had another son, she exclaimed, "God has given me a wonderful gift, and my husband will praise me for giving him six sons." So she named the boy Zebulun. Later, Leah had a daughter and named her Dinah.
The Living Bible	Then once again she became pregnant, with a sixth son. She named him Zebulun (meaning "Gifts"), for she said, "God has given me good gifts for my husband. Now he will honor me, for I have given him six sons." Afterwards she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.
New Berkeley Version	Then Leah conceived once more and bore Jacob a sixth son. Leah said, "God has presented me with a rich dowry; this time my husband will live with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun [Zebulun—dwelling]. Later she gave birth to a daughter whom she named Dinah.
New Century Version	Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son. She said, "God has given me a fine gift. Now surely Jacob will honor me, because I have given him six sons," so she named him Zebulun. Later Leah gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.
New Living Translation	Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. She named him Zebulun, for she said, "God has given me a good reward. Now my husband will treat me with respect, for I have given him six sons." Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Leah got pregnant again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. And Leah said: 'God has given me a fine gift this time. For my man will choose me, since I've given him six sons.' So she named him Zebulon (Gift).
International Standard V	And after that, she gave birth to a daughter whom she named Dinah (Justified). Later, Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son for Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has given me a good gift. This time my husband will exalt me, because I've borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulon [The Heb. name <i>Zebulun</i> means <i>exalted</i>].
New Advent (Knox) Bible	After that, Leah conceived, bore a daughter, and named her Dinah. And again Leah conceived, and bore a sixth son; This is a fair dowry, she said, God has endowed me with; once more my husband will dwell with me, now that I have borne him six sons; and she called the boy Zebulon, Dwelling. She had one more child after this, a daughter called Dina.
Translation for Translators	Leah became pregnant again and bore a sixth son for Jacob. Leah said, "God has given me a precious gift. ◀This time/Now▶ my husband will honor/respect me, because I have given birth to six sons for him." So she named him Zebulon, <i>which sounds like the Hebrew word that means 'accepted gift.'</i> ◌ Later she gave birth to a daughter, and named her Dinah.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Leah was to conceive and bear to Jacob, a sixth son. Leah was to say: He of mighty ones is to have bestowed to me a rich endowment. This time my husband was to be exulted, for I am to have bore forth six sons. She called his name Zebulon. Afterwards she is to have bore forth a daughter, and was to call her name Dinah.
Conservapedia	Leah fell pregnant yet again, and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob.. Now Leah said, "God has settled a generous dowry on me. Now my husband will prefer me, because I have given birth to six sons for him." So she named the boy Zebulon [Which in Hebrew means "dowry" or "endowment."]. After that, she gave birth to a daughter, and named her Dinah.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And Leah conceived yet again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. Then said she: God has endued me with good dowry. Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons: and called his name Zebulon. After that she bare a daughter, and called her Dina.
H. C. Leupold	And Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. And Leah said: God has bestowed an excellent gift on me; now my husband will dwell with me, for I have borne him six sons. And she called his name Zebulon (Dwelling). Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.
Lexham English Bible	And Leah conceived again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. And Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift. This time my husband will acknowledge me, because I bore him six sons." And she called his name Zebulon. And afterward she gave birth to a daughter. And she called her name Dinah.
NIV, ©2011	Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. Then Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulon. Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.
Tree of Life Version	Then Leah became pregnant again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. Leah said, "God has presented me a good gift. This time my husband will honor me for I've borne six sons for him." So she named him Zebulon. Afterwards she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.
Urim-Thummim Version	And Leah became pregnant again, and gendered Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, Elohim has bestowed on me a good gift, now will my husband live with me

because I have brought forth to him 6 sons, and she called his name Zebulun. Later she gendered a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Wikipedia Bible Project

And Leah conceived again, and bore a sixth son to Jacob. And Leah said: "God has endowed me with a good dowry, for once my husband will suffer me (Yizbeleni), for I have bore him six boys," and she named him Zvulun (Zebulun). And after, she bore a girl, and she named her Dinah.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

- Christian Community (1988) Leah bore another son to Jacob. Then she said, "God has offered me a beautiful gift; this time my husband will honor me for I have given him six children." She named the child Zebulun. She later gave birth to a daughter and called her Dinah.
- The Heritage Bible And Leah conceived again, and bore Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God has endowed me a good gift; *this* stroke my husband will live with me because I have born him six sons, and she called his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.
- New American Bible (2002) Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob; and she said, "God has brought me a precious gift. This time my husband will offer me presents, now that I have borne him six sons"; so she named him Zebulun [Zebulun: related to the Akkadian word zubullum, "bridegroom's gift," is explained by the terms, zebadani . . . zebed tob, "he has brought me a precious gift," and yizbeleni, "he will offer me presents."]. Finally, she gave birth to a daughter, and she named her Dinah.
- New American Bible (2011) Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob; and Leah said, "God has brought me a precious gift. This time my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons"; so she named him Zebulun [Zebulun: explained by the terms, zebadani...zebed tob, "he has brought me a precious gift," and yizbeleni, "he will honor me."]. Afterwards she gave birth to a daughter, and she named her Dinah.
- New Jerusalem Bible Again Leah conceived and gave birth to a sixth son by Jacob, and said, 'God has given me a fine gift; now my husband will bring me presents, for I have borne him six sons.' So she named him Zebulun. Later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.
- Revised English Bible Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son. She said, "God has endowed me with a noble dowry. Now my husband will honour me like a princess, because I have borne him six sons"; so she named him Zebulun. Later she bore a daughter whom she named Dinah.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

- Complete Jewish Bible Le'ah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Ya'akov. Le'ah said, "God has given me a wonderful gift. Now at last my husband will live with me, since I have borne him six sons." And she called him Z'vulun [living together]. After this, she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah [controversy over rights].
- The Complete Tanach And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. And Leah said, "God has given me a good portion. This time, my husband will live with me, for I have borne him six sons"; so she named him Zebulun.

a good portion: Heb. בֹּט דָּבָר. [To be interpreted] according to its Aramaic translation [בֵּט קְלוּחַ, a good portion].

will live with me: An expression of a dwelling place; herberjerie in O.F.; lodging, abode, home. From now on, his principal dwelling will be only with me, because I have as many sons as all his [other] wives have.

And afterwards, she bore a daughter, and she named her Dinah.

Dinah: Our Sages explained that Leah pronounced judgment (דָּנָה) upon herself. [She reasoned:] If this is a male, my sister Rachel will not be [esteemed even] as one of the handmaids. So she prayed over him, and he was turned into a female (Ber. 60a).

exeGes	companion Bible	And Leah conceives again and births Yaaqov a sixth son: and Leah says, Elohim endows me - a good endowment; this time my man dwells with me, because I birth him six sons: and she calls his name Zebulun. And afterwards she births a daughter and calls her name Dinah.
JPS	(Tanakh—1985)	When Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son, Leah said, “God has given me a choice gift; this time my husband will exalt me, for I have borne him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun. Last, she bore him a daughter, and named her Dinah.
Kaplan	Translation	Leah became pregnant again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. 'God has given me a wonderful gift (zeved),' said Leah. 'Now let my husband make his permanent home (zevul) with me.' She named the child Zebulun (Zebulun). Leah then had a daughter, and she named her Dinah [Some say that Dinah was Zebulun's twin sister (Ibn Ezra; Tol'doth Yitzchak; Yov'loth 28:23)].
Orthodox	Jewish Bible	And Leah conceived again, and bore Ya'akov ben shish. And Leah said, Elohim hath endued me with a zaved tov (good endowment); now will my ish zabal (honor) me, because I have born him shisha banim; and she called shmo Zebulun. And afterwards she bore a bat, and called her shem Dinah.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Leah conceived again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good [marriage] gift [for my husband]; now he will live with me [regarding me with honor as his wife], because I have given birth to six sons.” So she named him Zebulun. Afterward she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.
The Expanded Bible	Leah became pregnant [conceived] again and gave birth to a sixth son. She [Leah] said, “God has given me a fine gift [dowry]. Now surely Jacob will honor [exalt] me, because I have given him six sons,” so she named him Zebulun [sounds like “honor” in Hebrew]. Later Leah gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah [ch. 34].
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons; and she called his name Zebulun (dwelling). Although this detailed account of the most intimate relations between Jacob and his wives shows the weakness and sinfulness of their natures, yet it was not mere carnal desire and jealousy that filled their hearts, but they always had in mind, more or less distinctly, the Messianic promise and its significance. And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah, mentioned here on account of her later history, Genesis 34.
NET Bible®	Leah became pregnant again and gave Jacob a son for the sixth time [Heb “and she bore a sixth son for Jacob,” i.e., this was the sixth son that Leah had given Jacob.]. Then Leah said, “God has given me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me because I have given him six sons.” So she named him Zebulun. After that she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

The Pulpit Commentary	<p>And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God (Elohim; vide supra) hath endued me with a good dowry. Δεδώρηται μοι δω?ρον καλον (LXX.), dotavit me dote bona (Vulgate), hath presented me with a goodly present. The word רַבָּ is a ἀ΄παξ λεγόμενον. Now will my husband dwell with me. רַבָּ, also a ἀ΄παξ λεγ; signifies to be or make round (Gesenius), to limit round or encompass (Furst); hence, according to both, to cohabit or dwell together as husband and wife. The LXX. render αἴρειται, the meaning being that Leah's six sons would, in her judgment, be an inducement sufficiently powerful to cause Jacob to select her society instead of that of her barren sister. And she called his name Zebulan—i.e. Dwelling; from zabal, to dwell with, with a play upon the word רַבָּ, to hire, which, commencing with the same letter, was regarded as similar in sound to רַבָּ, the τ and the λ being sometimes interchangeable (Keil, Kalisch). And afterwards she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah—i.e. Judgment. Dinah (the female Dan) may not have been Jacob's only daughter (vide Genesis 37:35; Genesis 46:7). Her name is here recorded probably because of the incident in her history afterwards related (Genesis 34:1)..</p>
The Voice	<p><i>And God's favor didn't stop with him; Leah conceived again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob.</i></p> <p>Leah: God has given me a plentiful gift. Now my husband will surely honor me, because I have given him six sons.</p> <p>This is why she named her sixth son Zebulun. <i>And at last</i> after that, she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.</p>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	<p>...and Le'ah ^[Weary] conceived yet again and she brought forth a sixth son for Ya'aqov ^[He restrains], and Le'ah ^[Weary] said, Elohiym ^[Powers] endowed me a functional dowry, will my man reside with me this time given that I brought forth for him six sons and she called out his title Zevulun ^[Residence], and afterward she brought forth a daughter and she called out her title Dinah ^[Judgement],...</p>
Concordant Literal Version	<p>And pregnant again is Leah, and is bearing a sixth son for Jacob. And saying is Leah, "Dowering me is the Elohim with a good dowry this time. My husband will prefer me, for I bear for him six sons. And calling is she his name Zebulun. And afterwards she bears a daughter. And calling is she her name Dinah.</p>
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	<p>And Leah conceived again and bare a sixth son to Jacob. Then said Leah, God hath dowered me even me with a hand-some dowry, Now! will my husband dwell with me, for I have borne him six sons. So she called his name, Zebulun. And afterwards she bare a daughter,—so she called her name, Dinah.</p>
English Standard Version	<p>And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honour me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun. Afterwards she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.</p>
NASB	<p>Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun. Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.</p>
Third Millennium Bible	<p>And Leah said, "God hath endued me with a good dowry. Now will my husband dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." And she called his name Zebulun [that is, Dwelling]. And afterwards she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah [that is, Judgment].</p>
Young's Updated LT	<p>And conceive again does Leah, and she bears a sixth son to Jacob, and Leah says, "God has endowed me—a good dowry; this time does my husband dwell with me, for I have borne to him six sons;" and she calls his name Zebulun. And afterwards she has born a daughter, and calls her name Dinah.</p>

The gist of this passage: Leah bears a son, Zebulun; and a daughter, Dinah. She seems to think that this sixth son will do the trick to get more attention from Jacob.

19-21

Genesis 30:19			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced <i>haw-RAW</i>]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
ôwd (וּוֹעַ) [pronounced <i>gohd</i>]	<i>still, yet, again, again and again, repeatedly, in addition to; continue, continually; more, farther, besides; as yet, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
shishshîy (שִׁשִּׁי) [pronounced <i>shish-SHEE</i>]	<i>sixth</i>	masculine singular numeral ordinal; with the definite article	Strong's #8345 BDB #995
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob.

Interestingly enough, Leah seemed to no longer have relations with Jacob at the time that her son found the love-apples. After trading a night with her husband for love-apples, Leah conceived and had a son, Issachar. However, she bears another son to Jacob here, which suggests that, after Issachar, Jacob again had relations with her. It is not clear whether this was voluntary or whether it was the result of another trade-out deal.

Genesis 30:19 And Leah conceived again, and bore Jacob the sixth son.

We are not given the circumstances by which Leah and Jacob had relations again. Let me suggest that Leah did not make her previous night with Jacob into some sort of a confrontation. Leah, based upon what she said to Rachel, was moderately unhappy; but here she is with Jacob having another child.

Let me suggest that Leah has become less of a headache for Jacob. Given the situation of his marriage, *that* would have been a very pleasant change of circumstance for Jacob, who is used to getting crap from both of his wives. Given how Leah names this next child, it appears that she is in a somewhat better place, emotionally; but there is still inordinate competition going on between the two wives.

Genesis 30:19 [Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob.](#) (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lê'âh (לֵאָה) [pronounced <i>lay-AW</i>]	<i>weary; transliterated Leah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #3812 BDB #521
zâbad (זָבַד) [pronounced <i>zaw-BAHD</i>]	<i>to endow, to bestow upon, to endow with</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #2064 BDB #256
'Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>me; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to me, toward me</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
zebed (זֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>ZEH-behd</i>]	<i>endowment, gift</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2065 BDB #256
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced <i>toh^bv</i>]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine feminine singular adjective which can act like a substantive	Strong's #2896 BDB #373

Translation: [She](#) [lit., *Leah*] [then said](#), “Elohim has bestowed upon me a good gift.”

As before, Leah makes an announcement, either before or at the birth of her child; or sometime after the child is born (as the Hebrew suggests). This would be a few days later or the 8th day when the child is circumcised. She is going to name the child; and she gives a reason for naming him as she does. This time, she recognizes that God has given her a great gift with this child.

Genesis 30:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pa'am (פַּעַם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]	<i>beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps</i> ; the connotation is the passage of time; possibly <i>now, at this time; finally</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #6471 BDB #821
Based upon the usage of this word in Genesis 30:20, we might translate it <i>now, at this time</i> .			
zâbal (זָבַל) [pronounced zaw-BAHL]	<i>to exalt, to honor; to dwell with</i> ; meanings are probable	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2082 BDB #259
This verb occurs only here. This is why so many translations vary at this point.			
îysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced eesh]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #376 BDB #35
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
shishshâh (שֵׁשׁ) [pronounced shish-SHAW]	six	feminine form of numeral	Strong's #8337 BDB #995
bânîym (בָּנִים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people</i> ; sometimes rendered <i>men</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: Now my husband will honor me, for I have given him [lit., *born to him*] six sons."

The first word is difficult to translate. Usually, this word occurs in the middle of a sentence and it means *beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps*; the chief concept being the passage of time; however, at the beginning of a sentence with the definition, we might render this *now, at this time; finally*.

Also, we have a word found only here, so a guess is made as to its meaning: *to exalt, to honor; to dwell with*. This meaning is attributed to the verb primarily because of the context. Everything else in this sentence is known to translators. So, Leah is calling upon her husband to do something to her—so logically, it is to give her respect or honor as having produced 6 children for her.

It is unfortunate that, for most of the early years of their marriage, Rachel and Leah were in competition with one another. Leah clearly was less attractive to Jacob, but then, most of Jacob's children are from her. In any case,

this bearing of children has become a competition with these women, who have even brought their maids into the picture. Neither woman was content to simply enjoy with they had—Rachel had Jacob’s time and attention; Leah had Jacob’s children (to whom Jacob gave some time and attention). Each woman was obsessed with what the other one had. Under the circumstances, God cannot overrule Jacob’s personal preferences. He cannot make Jacob love Leah more, as God has given Jacob free will. So God balanced this out by giving Leah most of the children—and the important children as well (Genesis 29:31–30:17). But, despite God trying to balance things out between the women, they refused to be mollified. Each sister could look at the other and see something that she does not have, but that she wants.

Genesis 30:20c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
qârâ’ (אָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #7121 BDB #894
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #8034 BDB #1027
Zêbûlûn (זְבוּלוֹן) [pronounced <i>Zêb-oo-LOON</i>]	<i>exalted, honored; transliterated Zebulun</i>	masculine singular proper noun	Strong’s #2074 BDB #259

Carroll says that Zebulun means *dwelling*.²⁷¹

Translation: *And she named him Zebulun.*

The name *Zebulun* is based upon the questionable verb above. In checking BDB, I did not find any cognates; just *Zebulun* and *Zebulunite*.

The NET Bible: *The name Zebulun (זְבוּלוֹן, zevulun) apparently means “honor.” The name plays on the verb used in the statement made earlier in the verse. The Hebrew verb translated “will honor” and the name Zebulun derive from the same root.*²⁷²

Zebulun’s name probably has a dual significance. There are a lot of plays on words throughout Genesis, especially with regard to the names of individuals; and a similar Hebrew word means *to bestow* and a similar, probably Akkadian word, means *to honor*. So Leah called Zebulun both a gift and something which reveals God’s honor for her. Little is known about Zebulun and one of the very few to have come from the tribe of Zebulun is the almost unknown judge Elon, of Judges 12.

²⁷¹ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 28:10–31:55.

²⁷² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

Genesis 30:20 And Leah said, “God has given me a good present. Now my husband will live with me, because I have borne him six sons.” And she called his name Zebulun.

The first sentence has the verb *zâbal* (זָבַל) [pronounced *zaw-BAHL*], which is said to mean *to exalt, to honor; to dwell with*. However, this verb is found here only, so its meaning is uncertain. *Zebulun’s* name is based upon this verb. Strong’s #2074 BDB #259. It is logical to think that this means *to dwell with*, based upon her saying, “**Now my husband will live with me.**”

There is obviously a disagreement about who Jacob should be staying with; and Leah is asserting that Jacob will continue to live with her, as she has produced 6 sons for him. This assertion indicates that the two women live in different tents.

It is not clear whether Jacob is staying with Rachel or whether he stays in his own tent. In any case, he is not living with Leah. Leah announces that a sixth son would encourage Jacob to live with her (or to spend more time with her). Therefore, we continue to have competition between the two wives.

As was noted when we studied polygamy, a polygamous marriage is not a good thing. Here we are 7 or so years into this marriage, and the wives are still in competition with one another—and I can guarantee you, that is not a happy household for Jacob.

Genesis 30:20 She [lit., *Leah*] then said, “Elohim has bestowed upon me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me, for I have given him [lit., *born to him*] six sons.” And she named him Zebulun. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:20 And Leah said, “God has given me a good present. Now my husband will live with me, because I have borne him six sons.” And she called his name Zebulun.

The Meaning of Zebulun (Various Commentators)

Barnes: זְבוּלוֹן *zebulûn*, Zebulun, “dwelling.” There is here a play upon the two words זָבַד *zâbad*, “to endow” and זָבַל *zâbal*, “to dwell,” the latter of which, however, prevails in the name. They occur only here as verbs.²⁷³

Barnes (again): Leah confesses, “God has endowed me with a good dowry.” She speaks now like Rachel of the God of nature. The cherished thought that her husband will dwell with her who is the mother of six sons takes form in the name.²⁷⁴

Guzik: Jacob’s tenth son, born to Leah, is named Zebulun, meaning “dwelling.” In the pain of her heart, she still waits for her husband to truly love her and live with her, and she hopes the sheer quantity of sons will win his heart to her.²⁷⁵

Keil and Delitzsch: At length she bore her sixth son, and named him Zebulun, i.e., “dwelling;” for she hoped that now, after God had endowed her with a good portion, her husband, to whom she had born six sons, would dwell with her, i.e., become more warmly attached to her.

Keil and Delitzsch continue: The name is from זָבַל to dwell, with acc. constr. “to inhabit,” formed with a play upon the alliteration in the word זָבַד to present - two ἀπαξ λεγόμενα. In connection with these two births, Leah mentions Elohim alone, the supernatural giver, and not Jehovah, the covenant God, whose grace had been forced out of her heart by jealousy.²⁷⁶

²⁷³ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:20 (slightly edited).

²⁷⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14–21 (slightly edited).

²⁷⁵ David Guzik’s *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:19–20.

²⁷⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

The Meaning of Zebulun (Various Commentators)

Dr. Bob Uley: *The term Zebulun (BDB 259) is a play on the Hebrew words for "gift" or "dowry" (BDB 256) and the word "dwell" or "honor" (BDB 269). His wives are still fighting over his affection.*²⁷⁷

Matthew Henry: *[Leah] called Zebulun (dwelling), owning God's bounty to her: God has endowed me with a good dowry, Genesis 30:20. Jacob had not endowed her when he married her, nor had he wherewithal in possession; but she reckons a family of children not a bill of charges, but a good dowry, Psalm 113:9.*²⁷⁸

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *This vow should be the cause or occasion of the dwelling together of his parents.*²⁷⁹

The Cambridge Bible: *In this verse we have two explanations of the name "Zebulun." In the first clause Leah says "God has endowed (zabad) me with a good dowry (zebed)"; cf. the names Zabdi (Joshua 7:1) and Zebedee (Mark 1:19). In the second clause the derivation is taken from the word zabal, "he dwelt." Presumably both popular etymologies were current. The interchange of d and l sounds is well known; cf. δάκρυον = Lat. lachryma. Assyriologists suggest a derivation from the Assyrian zabalu, "lift up," "exalt," "honour."*²⁸⁰

Clarke: *[S]he called his name Zebulun, לבד a dwelling or cohabitation, as she now expected that Jacob would dwell with her, as he had before dwelt with Rachel.*²⁸¹

Whedon: *Zebulun — Which means, dwelling or habitation; for now she fondly hopes that her husband will dwell with her; cleave to her in his home-life with a warmer attachment.*²⁸²

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

It is clear that Jacob did spend more time with Leah, because next we read:

Genesis 30:21a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ו ^e (or ו ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
אַחַר (אַחַר) [pronounced <i>ah-KHAHR</i>]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29
יָלַד (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
בַּת (בַּת) [pronounced <i>bahth</i>]	<i>daughter; village</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #1323 BDB #123

²⁷⁷ Dr. Bob Uley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:19–21.

²⁷⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14–24.

²⁷⁹ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:20.

²⁸⁰ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:20.

²⁸¹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:20.

²⁸² *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:20.

Translation: *Afterwards, she bore a daughter...*

This particular verse suggests that, up until this point in time, Jacob had not fathered any daughters. This time, *after* his sons named above were born, he sires a daughter.

The other possibility is, the author knows that Genesis 34 is coming up (that particular narrative which features Dinah), so they place her name into the text so that she does not seem to come out of nowhere. Given all that we have studied, I think that it is more probable that this is the first girl born to Leah. It appears to be very likely that there were very few girls born to Jacob's family. When they move to Egypt, all of Jacob's descendants will be named and numbered; and there are only 2 females among them (who are both named and numbered).

Genesis 30:21b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lamed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced <i>shame</i>]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027
Dîynâh (דִּינָה) [pronounced <i>dee-NAW</i>]	<i>judgment; and is transliterated Dinah</i>	feminine singular proper noun	Strong's #1783 BDB #192

Translation: *...and she named her Dinah.*

Leah again names her child, and she names her *Dinah*, which means *judgment, to judge*.

It appears that Dinah is named in Scripture, as she will play a significant part in Genesis 34.

Men and women in the Bible; and women's liberation: Certainly unpopular with so-called liberated women is the part that women play in the Bible. Only one female child of Jacob is mentioned here (and she is not his only female child). It is not unusual for the Bible to list most of the sons and few if any of the daughters of some families. Nor is it unusual for the Bible to list the names of the sons but not the names of the daughters. Jacob had at least one other daughter; however, Dinah is mentioned because an incident later on in Genesis will reveal the character and predisposition of Reuben and Levi.

Women play a prominent part in the Bible, yet different from the parts that men play. This should not be a cause for concern. There is no stereo typing, per se. God just has a place for men and a place for women. Some people, particularly those who are frustrated with life in general, do not like the pre-defined roles which God has assigned to men and women in general. They further do not like that these roles exist across almost every society

and nation, with very few exceptions. They further place the blame upon the physical strength of man and the child-bearing characteristic of the woman and claim that we evolved that way. There was no evolving to it. God set up our roles, based upon the way that Adam and Eve were created and upon the way that they sinned, and that is that. If you are born with red hair, you have got red hair and that is all there is to it. If you are born 5'10" tall, then that's all there is to it. A kid who is 5'5" may play a lot of basketball in 5-8th grade, but his basketball career is going to wain once he reaches high school. It is not a matter of right or wrong; it just is what is true. A person with an IQ of 85 might have dreams of becoming a doctor or the president, but sometime around high school or earlier, these dreams will be discovered to be just that. It is not a matter of right or wrong; that is just the way things are. These are givens in your life. The male and female roles are also givens in life. Some men do not like to have the authority and many women do not like being under authority. However, it is the great safeguard to marriage. A woman can easily surmise whether she should marry a man or not by determining, not is she in love with him or if she is attracted to him, but can she submit to his authority for the rest of her life. If the answer to that question is a resounding **no**, then she has got the wrong man. If she is unsure, then she needs to wait and find out. When considering marriage, this ought to be the foremost question in a woman's mind—can I obey this man? Am I willing to submit to him? If she is not, then it is time to break things off in order to save both of you a life of heartbreak and frustration.

None of this implies inferiority of women on any level. In the gospels, the disciples, with the exception of John, are portrayed as fools whereas the women who followed our Lord are seen as much more spiritually mature. You, the reader (or hearer) may not realize that the disciples are such fools, but that only means that you have not had the gospels properly explained to you. Time and time again, the actions of the disciples cause one to wonder, *could they be any stupider?* None of the actions of the women in the gospels ever inspires such thinking. My point is, even though men and women have different and various roles in Scripture, there is no overall designation of the superiority of the man over the woman. Most of the time, men do have authority over the women—and that is God's plan—but that does not indicate inferiority in any way. Obviously, many *liberated women* do not see it that way, but their philosophy is simply a rejection of divine establishment truth.

Genesis 30:21 And afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Leah continues to have relations with Jacob and she bears him a daughter as well. Her name is Dīynâh (דִּינָה) [pronounced *dee-NAW*], and it is based upon the verb *to judge*. Strong's #1783 BDB #192.

Genesis 30:21 *Afterwards, she bore a daughter and she named her Dinah.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:21 And afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

The Name of *Dinah* (Various Commentators)

Carroll: *"I have borne six sons to my husband. Surely he will dwell with me." When her daughter was born she named her Dinah, which means "vindication": "God is vindicating my side of the marriage relation."* ²⁸³

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Dinah, meaning judgment, from the same root as Dan.* "This is the only daughter of Jacob mentioned, and that on account of her connection with the history of Jacob. (Ch. 34.) (Jacobus.) Jacob had more daughters: compare ch. Genesis 37:35, with Genesis 46:7." ²⁸⁴

Whedon: *Which means, judgment; kindred to the name Dan. Genesis 30:6. Some suppose, from the language of Genesis 37:35; Genesis 46:7, that Jacob had other daughters. This is possible, and yet the word may, in those passages, refer to daughters-in-law. So full a narrative of Jacob's family would not have been likely to omit mention of any child of his.* ²⁸⁵

²⁸³ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

²⁸⁴ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:21.

²⁸⁵ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:21.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

And it becomes apparent that Jacob continues to cohabit with Leah. Let me suggest that perhaps Rachel, since she was not having children, became somewhat difficult. However, Jacob did continue to spend time with Rachel and to cohabit with her as well.

Despite Jacob cohabiting with both women, so not think that this is some kind of a paradise. In this chapter, it is clear that Rachel is angry with Jacob for not giving her a son; and the Leah is angry with Rachel for taking her husband from her. Furthermore, Rachel seems to be calling the shots of which tent Jacob stays in. My point being, the overall household is rarely pleasant. There always appears to be hurt feelings, arguments, disagreements and blame.

Based upon one particular verse, many commentators, including me at one time, believed Jacob to have several daughters, only one of whom is named.

Did Jacob have many daughters?

This is what I originally wrote: *Dinah is the only daughter mentioned by name, and part of the reason for this is there will be a narrative which centers on her. However, Jacob appears to have fathered other unnamed daughters. Genesis 37:35 reads: All Jacob's sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted and said, "No, I will go down to Sheol to my son [Joseph], mourning." Thus his father wept for him. At this time, Jacob believed that his son Joseph was dead (but he was not). In any case, we find out that he fathered more than one daughter. We do not know when or by whom these daughters were born.*

Keil and Delitzsch: *[Leah] afterwards bore a daughter, Dinah, who is mentioned simply because of the account in Gen 34; for, according to Genesis 37:35 and Genesis 46:7, Jacob had several daughters, though they were nowhere mentioned by name.*²⁸⁶

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The record of Dinah's birth is intended to introduce her to us in preparation for the tragic events of Genesis 34 where she is raped by Shechem who was the son of Hamor the Hivite the prince of the land (See Genesis 34:2). Jacob did not have other daughters besides Dinah (cf. 37:35 and 46:7) since the term "daughters" can be used to describe a "granddaughter" and not just a "daughter."*

Wenstrom Continues: *In Genesis 46:7-19, the term "daughters" is used with reference to Jacob's "granddaughters" and not to other daughters besides Dinah since Dinah is singled out as being his only daughter and the daughters of Jacob's son are listed.*²⁸⁷ Although daughter can refer to a granddaughter, I don't believe that we really know how many daughters and/or granddaughters that Jacob had.

However, once we get to Genesis 46:15, we have the word *daughters* used, but the sons and grandchildren are not only named, but they are numbered as well. Gen 46:15 *These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, together with his daughter Dinah; altogether his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.* This passage is very specific in its naming and numbering. Had there been another daughter of Leah's, maybe she was not named, but she would have had to have been numbered—which would have given us 34 rather than 33.

We must be forced to the conclusion that, sometimes when the term *daughters* is used, it can refer to *one or more* daughters. In the same context, we also read *The sons of Dan: Hushim.* (Gen 46:23; ESV corrected to match the Hebrew)

²⁸⁶ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:14–21.

²⁸⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 472); accessed September 9, 2017.

This would lead us to the conclusion that Jacob had exactly one daughter and exactly one granddaughter when he moved to Egypt (he may have had others subsequent to this move).

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:19–21 Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. She [lit., *Leah*] then said, “Elohim has bestowed upon me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me, for I have given him [lit., *born to him*] six sons.” And she named him Zebulun. Afterwards, she bore a daughter and she named her Dinah. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:19–21 Leah conceive yet again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. She then said, “God has bestowed upon me a good gift. Surely now my husband will honor me and live with me, for I have given him six sons.” And she named her son *Zebulun*. Afterwards, she gave birth to a daughter and she named her Dinah. (Kukis paraphrase)

Ron Snider’s translation of Genesis 30:17–21 And God have heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I gave my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar. And Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me, even me, as a good gift; [Tom, this construction looks like it can go one of two ways, the accusative can be the gift, what was bestowed, or it can be the one on whom it was bestowed, since it is used only once, there is no other passage to compare--so I take the sign of the direct object here to refer to what follows, i.e. me is the good gift or dowry. I know you will have more time to reflect on this, so let me know which one is correct.] Now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun. And afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:17–21

1. With all the conflict and misery in this home we may lose sight of the fact that these people were all
2. In spite of their tangled Sinful trend of Adam webs, from time to time they came under Divine favor and blessing.
3. While it may be true that their blessing was contingent upon the Abrahamic covenant, obviously Leah engages in prayer about this matter.
4. There can be no doubt that God's answers are based on grace and not on the merit of the petitioner.
5. We should not lose sight of the fact that the same is true today, no matter how much doctrine we may have or think we have, God's blessing is based on doctrine and the person and work of His Son, not our merit.
6. From the context it appears that the fifth son, Issachar, was a result of the night Leah hired Jacob with the mandrakes.
7. Rather than focus on God's grace, Leah demonstrates how maladjusted she is by naming this son,
8. She views her birth as some sort of Divine reward for her unselfishness in giving her female servant to Jacob.
9. She did not give her servant to Jacob as an act of unselfishness, but to spite her sister and have more children.
10. Because her scheme was successful, she puts the best face on it that she can and attributes it to God.
11. It should be evident that many people attribute things to God, with which He has nothing to do.
12. God is in no way in favor of polygamy and the evils which are occurring in this house.
13. Nevertheless, in spite of the rampant Sinful trend of Adam activity, His plan is being furthered in the multiplication of Abraham's offspring.
14. Leah gets pregnant again after some lapse of time, and gives birth to a sixth son.
15. Leah's thinking is that God has blessed her husband through her, so she perceives herself to quite a gift to him.
16. She views herself as a wedding present or dowry, who has been given by God to Jacob.
17. She is impressed with herself and her ability to bear children, and she continues to think that this will commend her to her husband.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:17–21

18. She will not be able to purchase his love by having babies.
19. Rachel could not acquire children through the things she possessed, Jacob's love, her looks, her figure, etc.
20. Both wanted what the other had and were miserable because they could not acquire it.
21. She makes a word play in the Hebrew, using dbz and lbz suggesting that now her husband will treat her in the way she desires since she is so valuable to him.
22. She names the sixth son Zebulun, dwelling, to symbolize what she hopes will occur.
23. vs 21 informs us that she gives birth sometime later to a daughter, whom she names Dinah, a form of Dan meaning acquittal or vindication.
24. The fact is Jacob had other daughters who are not named. Gen. 37:35, 46:7,15

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:14–21 Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

But she said to her, "Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also?"

So Rachel said, "Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night.

God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband." So she named him Issachar.

Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun. Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:14–21: The Mandrake Caper

1. At the time of this episode Reuben was about 4 or 5 years of age taking into account that all the birthing of the sons (11) of Jacob took place within the second seven year period of Jacob's employment.
2. Leah had her first four sons within the first 3 or 4 years of the 7 year period and then she stopped bearing children for whatever reason.
3. Reuben in late summer (wheat harvest) brings his mother some mandrakes.
4. This plant bears bluish flowers in winter and yellowish plum-sized fruit in summer.
5. The plant was known for its aphrodisiac properties by ancient man.
6. The plant was considered a fertility drug.
7. The only other mention of it outside this chapter in the Bible is SOS 7:13 ("The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; and over the doors are all choice fruits, both old and new, which I have saved up for you, my beloved.").
8. Rachel politely asks her sister for "some of your son's mandrakes" (v. 14).
9. Rachel is desperate to have a son of her own so she resorts to superstition.
10. Leah in response to the request vents her long-standing grievance with her sister (v. 15).
11. Leah's accusation that Rachel has taken her husband is based on the fact that Jacob is no longer sleeping with her.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:14–21: The Mandrake Caper

12. The reason is no doubt due to Rachel's insistence that he not have anything to do with Leah sexually.
13. Questions introduced by the Hebrew *hame-at* ("a small matter") usually express exasperation (cf. Num. 16:9; Josh. 22:17; Isa. 7:13; Ezek. 34:18).
14. Again, Jacob is seen as trying to keep the peace by doing whatever his wives want him to do!
15. This would explain the statement back in 29:3 regarding Leah that "**she stopped bearing.**"
16. Rachel acquiesces to her sister's justifiable grievance and makes her an offer in exchange for some of the mandrakes.
17. Rachel trades one night's conjugal rights for some mandrakes.
18. All this shows how desperate Rachel is to bear sons of her own as the surrogate thrill has long worn off!
19. What she wants more than anything else is a child of her own.
20. Her whole existence and happiness was built around having children of her own.
21. That same day in the evening Jacob returns from a hard day's work only to be greeted by his wife Leah who actually came out to meet him.
22. She is demanding of him with the, "**You must come**" followed by the infinitive absolute "**I have hired surely hired you.**"
23. The verb "hire" is seen also at 29:15; 30:28, 32; 33:7,8,41 of Jacob's employment with Laban.
24. Now even his body is up for rent by his conspiring wives!
25. Her words "I have really hired you" anticipate the name of Leah's fifth son Issachar in v.18.
26. Once again the ever compliant Jacob spends the night with her (v. 16b).
27. Nine months later the 9th patriarch of Israel is born into the world and the fifth son of Jacob by Leah (v.17).
28. Leah sees in the birth of Issachar a reward or a wage, not for giving mandrakes to her sister, but "**because I gave my maid to my husband**" (v. 18).
29. The name Issachar means something like "man for hire."
30. Leah during her non productive period when she offered Jacob her maid views her action as a great sacrifice that God had now rewarded her for.
31. Yet when the two sons of Zilpah (Gad and Asher) were born she considered those very joyous occasions.
32. The reality was that giving her maid to Jacob was not a pleasant experience considering her estrangement from her husband.
33. Following the birth of Issachar, Leah for the 6th time, becomes pregnant (v. 19).
34. Leah's standard dual explanation for at the birth of Zebulon has her focusing on the proper source of her blessing at least in the first part of her declaration.
35. What she says is this: "**God has endowed me with a good endowment.**"
36. The consonants z, b, and r are found in Hebrew names like Zedediah, Zabdi, and Zebedee.
37. The name Zebulon is a kind of pun on the root 'to endow.'
38. With the birth of her 6th and final son she regards this as her real marriage dowry.
39. Six sons will bring Jacob around and this will cause him to treat her as a worthy if not superior mate.
40. Again, wishful thinking tripped up these two sisters.
41. More and more sons did not bring Jacob to loving her with the same devotion he had for Rachel.
42. The polygamous marriages in Scripture while permitted were fraught with trouble and strife.
43. Leah's supposed triumph is carried through in the naming of her 7th child and daughter Dinah.
44. Her name means "vindication."
45. The one and only daughter is the final child of Jacob and Leah making a grand total of six sons and one daughter.
46. Adding the four sons by the maid-wives the grand total at this point in the story is ten sons and one daughter.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Rachel bears a son, Joseph (vv. 22–24)

So far, Jacob's first wife, Leah, has given birth to six sons and one daughter. There was a gap of time between son #4 and son #5, which may have only been 6 months or a year. Rachel's maid has given birth to two sons and Leah's maid has given birth to two sons. At least one additional daughter is born, but we do not know anything else about additional daughters in Jacob's family.

The wife that Jacob loved, Rachel, has not given birth to any children until now.

And so remembers Elohim Rachel and so hearkens unto her Elohim and so He opens her womb. And so she conceives and so she gives birth to a son and so she says, "Has removed Elohim my reproach." And so she calls his name Joseph, to say, "Adds Y^ehowah to me a son—another."

Genesis
30:22–24

Elohim remembered Rachel and He [lit., *Elohim*] listened to her [voice] and He opened her womb. Consequently she conceived and gave birth to a son. And she remarked, "Elohim has removed my reproach." She then named him *Joseph*, saying, "Y^ehowah added another son to me."

God remembered Rachel and He listened to her prayers and opened up her womb as a result. Consequently, she conceived and gave birth to a son, which caused her to remark, "God has removed my shame and given me a son." Therefore, she named him *Joseph*, saying, "Jehovah has given me another son."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so remembers Elohim Rachel and so hearkens unto her Elohim and so He opens her womb. And so she conceives and so she gives birth to a son and so she says, "Has removed Elohim my reproach." And so she calls his name Joseph, to say, "Adds Y^ehowah to me a son—another."

Jerusalem targum

Four keys are held in the hand of the Lord of all the world, even the Lord, and He will not deliver them either to angel or to saraph; the key of the rain, the key of the provender, the key of the sepulchre, the key of barrenness. The key of rain : for thus the Scripture expoundeth, The Lord shall open unto thee His good treasure, &c. The key of provender: for thus the Scripture expoundeth, Thou openest thine hand, &c. The key of the sepulchre : for thus the Scripture expoundeth, When I shall open your sepulchre, &c. The key of barrenness Scripture expoundeth, And Elohim remembered Rahel, &c. And the Word of the Lord remembered Rahel in His good compassions, and the Word of the Lord heard the voice of her prayer, and He said in His Word that He would give her children.

Targum (Onkelos)

And the remembrance of Rahel came before the Lord, and the Lord received her prayer, and gave her to conceive. And she conceived and bare a son, and she said, The Lord hath taken up [Or, "cleansed away." See Castel, voce Kenash.] my reproach. And she called his name Joseph ["Addition."], saying, The Lord shall add to me another son.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And the remembrance of Rahel came before the Lord, and the voice of her prayer was heard before Him; and He said in his Word that He would give her sons. And she conceived and, bare a son, and said, The Lord hath gathered off my reproach, even as Jehoshua the son of Joseph will gather off the reproach of Mizraim from the

	sons of Israel, and will circumcise them beyond Jardena. And she called his name Joseph, saying, The Lord will add me yet another son to this one.
Revised Douay-Rheims	The Lord also remembering Rachel, heard her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bore a son, saying: God has taken my reproach. And she called his name Joseph, saying: The Lord give me also another son.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and opened her womb. She conceived, bore a son, and said, "God has taken away my reproach." She named him Yoseph, saying, "May Mar-Yah add another son to me."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bore a son; and said, God has taken away my reproach; And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.
Septuagint (Greek)	And God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and he opened her womb. And she conceived, and bore Jacob a son; and Rachel said, God has taken away my reproach. And she called his name Joseph, saying, Let God add to me another son.
Significant differences:	All kinds of extra verbiage in the targums. <i>God</i> is found twice in the first two phrases; the Latin has <i>the Lord</i> just once.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then God gave thought to Rachel, and hearing her prayer he made her fertile. And she was with child, and gave birth to a son: and she said, God has taken away my shame. And she gave him the name Joseph, saying, May the Lord give me another son.
Easy English	Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her. And he let her give birth to children. She became pregnant. She gave birth to a son. Rachel said, 'I am not ashamed any more because God has given me a son.' Rachel called her son Joseph. She said 'May the Lord give me another son.'
International Children's B.	Then God remembered Rachel and answered her prayer. God made it possible for her to have children. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, "God has taken away my shame." She named him Joseph. Rachel said, "I wish the Lord would give me another son."
Names of God Bible	Then Elohim remembered Rachel. Elohim answered her prayer and made it possible for her to have children. So she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. Then she said, " Elohim has taken away my disgrace." She named him Joseph [May He Give Another] and said, "May Yahweh give me another son."
NIRV	Then God listened to Rachel. He showed concern for her. He made it possible for her to have children. She became pregnant and had a son. Then she said, "God has taken away my shame." She said, "May the Lord give me another son." So she named him Joseph.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then God remembered Rachel, responded to her, and let her conceive. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my shame." She named him Joseph, saying to herself, May the LORD give me another son.
Contemporary English V.	Finally, God remembered Rachel—he answered her prayer by giving her a son. "God has taken away my disgrace," she said. "I'll name the boy Joseph, and I'll pray that the LORD will give me another son."
The Living Bible	Then God remembered about Rachel's plight, and answered her prayers by giving her a child. For she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. "God has removed

New Berkeley Version	the dark slur against my name," she said. And she named him Joseph (meaning "May I also have another!"), for she said, "May Jehovah give me another son." God also remembered Rachel; God heard her and rendered her fertile. She conceived and gave birth to a son; she said, "God has removed my reproach," and named him Joseph [A childless wife felt she was failing her husband, especially in not perpetuating his family, and so other women who had children felt above her. The name she gave Joseph meant, "May he add." But the next son cost Rachel her life], saying, "May the LORD add to me another son."
New Life Version	Then God remembered Rachel. God listened to her, and made her able to have a child, and she gave birth to a son. Then she said, "God has taken away my shame." She gave him the name Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me another son."
New Living Translation	Then God remembered Rachel's plight and answered her prayers by enabling her to have children. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. "God has removed my disgrace," she said. And she named him Joseph, for she said, "May the LORD add yet another son to my family."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then God remembered RachEl... He heard her and opened her womb, so she got pregnant and bore Jacob a son. And RachEl said: 'Jehovah has removed my disgrace.' So she named him JoSepH (Jehovah Will Increase), saying, 'May God give me another son.'
Beck's American Translation	God also remembered Rachel. God heard her and let her have children she had a boy, and she said, "God has taken away my disgrace." She called him Joseph ["May He Add"], saying, "May the LORD add to me another son."
International Standard V	Rachel's Son Joseph is Born Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her womb, so she conceived, bore a son, and remarked, "God has removed my shame." Because she had been asking, "May God give me another son," she named him Joseph.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	Meanwhile, the Lord had not forgotten Rachel; her prayer was answered, and she, too, had issue. When she conceived and bore a son, her thought was, God has taken away my disgrace. And she called him Joseph, Increase; If only, she thought, God would increase my household with another son.
Translation for Translators	Then God thought about what Rachel wanted. He heard her prayers and enabled her to become pregnant. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She said, "God has caused that no longer will I be ashamed for not having children." She named him Joseph, <i>which sounds like the Hebrew words that mean 'I pray that he will give me another one'</i> .

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	He of mighty ones was to remember Rachel, and he of mighty ones was to listen to her, and were to open her womb. She was to conceive and bear forth a son. She was to say: He of mighty ones is to have gathered together my reproach away from me. She was to call his name Joseph, to the intent: Jehovah was to add another son.
Conservapedia	Now God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and opened her womb. She fell pregnant, and gave birth to a son, and said, "God has taken away my shame! She named the lad Joseph, and said, The LORD will add another son to me." The name <i>Joseph</i> literally means <i>YHWH shall add</i> .
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And God remembered Rahel, heard her, and made her fruitful: so that she conceived and bare a son, and said: God has taken away my rebuke. And she called his name Joseph saying: The Lord give me yet another son.

NIV, ©2011	Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." She named him Joseph, and said, "May the Lord add to me another son."
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Elohim remembered Rachel, and Elohim listened to her and opened her womb. And she became pregnant, and gendered a son and said, Elohim has taken away my taunting. She called his name Joseph, and said, YHWH will add to me another son.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And God remembered Rachel, and he listened to her, and he opened her womb. And she conceived, and she bore a son, and she said, "God has gathered away (Asaf) my faults." And she named him Yosef (Joseph), to say: "Yahweh has added (Yosif) to me, another son."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

The Heritage Bible	And God remembered Rachel, and God attentively heard her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bore a son; and said, God has taken away my disgrace; And she called his name Joseph, and said, Jehovah shall add to me another son.
New American Bible (2011)	Then God remembered Rachel. God listened to her and made her fruitful. She conceived and bore a son, and she said, "God has removed my disgrace [Lk 1:25]." She named him Joseph [Joseph : explained by the words yosep, "may he add," and in v. 23, 'asap, "he has removed."], saying, "May the LORD add another son for me!"
Revised English Bible	Then God took thought for Rachel; he heard her prayer and gave her a child. After she conceived and bore a son, she said, "God has taken away my humiliation." She named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord add another son to me!"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Then God took note of Rachel, heeded her prayer and made her fertile. She conceived, had a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." She called him Yosef [may he add], saying, "May <i>ADONAI</i> add to me another son."
The Complete Tanach	And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and He opened her womb.

And God remembered Rachel: (Gen. Rabbah 73:4) He remembered for her that she gave over her signs to her sister [Leah] and that she was troubled lest she fall into Esau's lot, perhaps Jacob would divorce her because she had no children. The wicked Esau also got that idea when he heard that she had no children. This is what the paytan incorporated [into his poem for the first day of Rosh Hashanah, entitled *אָדָּמָה נִיבָה*]: When the ruddy one (Esau) saw that she (Rachel) had not experienced birth pangs, he wished to take her for himself, and she was terrified.

And she conceived and bore a son, and she said, "God has taken away my reproach."

has taken away: Heb. *אָפַק* He took it into a place where it would not be seen, and similarly (Isa. 4:1): "take away (*אָפַק*) our reproach" ; (Ex. 9:19): "and will not be taken in (*אָפַק*) the house" ; (Joel 4:15): "have withdrawn (*אָפַקוּ*) their shining" ; (Isa. 60: 20): "shall your moon be gathered in (*אָפַק*)," [meaning that] it will not be hidden.

my reproach: For I was put to shame, having been barren, and [people] were saying about me that I would fall to the lot of the wicked Esau (Tan. Buber, Vayetze 20). The Aggadah (Gen. Rabbah 73:5) [explains it thus:] As long as a woman has no child, she has no one to blame for her faults. As soon as she has a child, she blames him. "Who broke this dish?" "Your child!" "Who ate these figs?" "Your child!"

So she named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord grant me yet another son!"

May the Lord grant me yet another son: She knew through prophecy that Jacob was destined to establish only twelve tribes. She said, "May it be His will that the one he is destined to establish be from me." Therefore, she prayed only for another son [and no more]. — [from Gen. Rabbah 72:6]

exeGesese companion Bible	And Elohim remembers Rachel and Elohim hearkens to her and opens her womb: and she conceives and births a son; and says, Elohim takes my disgrace. - and she calls his name Yoseph; and says, Yah Veh adds to me another son.
Israeli Authorized Version	And Elohim remembered Rachel, and Elohim hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, Elohim hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Yosef; and said, YY shall add to me another son.
Kaplan Translation	God gave special consideration to [Literally, 'remembered.'] Rachel. He heard her [prayer] and opened her womb. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son. 'God has gathered away (asaph) my humiliation,' she said. She named the child Joseph (Yoseph), saying, 'May god grant another (yoseph) son to me.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Elohim remembered Rachel, and Elohim paid heed to her, and opened her rekhem (womb). And she conceived, and bore ben; and said, Elohim hath taken away my cherpah (shame, disgrace, reproach); And she called shmo Yosef; and said, yosef (may He add), may Hashem add me ben acher (another son).
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And Elohim remembered Raḥēl, and Elohim listened to her and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bore a son, and said, "Elohim has taken away my reproach." So she called his name Yosēph, and said, "יְהוָה has added to me another son."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Then God remembered [the prayers of] Rachel, and God thought of her and opened her womb [so that she would conceive]. So she conceived and gave birth to a son; and she said, "God has taken away my disgrace and humiliation." She named him Joseph (may He add) and said, "May the LORD add to me another son."
The Expanded Bible	Then God remembered Rachel and ·answered her prayer [^l heard her], ·making it possible for her to have children [^l and opened her womb]. When she ·became pregnant [conceived] and gave birth to a son, she said, "God has taken away my ·shame [reproach]," and she named him Joseph [^C sounds like "he adds" in Hebrew]. Rachel said, "I wish the LORD would ·give [^l add to] me another son."
Kretzmann's Commentary	Verses 22-24 The Birth of Joseph And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. It seems, then, that when all her schemes and stratagems failed, she turned to God in fervent and patient prayer, and that the Lord, in answer, removed her barrenness. And she conceived, and bare a son, and said, God hath taken away my reproach; and she called his name Joseph (He shall add); and said, The LORD shall add to me

another son. In taking away from Rachel the reproach of her unfruitfulness, the Lord had added to her the hope that He would add a second son. This wish was later fulfilled, Genesis 35:16-18. It is undoubtedly correct to assume, from the subsequent story, that the eleven children of Jacob, from Reuben to Joseph, were born in the seven years after his marriage, not exactly in a chronological succession as narrated, but so that Leah gave birth to her four sons during the first four years. Dan and Naphtali were probably likewise born during this period, the children of Zilpah immediately after, Leah herself again becoming a mother in the sixth and seventh years, and Joseph being born about the end of the seventh year, when Jacob was ninety-one years old. The entire story shows that the fear of the Lord makes for true happiness in the home, for believers rely upon the Lord for all good gifts and gratefully receive them, at His hands.

NET Bible®

Then God took note of [Heb “remembered.”] Rachel. He paid attention to her and enabled her to become pregnant [Heb “and God listened to her and opened up her womb.” Since “God” is the subject of the previous clause, the noun has been replaced by the pronoun “he” in the translation for stylistic reasons]. She became pregnant [Or “conceived.”] and gave birth to a son. Then she said, “God has taken away my shame [Heb “my reproach.”].” She named him Joseph, saying, “May the Lord give me yet another son.”

The Pulpit Commentary

And God remembered Rachel (cf. Genesis 8:1; 1Samuel 1:19), **and God hearkened to her**,—as to Leah (Genesis 30:17)—**and opened her womb**—as he had previously done to Leah (Genesis 29:31). Rachel’s barrenness had not continued so long as either Sarah’s or Rebekah’s. **And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach—i.e. of sterility.** The mandrakes of Leah having proved inefficacious, Rachel at length realizes that children are God’s gift, and this thought sufficiently explains the use of the term Elohim. **And she called his name Joseph;**—יֹסֵף, either, “he takes away,” with allusion to the removal of her reproach, or, “he shall add,” with reference to her hope of another son. Perhaps the first thought is not obscurely hinted at, though the second appears’ from the ensuing clause to have occupied the greater prominence in Rachel’s mind—**and said, The Lord—Jehovah; a trace of the Jehovistic pen (Tuch, Bleek, et alii); rather an outcome of the higher spiritual life of Rachel, who had now got emancipated from all such merely human devices as resorting to mandrakes, and was able to recognize her complete dependence for offspring on the sovereign grace of the covenant God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (Hengstenberg, Keil)—shall add to me another son.**

The Voice

Then God remembered Rachel. He heard her prayer and made her fertile. She conceived and gave birth to her first son.

Rachel: God has taken away my shame.

She decided to name him Joseph.

Rachel: May the Eternal One add to me another son!

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and Elohiym ^[Powers] remembered Rahhel ^[Ewe] and Elohiym ^[Powers] heard her and he opened her bowels, and she conceived and she brought forth a son and she said Elohiym ^[Powers] gathered my disgrace, and she called out his title Yoseph ^[Adding] saying, YHWH ^[He Exists] will add to me another son,...

Concordant Literal Version

And remembering is the Elohim Rachel and hearkening to her is the Elohim and opening her womb. And pregnant is she and bearing for Jacob a son. And saying is Rachel, “The Elohim gathers up my reproach. And calling is she his name Joseph saying, “Adding is Yahweh to me another son.

Emphasized Bible

Then God remembered Rachel,—and God hearkened unto her, and granted her to bear. So she conceived and bare a son,—and said, God hath taken away my

reproach; So she called his name Joseph, saying, Yahweh is adding unto me another son.

Modern English Version Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. She conceived and gave birth to a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” And she called his name Joseph, saying, “The LORD will add to me another son.”

NASB Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” She named him Joseph, saying, “May the LORD give me another son.”

Young’s Updated LT And God remembers Rachel, and God listens unto her, and opens her womb, and she conceives and bears a son, and says, “God has gathered up my reproach;” and she calls his name Joseph, saying, “Jehovah is adding to me another son.”

The gist of this passage: Rachel has no doubt been praying from time to time to God and God hears her and opens up her womb. She bears a son whom she names Joseph.

22-24

Genesis 30:22a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
zâkar (זָכַר) [pronounced zaw-KAHR]	<i>to remember, to recall, to call to mind</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #2142 BDB #269
’Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong’s #430 BDB #43
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced raw-KHALE]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong’s #7354 BDB #932

Translation: Elohim remembered Rachel...

God did not forget Rachel, because of all Jacob’s women, and then suddenly, woke up and thought, “Oh, Rachel. Jacob’s favorite. She needs to have a child.” God does not forget anything. This word *remembered* is known as an **anthropopathism**—God is attributed with a human characteristic or emotion which He really does not possess, but His actions are expressed in terms of that characteristic. God’s thinking and behavior are brought down, in this way, to our level. He did not forget about Rachel; but, since she does not have children for a very long time, it is as if God had forgotten about her. We find this in many places in Scripture, including Genesis 8:1 1Samuel 1:19 Psalm 105:42.

Genesis 30:22a Elohim remembered Rachel...

“God remembered Rachel” (Several Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *When Genesis 30:22 says that “God remembered Rachel” it does “not” mean that He had forgotten her but rather it signifies that God according to His timetable is about to act on Rachel’s behalf by giving her the capacity to get pregnant.*²⁸⁸

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The statement “God remembered Rachel” expresses the Lord’s compassion towards Rachel and that He acted decisively on her behalf by giving her a child. God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17).*²⁸⁹

H. C. Leupold: *By this statement (“God remembered”) the author indicates that Rachel’s conception was not due to the mandrakes but to the omnipotent power of God, who is the Author of all life. In any case, the story has advanced several years beyond the point where the mandrakes were eaten.*²⁹⁰

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Assuming that Rachel has been praying to God, let me suggest that has been going on ever since her sister began to have babies—so maybe 6 years or more have transpired (Jacob will petition Laban to leave Haran after Joseph, Rachel’s son, is born).

As we have seen with Noah, God did not forget about Rachel. To her, a somewhat emotional female with a flair for the dramatic, it seemed as though God had completely forgotten about her. This is an anthropopathism where the actions of God are explained to us in language of accommodation. God, in eternity past, billions of years before Rachel was born, decreed the exact right time for her to give birth to Joseph. His timetable was not her timetable; therefore, she felt as though God had forgotten her.

Genesis 30:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
shâma ^c (שמע) [pronounced shaw-MAHG]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #8085 BDB #1033
’el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong’s #413 BDB #39

²⁸⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 472); accessed September 9, 2017.

²⁸⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 473); accessed September 9, 2017.

²⁹⁰ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Genesis 30:22b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
<p>ʿĒlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]</p>	<p><i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i></p>	<p>masculine plural noun</p>	<p>Strong's #430 BDB #43</p>

Translation: ...and He [lit., *Elohim*] listened to her [voice]...

Now and again, the Bible refers to an historical incident which is not recorded in the Bible. That is, Rachel has, on several occasions at least, petitioned God for a child. In the ancient world, having children was understood to be a great blessing; and a woman who produced many children was understood by her husband to be a great blessing to him.

Rachel no doubt petitioned the Lord on many occasions, that she might be blessed with a child. God did not ignore her request, but He granted it at the perfect time. That this son would be the youngest son for a time will be an important consideration in narratives to come.

Genesis 30:22 [God remembered Rachel and He listened to her prayers and opened up her womb as a result.](#)

A plethora of opinions re: God answering Rachel's prayers (several commentators)

Everett: *After Rachel prayed, both handmaids gave birth to two sons, and Leah gave birth to two sons and one daughter, which took perhaps five years. When the Lord answered Rachel's prayer, Leah had given birth to six sons and one daughter, which would have taken a minimum of seven years. Thus, it probably took at least three years before the Lord answered Rachel's prayer.*²⁹¹

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *At this point in her life, Rachel stopped trusting in the pagan superstition that mandrakes could get her pregnant and instead trusted in God who honored her faith in Him by answering her prayer for a child of her own. After all of Rachel's devices and schemes have been exhausted, God grants her the desire of her heart.*

Wenstrom continues: *Rachel's prayer for a child was successful because she offered it in faith. Faith is bringing our fears and weaknesses to God and believing that somehow God will transform our pain into a moment of grace. The fulfillment of one's prayer requests demands faith (Mt. 17:20; Jam. 5:15). Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."*²⁹²

The NEV commentary: *Rachel is presented as not having God on her horizon at all. But the misery of the whole situation maybe led her to pray to her husband's God. Or it could be that she didn't specifically pray, but rather God took pity upon her, reading the whole sad situation as prayer, and responded to her.*²⁹³

As an aside, the NEV went far afield in their discussion of this particular chapter.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

²⁹¹ Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 30:22.

²⁹² From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 473); accessed September 9, 2017.

²⁹³ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

We have to bear in mind that Rachel has her reasons for requesting that God give her a son; and God has His reasons as well. Rachel's reasons are quite short-term. As described earlier, when a woman lost her husband, then she would be dependent upon her sons to take care of her. God's view of this looks down the corridors of time, for the building up of the Jewish people; the power of the Hebrew army; and the settling of the land which they will take under Joshua. Whenever we find a verse like this, where someone prays to God and He answers in the affirmative, remember that the person who is praying generally has a fairly temporal desire; and when God answers the prayer, He is looking much further out into the future.²⁹⁴

There also appears to be the situation that Rachel is not as strong and healthy as her sister when it comes to bearing children. Leah pops them out, one after another; but it is not the same for Rachel, who will die giving birth to her next child.

When it comes to Rachel having children, she was very concerned about that. Whether Jacob was or not, we do not know. However, it is clear the Jacob prefers Rachel, so God's plan includes long periods of time when Rachel is not pregnant, so that she and Jacob can enjoy this time together.

Genesis 30:22c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâthâh (פָּתַח) [pronounced <i>paw-THAW</i>]	<i>to spread out, to open; to be open; to be open and ingenuous in mind [like children and young people]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6601 BDB #834
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
rechem (רֶחֶם) [pronounced <i>REH-khem</i>]	<i>womb; inner parts; poetically used to mean a girl, a woman</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person feminine singular suffix	Strong's #7358 (and #7356) BDB #933

Translation: ...and He opened her womb.

God, in response to prayers from Rachel, opens up her womb. That is, He makes it possible for her to become impregnated.

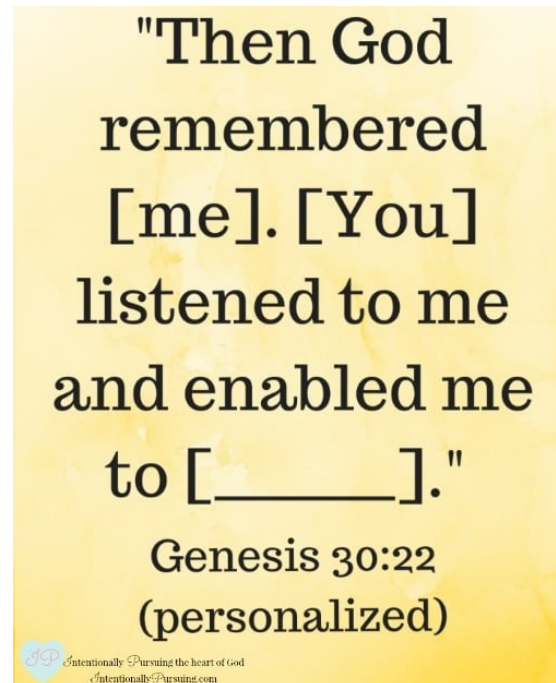
We know this as a very random, biological thing—1 sperm of many swimming toward the egg to fertilize it, during the proper time—but that union has to be given life; and perhaps given life again at birth. We do not know what specific problem Rachel had, but God took care of that problem. Throughout Genesis, this is a major theme, of God opening up the womb, of cancelling a woman's barrenness (Genesis 21:1–2 25:21 29:31 30:2 Psalm 113:9).

²⁹⁴ Even this is ascribing a human characteristic to God that He does not possess; as God knows the end from the beginning.

Guzik: *The idea of God's sovereignty over the womb is a persistent theme in the Bible; God granted twins to Rebekah (Genesis 25:21); He opens the womb of Leah (Genesis 29:31), and closes the womb of Hannah (1Samuel 1:5). The purposes of God in opening one and closing the other may be completely unknowable, but God has His purpose.*²⁹⁵

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The fact that Rachel was barren gave the Lord an opportunity to demonstrate His power in her life. Jeremiah 32:27, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?" The fact that Rachel's prayer for a child was answered and solved her problem of infertility teaches that prayer solves problems (Kgs. 17:1; cf. 18:36-46; Acts 12:1-17; Phlp. 4:6).*²⁹⁶

Personalizing Genesis 30:22 (a graphic); from **Crystal Storms**; accessed September 16, 2017. **Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive.** Genesis 30:22



Genesis 30:22 And God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.

Genesis 30:22 **Elohim remembered Rachel and He [lit., Elohim] listened to her [voice] and He opened her womb.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

The order in which these births are recorded are probably the order in which these women gave birth. There will be later indications that Rachel's two sons will be the youngest of Jacob's sons. As we have seen in other situations, most of Genesis appears to be in chronological order (with the exception of passages where one or two generations of a family are named all at once).

Rachel has, no doubt, been praying to God—and we are told that God remembered her and listened to her prayer. That is, of course, an anthropopathism. God did not forget all about Rachel, and suddenly say, "Oh, Jacob is also married to Rachel. I completely forgot about her." This is how it seems to Rachel, as if God forgot about her, but that is not how an omniscient God functions.

An anthropopathism takes the actions of God and explains them by using human thinking, emotions and actions. God did not forget about Rachel; He did not remember her suddenly.

Definition of an **anthropomorphism**: the ascribing of human characteristics to God. Although this is properly the ascribing of physical characteristics to God (e.g., the *hand* of God), this word is also taken to mean, the ascribing of mental and emotional characteristics of man to God. These are characteristics which God does not possess, but are used in order to explain divine action through the use of a human attribute.²⁹⁷

Definition of an **anthropopathism**: the ascribing of human emotions, passions or thinking to God which do not inherently belong to Him. The Webster definition is: *The affections of man, or the application of human passions*

²⁹⁵ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:22.

²⁹⁶ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 473); accessed September 9, 2017.

²⁹⁷ There is an alternate understanding of this word, which refers to the thinking of those who actually believe that God possesses these human characteristics (Mormonism is an example of this doctrine, as they believe that God the Father actually possesses a human form and is on some planet taking care of business).

to the Supreme Being. My point in quoting Webster is, this concept has been around for a long time; I did not just suddenly invent it in order to explain this passage.

Rachel was the weaker of the two sisters, and, as this narrative will later bear out, pregnancy will take away much of her strength. God gave Jacob and Rachel a maximum amount of time with one another by holding back on giving life to her womb.

Application: When believers in a marriage find themselves pregnant; or when they are having difficulties having children, they ought not to panic. God knows what He is doing and God gives the life when it is time and appropriate.

Genesis 30:23a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hârâh (הָרָה) [pronounced haw-RAW]	<i>to conceive, to become pregnant, to be with child; to conceive in the mind; to plan [something out], to devise, to plot</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #2029 BDB #247
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHAD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: [Consequently she conceived and gave birth to a son.](#)

As a result, Rachel gives birth to a son. We may reasonably assume that this occurs after Leah has given birth to 6 sons and possibly 2 or more daughters; and their respective personal maids have given birth to their sons.

Genesis 30:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

Genesis 30:23b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'āmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'āçaph (אָפַף) [pronounced aw-SAHF]	<i>to collect, to relocate, to transfer, to transport, to gather (together), to gather and remove, to remove</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #622 BDB #62
'Ēlōhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>God; gods, foreign gods, god; rulers, judges; superhuman ones, angels; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
cherp ^e âh (חֶרְפָּה) [pronounced kher-PAW]	<i>a reproach, a taunt, scorn, shame, disgrace</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2781 BDB #357

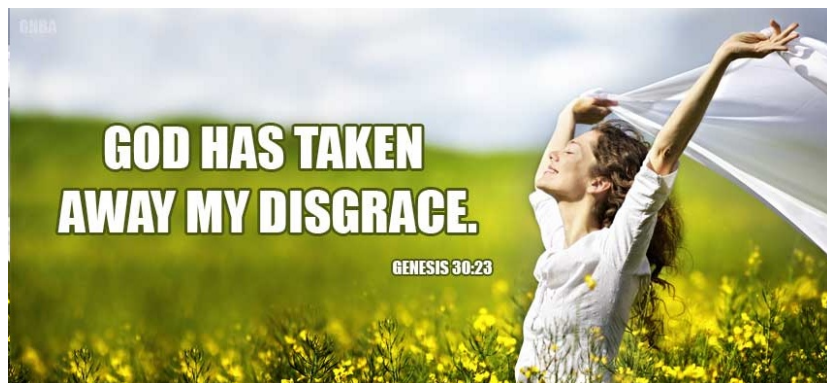
The NET Bible: A “reproach” is a cutting taunt or painful ridicule, but here it probably refers by metonymy to Rachel’s barren condition, which was considered shameful in this culture and was the reason why she was the object of taunting and ridicule.²⁹⁸

Translation: And she remarked, “Elohim has removed my reproach.”

Rachel has felt shamed or disgraced all of this time because she produced no children for her husband Jacob. So she expresses gratitude that God has removed her shame.

Genesis 30:23 God has taken away my disgrace (a graphic); from [Biblesms](#); accessed September 15, 2017.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: *“Be fruitful and multiply,” was the blessing of God: barrenness therefore was reckoned a reproach The intense desire of having children, observable among the Jewish women, arose not only from this reproach of barrenness, but from the hope of being the mother of the promised seed, and Him in whom all the*



²⁹⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

*nations of the earth were to be blessed.*²⁹⁹

Genesis 30:23 And she conceived and bore a son, and she said, “God has taken away my reproach.”

Rachel has not had any children as of this time. This is her first child. She believed that there was some kind of reproach against her by God, and now it has been lifted away. She did not realize that God was giving her more time with Jacob by withholding children from her. She believed that God, for a time, was intentionally making her life miserable; but now, He had removed her reproach.

Genesis 30:23 Consequently she conceived and gave birth to a son. And she remarked, “Elohim has removed my reproach.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Rachel’s spiritual growth; her unique raising of Joseph: In this very short section (Genesis 30:22–24), there may be a great deal of subtext going on here.

Whedon has somewhat of a unique take on this, and he may be right: *This implies a prevailing prayer on her part, which had probably softened and subdued her spirit, and begotten in her a forgiving disposition towards her rival — a quality that impressed itself upon her son.*³⁰⁰

Then Whedon points out: *[Rachel] has now no words of envy or triumph towards her sister, but a humble acknowledgment of her previous pitiable condition among women.*³⁰¹ This is a brilliant and extremely important observation.

Rachel seems to confine her comments as being between herself and God. She is not hauling her sister into this, as she did when her personal maid gave birth. She does not again proclaim that she has been vindicated. As Whedon suggests, perhaps she has grown spiritually, making her ready to raise this child. Bear in mind, the final portion of Genesis is all about Joseph; and the history of the people of Israel is based upon the integrity of Joseph.

Joseph’s upbringing was unique in his family. He is the only son raised specifically by Rachel. We will observe how Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah and Joseph behave as adults, and Joseph’s actions and character is quite different from that of his brothers. This is the key to Joseph’s upbringing—he is the only son brought up by Rachel.

Let me suggest that Rachel raised Joseph and instilled integrity in him, carefully teaching him about God and how he ought to behave. His spiritual growth is going to be unique among his brothers, and the only person we can reasonably attribute this to is Rachel—and she will have perhaps 7 or 10 years to train Joseph, and that training will stay with him all of his life.

Rachel’s spiritual growth is implied by the things that she says—that she is no longer in competition with her sister (look back at vv. 6 and 8). This would have taken some humility for her to step back from this sibling rivalry; and let me suggest that her spiritual advance resulted in the excellent training of Joseph. Remember, there are 3 other women raising the other children—and we will find out that they are, for the most part, some rotten sons. Two of them will kill off all the adult males in a village over a rape (the rapist should have been killed, but not all of his family). All of the brothers will plot against young Joseph and sell him into slavery. Of all the brothers, Joseph stands head and shoulders over them when it comes to personal integrity and trust in God. What is the

²⁹⁹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:23.

³⁰⁰ *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:22.

³⁰¹ *Whedon’s Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:23.

differentiating factor in his upbringing? (1) Rachel raised him and (2) Jacob kept him at home and favored him. Rachel would have had the most influence on the young child; and we know that favoritism is not healthy in any family. So, based upon what Rachel says, it appears that she had spiritually advanced; and based upon the life of Joseph, it seems likely that Rachel is the one person who can be credited for his personal integrity.

This also explains why God delayed the birth of Joseph. God needed Joseph to be born to a woman who was no longer in constant competition with her sister. Listen, when these mothers start telling their children that they are better than the children of the others; and that all of this is viewed as a competition, you end up with some messy family problems. By the names given to their children combined with the explanations, it is pretty obvious that there was some serious competition and bad feelings going on within Jacob's family. Rachel seems to have reached a point where she has transcended that pettiness; which makes her the right person at the right time to raise up the right person at the right time to preserve the entire Hebrew family.

If you think about how all of this works out and how crucial Joseph's character is to the survival of the sons of Jacob; then you understand that it is crucial for Joseph to be born just at the right time, when his mother is prepared to raise him.

Furthermore, for the few who think that Jacob did a bad thing by marrying Rachel—this son of hers will deliver the family of Jacob and, therefore, preserve the Jewish race. Joseph is crucial to the future of the Jewish people.

As an aside, I may pass through this verse two dozen times; and sometimes, twice that many times. I think about it, I translate it from scratch, I view other translations, and I read perhaps 50 commentaries. And I have found in while engaged in this project of writing thorough commentaries on the chapters in the Old Testament, that, sometimes I have to go over a passage 30x and then suddenly, I see something there which I did not see before; and something which turns out to be unique (insofar as I know) in the commentary world. There are at least two unique observations in this chapter—observations which I have not read made by anyone else. So, even though there are times that I feel worn out and thinking, I cannot give this verse another look—and then, suddenly, there is a little gem of truth there not ever discussed before. That is always a nice experience to have.

Many believers, throughout history, have believed God to have set them aside; to have forgotten about them. David in Psalm 77:1–20, Isaiah in Isaiah 63:15, and the people of Isaiah's time in Isaiah 30:19.

Genesis 30:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon; to call, to name [when followed by a lâmed]</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
shêm (שֵׁם) [pronounced shame]	<i>name, reputation, character; fame, glory; celebrated; renown; possibly memorial, monument</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8034 BDB #1027

Genesis 30:24a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yôwçêph (יֹזֶפֶד) [pronounced yoh-SAYF]	he adds, he increases; transliterated Joseph	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3130 BDB #415

Translation: She then named him Joseph,...

This time, the name of the child is given first; and then in the next phrase, why he is given this name is explained. She names her son—her first son—Joseph, which means *he adds, he increases*.

The NET Bible: *The name Joseph (יֹזֶפֶד, yoseph) means “may he add.” The name expresses Rachel’s desire to have an additional son. In Hebrew the name sounds like the verb (אָסַף, ’asaf) translated “taken away” in the earlier statement made in v. 23. So the name, while reflecting Rachel’s hope, was also a reminder that God had removed her shame.*³⁰²

Joseph is the man that we have been waiting for. Joseph is the first spiritually mature person in Abraham's line to come along. Isaac attained some spiritual maturity and Jacob will also, and both of them recorded God's Word. However, Joseph is light years ahead of them spiritually. He comes from a family that believes in Yahweh and he seized the opportunity to grow spiritually.

In Hebrew, his name is Yôwçêph (יֹזֶפֶד) [pronounced yo-SAFE (or, possibly, yow-SAFE)]. As has possibly become apparent to many of you, there is no *J* in Hebrew. That is, there is no Joseph, no Jacob, no Joshua, no Jeremiah, etc. Their names often begin with h's or y's. Yôwçêph means *to add, to increase*. Even though the Law of Moses had not yet been established, it would soon be that the first-born would be entitled to the double-portion. Joseph, not as the first-born physically, but as possibly the first-born spiritually (and certainly, the first spiritually mature person in Jacob's family) will receive the double-portion that would have normally gone to unstable Reuben. At some point in the next few chapters, it will probably be Joseph who will take up the pen and for all intents and purposes, finish the book of Genesis. He will write one of the greatest portions of Genesis.

Genesis 30:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced ℓ]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #559 BDB #55
yâçaph (יָצַף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again; to continue to	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

³⁰² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 27, 2016.

Genesis 30:24b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced / ^l /]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
bên (בן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
'achar (אחר) [pronounced ah-KHAHR]	<i>after, following, behind; afterwards, after that; another</i>	preposition/adverb	Strong's #310 BDB #29

Translation: ...saying, "Y^ehowah added another son to me."

Now, even though she says, "Y^ehowah has given me another son;" this is actually her first son. However, her personal maid has given birth to two sons; and Rachel counts these are her sons as well. Therefore, when she actually has a son herself, she presents him as an additional son. I do not believe that she was looking ahead to her next son and telling God, "Okay, I am ready for son #2."

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Up to this point in Genesis 30, the term Elohim, "God" has been used exclusively and not the covenant name of God Yahweh, "Lord" in order to emphasize the omnipotence of God which enabled Rachel and Leah to conceive and bear children for Jacob in fulfillment of His covenant promise to Jacob to give him numerous progeny. The fact that Rachel refers to God with the covenant name of God, Yahweh indicates that she is a believer.*³⁰³ I am thinking this statement over.



Jacob's Children (a graphic); from [Women Journeying Through the Bible](#); accessed August 11, 2017. Leah is in blue, on the far left, with 6 sons and 1 daughter (there should be 2); Jacob is in the forefront with Rachel with son Joseph; and each of the personal servant women are to the right, each having two sons of Jacob.

Genesis 30:24 And she called his name Joseph. And she said, "May Jehovah add another son to me."

The name *Joseph* is Yôwçêph (יוסף) [pronounced yoh-SAYF]. It means *he adds, he increases*; and it is transliterated *Joseph*. Strong's #3130 BDB #415. So, already, Rachel's thoughts were on having another son after Joseph. Or she is considering that God has given her *another son* after there being two sons born through her personal servant. After all, her older sister has produced 7 sons for Jacob. Or, the idea is, Joseph is added to their family (she considers the sons of her personal maid as her own sons). At this point, he is the youngest child in the family.

Interestingly enough, there is no *j* in the Hebrew or the Greek. So the names *Jacob, Joseph, Joshua*, etc., which are transliterated into the Greek and later into the English, did not begin with *j*'s originally.

³⁰³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 473); accessed September 9, 2017.

Genesis 30:24 She then named him *Joseph*, saying, “Y^ehowah added another son to me.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:24 And she called his name Joseph. And she said, “May Jehovah add another son to me.”

The Meaning of Joseph (Various Commentators)

Barnes: יוסף *yôsêph*, Joseph, “he shall add.” There is, however, an obvious allusion to the thought. “God has taken away (כֹּסֶף *’âsap*) my reproach.” Double references, we find, are usual in the giving of names (see Genesis 25:30).³⁰⁴

Carroll: *At that time Rachel bore her first child and she named him Joseph, “May he add, as I now have a start.”*³⁰⁵

The College Press Bible Study: *God gave Rachel a son, whom she named Joseph, one that takes away, or he may add: “because his birth not only furnished an actual proof that God had removed the reproach of her childlessness, but also excited the wish, that Jehovah might add another son. The fulfilment of this wish is recorded in chap. Genesis 35:16 ff. The double derivation of the name, and the exchange of Elohim for Jehovah, may be explained, without the hypothesis of a double source, on the simple ground, that Rachel first of all looked back at the past, and, thinking of the earthly means that had been applied in vain for the purpose of obtaining a child, regarded the son as a gift of God. At the same time, the good fortune which had now come to her banished from her heart her envy of her sister (Genesis 29:1), and aroused belief in that God, who, as she had no doubt heard from her husband, had given Jacob such great promises; so that in giving the name, probably at the circumcision, she remembered Jehovah and prayed for another son from His covenant faithfulness” (BCOTP, 290).*

According to Lange, the text allows only one derivation: he may add: “to take away and to add are too strongly opposed to be traced back to one etymological source. Rachel, it is true, might have revealed the sentiments of her heart by the expression, God hath taken away my reproach; but she was not able to give to her own sons names that would have neutralized the significance and force of the names of her adopted sons, Dan and Naphthali. That she is indebted to God’s kindness for Joseph, while at the same time she asks Jehovah for another son, and thereupon names Joseph, does not furnish any sufficient occasion for the admission of an addition to the sources of scripture, as Delitzsch assumes. The number of Jacob’s sons, who began with Jehovah, was also closed by Jehovah. For, according to the number of twelve tribes, Israel is Jehovah’s covenant people”³⁰⁶

The College Press Bible Study then continues: *The majority of Old Testament commentators seem to agree that the meaning of Joseph’s name is more literally, “add”; that is to say, May Yahweh add to me another son. “At last Rachel bears a son, long hoped for and therefore marked out for a brilliant destiny” (ICCG, 389). “A double thought plays into the name Joseph: it incorporates both of Rachel’s remarks. For yoseph may count as an imperfect of ‘asaph’, ‘to take away.’ Or it may also count more definitely as imperfect (Hifil) of the verb yasaph, ‘to add.’ We must admit this to be very ingenious. But why deny to a mother a happy ingenuity on the occasion of her greatest joy? Why try to inject the thought of a confusion of two sources?”*³⁰⁷

Guzik: *The eleventh son born to Jacob, through Rachel, is named Joseph, meaning “may he add”; Rachel feels she has been “vindicated” by the birth of one son, but longs for more children to continue the competition with her sister Leah.*³⁰⁸

³⁰⁴ Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:24 (slightly edited).

³⁰⁵ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

³⁰⁶ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

³⁰⁷ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 29:31–30:24.

³⁰⁸ *David Guzik’s Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:23–24.

The Meaning of Joseph (Various Commentators)

Matthew Henry: *Rachel called her son Joseph, which in Hebrew is akin to two words of a contrary signification, Asaph (abstulit), He has taken away my reproach, as if the greatest mercy she had in this son was that she had saved her credit; and Jasaph (addidit), The Lord shall add to me another son, which may be looked upon either as the language of her inordinate desire (she scarcely knows how to be thankful for one unless she may be sure of another), or of her faith - she takes this mercy as an earnest of further mercy. "Has God given me his grace? I may call it Joseph, and say, He shall add more grace! Has he given me his joy? I may call it Joseph, and say, He will give me more joy. Has he begun, and shall he not make an end?"*³⁰⁹

The Cambridge Bible: *The Hebrew for "has taken away" (âsaph) [v. 23] is clearly regarded as one etymology of the name Joseph.*³¹⁰

The Cambridge Bible gives the convoluted opinion: *This clause gives another etymology of the name Joseph from yâsaph, "he hath added." These two traditional interpretations of the name are taken, the one from E, the other from J narrative. According to E, the name means âsaph Elohim, "God hath taken away"; according to J, it means yôselph Jehovah, "may Jehovah add." This name is very possibly to be read in the list of Thothmes III (No. 78) as Joseph-el (Ysp'r); see p. 273. Similarly Yašupili appears in documents of Hammurabi's time as a proper name.*³¹¹ Personally, I do not buy into the idea that there were a variety of authors for the Pentateuch.

Clarke: *She called his name Joseph – יוסף Yoseph, adding, or he who adds; thereby prophetically declaring that God would add unto her another son, which was accomplished in the birth of Benjamin, Genesis 35:18.*³¹²

Gill: *[T]he name Joseph is composed of two words, one which signifies to gather or take away, used in Genesis 30:23, and another which signifies to add; and so has respect to the Lord's taking away her reproach, and adding to her another son.*³¹³

Whedon: *Joseph...means adding, for she herewith expresses her faith that Jehovah will add to her another son. There seems also to be a play upon the word יוסף, hath taken away, used in the preceding verse. Thus the name takes on a twofold significance. Elohim has taken away her reproach, and Jehovah will add another son. While this faith showed a nobler spirit than she had manifested before, it also showed an impatience and ambition, which issued in sorrow and death, when the other son was added. See Genesis 35:18.*³¹⁴

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

L. M. Grant: *Joseph gives us only one side of the truth concerning Christ, that is, that He was a Sufferer before being exalted. This is most important for us all to learn, before we are in any condition to appreciate the truth seen in Benjamin, a type of Christ as the Son of the Father's right hand, glorified and exalted to the throne, reigning in glory.*³¹⁵

Guzik makes this apt observation: *At this point, none would think this eleventh son would end up being the key son used to further God's redemptive purpose through this family. Yet Isaiah 55:8–9 is true: "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the*

³⁰⁹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:14–24.

³¹⁰ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:23.

³¹¹ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:24.

³¹² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:24.

³¹³ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:24.

³¹⁴ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:24.

³¹⁵ From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/lmg/genesis-30.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."³¹⁶

Genesis 30:22–24 Elohim remembered Rachel and He [lit., *Elohim*] listened to her [voice] and He opened her womb. Consequently she conceived and gave birth to a son. And she remarked, "Elohim has removed my reproach." She then named him *Joseph*, saying, "Y^ehowah added another son to me." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:22–24 God remembered Rachel and He listened to her prayers and opened up her womb as a result. Consequently, she conceived and gave birth to a son, which caused her to remark, "God has removed my shame and given me a son." Therefore, she named him *Joseph*, saying, "Jehovah has given me another son." (Kukis paraphrase)

Because Leah has so many children, many take the position that the order of births is not really found here. Apart from the birth of Dinah, this would be the most logical passage for the sons' birth order to be given.

The Birth Order of the Sons (Commentators and Commentary)

Lange goes into great detail about the order of birth, suggesting that this chapter may not present the correct order of birth: *Leah [probably] gave birth to the first four sons during the first four years. In the meanwhile, however (not after the expiration of the four years), Rachel effected the birth of Dan and Naphtali by Jacob's connection with Bilhah. This probably induced Leah, perhaps in the fifth year, to emulate her example by means of her handmaid, who in a quick succession gave birth to two sons in the course of the fifth and sixth years. During the sixth and seventh years Leah again became a mother, and a short time after Zebulun, Joseph was born also. According to Delitzsch, Joseph's birth would occur between that of Issachar and Zebulun.*³¹⁷ Quite frankly, I don't know that this makes sense, as Joseph is set apart from the other boys in subsequent chapters; and he seems to be portrayed as the youngest son (except for Benjamin, who is not born yet in this narrative). Lange also points out that the following verse seems to suggest that Joseph was born last: *As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country.* (Genesis 30:25)

College Press Bible Study: *From the reading of the text it seems that Joseph must have been born at the end of the fourteen years of Jacob's service. However, it must be understood that apparently there is no attempt made here to report the births of Jacob's sons in strict sequence chronologically. Apparently the children born of one mother are listed in a group "in order to dispose of all of them at once, except in the case of Leah where approximately a year may have elapsed between the birth of her fourth and fifth sons." By this time Jacob's family was almost complete, and he might well be thinking of establishing his own household.*³¹⁸

Whitelaw: *The six sons of Leah may have been born in the seven years, allowing one year's complete cessation from pregnancy, viz. the fifth; Bilhah's in the third and fourth years; Zilpah's in the beginning of the sixth and seventh; and Rachel's toward the end of the seventh, leaving Dinah to be born later.*³¹⁹

There is a 7 year period of time—minimum—during which Leah can give birth while Jacob is still under contract to Laban to pay for his two wives. So, it is possible of Leah to have 7 sons and a daughter during this 7 years. Dinah's name seems to be added at the end possibly as a gloss, so her birth could have come later.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

³¹⁶ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:23–24.

³¹⁷ The Rev. Dr. John P. Lange, *Lange's Commentary*; 1857–1864; in the Public Domain; from E-sword; Genesis 30:22–24 (Exegetical and Critical).

³¹⁸ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

³¹⁹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

These are some interesting observations. One should bear in mind that character is not static.

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on Rachel and Leah

- I. The type represented by Rachel. This character consists mainly of two elements.
 1. Distrust. Rachel had no strong faith in God. There was no disposition to abide by His will, or to wait patiently for its unfolding.
 2. The tendency to rely upon carnal devices. Rachel was fruitful in expedients instead of depending upon the favours of Providence. This character is the opposite of that which belongs to the meek. It is the character of the wilful who strive to accomplish their own ends by any means, regardless of what God's will may decide. The meek humbly submit themselves under the Lord's hand.
- II. The type represented by Leah. This also consists mainly of two elements.
 1. Prayerful trust in God. Leah is content to forego the carnal means which would take the matter out of God's hand. She will pray and trust in Him. "God hearkened unto Leah" (Genesis 30:17), for she prayed, and has again the advantage over Rachel with all her expedients.
 2. The spirit of gratitude. Leah ascribes her blessings to God. "God hath given me my hire." (Genesis 30:18.) "God hath endued me with a good dowry. (Genesis 30:20).

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:14–21 (Main Homiletics of the Paragraph).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

At this point, we enter into a completely new narrative, which is mostly centered around Jacob and Laban.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:22–24 [Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened so she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." and she named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me another son."](#)

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:22–24

1. This verse is as strong a statement that God is the final authority behind the scenes.
2. For all her beauty and pulchritude, Rachel could not have what she so desperately wanted.
3. Her superstitious attempt with the mandrakes occurred some years earlier, and did not produce the desired result.
4. God sovereignly controls who has babies and who does not.
5. Three verbs in this verse, 2 of which have God as the explicit subject, serve to underscore this fact.
6. There was some extent to which the ancients recognized that God or gods, depending upon their beliefs, controlled the forces related to children.
7. There was a belief that going childless was an expression of Divine displeasure.
8. So for Rachel to finally have a baby would cause people to believe that God was no longer displeased with her.
9. The verb remembered is an anthropomorphism for omniscience, since God can never forget or lose sight of anything.
10. It implies to turn one's attention toward something or someone who did not previously have one's
11. The fact that God heard Rachel indicates that she had now made this a matter of prayer.
12. Opened the womb is a phrase which indicates that God oversees the process of pregnancy and
13. This was just a small exercise of His omnipotence.
14. Rachel rightly attributes the child to God.
15. She assumes that this has taken away her reproach or contempt in the eyes of her contemporaries.
16. She certainly thinks that this is her vindication.
17. She is a believer who is not so much concerned about the issues of doctrine, as much as she is concerned with having children.
18. She names the boy, Joseph, in a word play on the two verbs "removed and add".

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:22–24

19. She is right that she will give birth once again, and God will use the second birth to administer the SUD to Rachel.
20. Instead of dealing with the issues of submission to her husband's authority and pursuing BD, she builds her life and happiness around her children.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:22–24 Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." She named him Joseph, saying, "May the LORD give me another son."

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:22–24: Birth of Joseph

1. Finally, Rachel is blessed with a child and not through surrogate motherhood or mandrakes but through the mercy of God.
2. She apparently put her trust in God and quit all her antics as suggested in the words "God gave heed to her..."
3. She relied strictly on prayer in the end.
4. When it says in Scripture that "God remembered" someone it is always followed by a display of God's power.
5. In this case it was also a display of divine mercy considering how badly she had acted during the first six years of the marriage.
6. God opened her womb as he did Leah's at the outset of the 2nd seven year period (29:31).
7. As typical, we have a double explanation of the name chosen for the 11th son (v. 23-24).
8. Childlessness was considered shameful (cf. Isa. 4:1).
9. God preserved Rachel's reputation by removing childlessness from her ("God has taken away my reproach.").
10. She properly gives God the credit for her blessing.
11. The second part of her declaration "May the LORD give me another son" is a prayer request for one more son.
12. This prayer would be answered at the cost of her life (35:16-19).
13. The name of her son is Joseph and is an abbreviated form of "May God add."
14. Note that the name Yahweh is used at the beginning and at the end of sections/stories (29:32, 33, 35).
15. The less intimate name Elohim is preferred elsewhere through the midsection.
16. Yahweh is used when prayers are answered and when the parties are objects of covenant grace.
17. Rachel was graced-out in the birth of this famous son; one of the greatest examples of faithfulness to the plan of God found in all Scripture.
18. So, this messy episode ends on an upbeat note

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob's New Deal with Laban

Jacob and Laban come to an agreement on wages (vv. 25–34)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The conversation between Laban and Jacob that is recorded in Genesis 30:25-34 takes place after he has fulfilled the seven years of service to Laban to secure Rachel as his bride. Therefore, Jacob has been in Paddan Aram for fourteen years when the events of Genesis 30:25-43 are recorded.*³²⁰

Jacob will go to Laban at the end of 14 years and request that he be allowed to return to the Land of Promise with his wives and children. Included in the discussion for vv. 25–26 will be (1) did this occur immediately after year 14 (probably, but not necessarily); and (2) how many children are a part of this discussion (probably 12, which includes Dinah³²¹). These two points are not universally agreed to; but they appear to be the position of most commentators. In any case, this is clearly written *after* the birth of Joseph. A few commentators dink around at the time frame and place Zebulun's birth after Joseph's, but I do not think that is necessary in order for all of the timing to work out well enough to accommodate all of the births. This conversation could have very easily taken place after year 15 or 16. All that would be needed is for Laban to say, "Okay, now your wages are..." and Jacob could have simply accepted that (none of this is recorded; it is simply a possible scenario).

Even though Jacob will make this request to leave and return to his home, this is not necessarily a great spiritual awakening in Jacob.³²² It could be, just as much, a reaction to Laban and his evil schemes. We have to be careful when evaluating the lives of these believers, not to be too harsh on Jacob; nor to suppose that he is a great and mature believer. He has obviously put in honest hours of work to Laban and Laban has prospered by this relationship (Laban himself will admit to that in this chapter). Although Jacob and Laban will butt heads on several occasions, Laban never accuses Jacob of dishonesty or laziness. It is very easy to continually take a dim view of Jacob, as he does make many missteps along his way. However, Laban found out that Jacob was a great one to work for him.

Furthermore, Jacob appears to be a good husband and father, under the difficult circumstances of polygamy. So, even though we know Jacob's shortcomings, as we have studied in previous chapters, he is not the worst man in the world.

Too many commentators, however, give Jacob far more credit than he is due. For instance, Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *In this resolution the faith of Jacob was remarkable, for as yet he had nothing to rely on but the promise of God.*³²³

Jacob's very request indicates that he is not thinking about God. When Jacob has for Laban to send him back, he does not say, "...to the land with God has given my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and to me." I think that Jacob would like to get away from the dishonest and manipulative Laban, rather than exhibiting a deep faith in Y^ehowah, Who has given him the Land of Promise.

When we study these people from long ago, we have to bear in mind that they are real people with real lives. Many of the people that we study are not spiritual giants; and all the people that we study have feet of clay.

³²⁰ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 477); accessed September 9, 2017.

³²¹ Given the way this is written, Dinah could have been born after this discussion took place.

³²² Matthew Henry appears to give Jacob far too much credit in Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

³²³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:25.

And so he is as which gave birth Rachel to Joseph and so says Jacob unto Laban, “Send me away and I will go unto my place and to my land. Give my women and my children whom I have served you in them and I will go; for you [even] you have known my service which I served you.”

Genesis
30:25–26

And it is, when Rachel gave birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, “Send me away so that I may go to my place and to my land. Give [to me] my wives and my children, [for] whom I have served you and I will go. For you [certainly] know [of] the [excellent] service [lit., *my service*] which I gave [lit., *served*] to you.”

And after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban and said to him, “Send me away so that I may return to my place of origin; to my land. Give to me my wives and Children for whom I have served you, and I will leave. You certainly know of the excellent service which I have given to you for them.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he is as which gave birth Rachel to Joseph and so says Jacob unto Laban, “Send me away and I will go unto my place and to my land. Give my women and my children whom I have served you in them and I will go; for you [even] you have known my service which I served you.”
Targum (Onkelos)	And it was when Rahel had born Joseph, that Jakob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go to my place, and to my land. Give <u>me</u> my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, that I may go: for thou knowest the service with which I have served thee.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And it was when Rahel had borne Joseph, Jakob <u>said by the Holy Spirit concerning the house of Joseph, They are to be as a flame to consume the house of Esau; and he said, Therefore will I not be afraid of Esau and his legions. And he, said unto Laban, Send me away, and I will go to my place and to my country. Give <u>me</u> my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and I will go; for thou knowest my service with which I have served thee.</u>
Revised Douay-Rheims	And when Joseph was born, Jacob said to <u>his father in law</u> : Send me away that I may return into my country, and to my land. Give <u>me</u> my wives, and my children, for whom I have served you, that I may depart: you know the service that I have rendered you.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	It happened, when Rachel had borne Yoseph, that Ya'aqub said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place, and to my country. Give <u>me</u> my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and <u>let me go</u> ; for you know my service with which I have served you."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go to my own place, and to my land. Give <u>me</u> my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and <u>let me go</u> ; for you know the service which I have rendered you.
Septuagint (Greek)	Jacob's bargain with Laban. Gn.30.25-43 And it came to pass when Rache had born Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go to my place and to my land. Restore my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, that I may depart, for you know the service that I have given you.
Significant differences:	Gobs of additional text in the PJ Targum. The Latin has <i>his father in law</i> rather than Laban.

All the ancient versions above add *me* after the imperative *give*, except for the Greek. That word is not found in the Hebrew. The Aramaic appears to have an imperative (*let me go*) which is in line with the Hebrew, as that verb is a cohortative.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Now after the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, Let me go away to my place and my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have been your servant, and let me go: for you have knowledge of all the work I have done for you.
Easy English	After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob spoke to Laban. He said 'Let me go on my way. Let me go so that I can go back to my own land. Give me my wives. Give me my children. I have worked for you to have them. Then I will go on my journey. You know how much I have worked for you.'
God's Word™	Jacob's Flocks Prosper After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me go home to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I've worked, and let me go. You know how much work I've done for you."
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob's Bargain with Laban After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me go, so that I can return home. Give me my wives and children that I have earned by working for you, and I will leave. You know how well I have served you."
International Children's B.	After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Now let me go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children, and let me go. I have earned them by working for you. You know that I served you well."
NIRV	Jacob Becomes the Owner of Large Flocks After Rachel had Joseph, Jacob spoke to Laban. He said, "Send me on my way. I want to go back to my own home and country. Give me my wives and children. I worked for you to get them. So I'll be on my way. You know how much work I've done for you."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	God blesses Jacob and Laban After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me off so that I can go to my own place and my own country. Give me my wives and children whom I've worked for, and I will go. You know the work I've done for you."
Contemporary English V.	After Joseph was born, Jacob said to Laban, "Release me from our agreement and let me return to my own country. You know how hard I've worked for you, so let me take my wives and children and leave."
The Living Bible	Soon after the birth of Joseph to Rachel, Jacob said to Laban, "I want to go back home. Let me take my wives and children—for I earned them from you—and be gone, for you know how fully I have paid for them with my service to you."
New Berkeley Version	When Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Grant me leave to move on to my own community and my country. Let me have my wives and my children for whom I have served you, so I can go; for you know what service I have rendered you."
New Century Version	Jacob Tricks Laban After the birth of Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Now let me go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children and let me go. I have earned them by working for you, and you know that I have served you well."
New Living Translation	Jacob's Wealth Increases Soon after Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Please release me so I can go home to my own country. Let me take my wives and children, for I have earned them by serving you, and let me be on my way. You certainly know how hard I have worked for you."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well, after Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban: '[Allow] me to leave, so I can return to my country and my home. Free my women and children that I served you for, so I can go, since you're aware of all the services that I've provided to you.'
Beck's American Translation	<i>Jacob Gets Rich</i> After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me leave and go home to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I've served you, and let me go, because you know the work I did for you."
International Standard V	<i>Jacob and Laban's Livestock</i> After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob told Laban, "Send me off so that I can go back to my place and country. Give me my wives and children for whom I've served you. Then I'll leave, since you're aware of my service to you."
Revised Knox Bible	After Joseph's birth, Jacob said to his father-in-law, Give me leave to go back home, to my own country. And when I go, let me take with me the wives and the children I have earned in your service; how hard I have worked for you, none knows better than you.
Translation for Translators	Jacob tricked Laban and became very wealthy After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Now allow me to quit working for you and let me return to my own land. You know the work that I have done for you for a long time to get my wives. So let me take my wives and my children for whom I worked for you to get them, and leave."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	As Rachel is to have bore forth Joseph, Jacob was to say to Laban: Be sending me off, I was to go to the place of my solid grounds. Be giving me my wives and my children, for these I have served you, and I was to go. For you is to have known, the service I am to have served you.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	But it occurred that when Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, " Send me away, and I will go to my own home, and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children, whom I have served you for, because I must go with them, for you know the wages for which I have served to you."
HCSB	Jacob's Flocks Multiply After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me on my way so that I can return to my homeland. Give me my wives and my children that I have worked for, and let me go. You know how hard I have worked for you."
Lexham English Bible	Jacob's Prosperity And it happened [that] as soon as Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away that I may go to my place and my land. Give [me] my wives and my children for which I have served you, and let me go. For you yourself know my service that I have rendered to you."
NIV, ©2011	Jacob's Flocks Increase After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me on my way so I can go back to my own homeland. Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you, and I will be on my way. You know how much work I've done for you."
Urim-Thummim Version	After Rachel had gendered Joseph, then Jacob said to Laban, send me away, so that I may go to my own region and to my own land. Give me my women and my children for whom I have worked for you to acquire, and let me go, because you have witnessed my labors that I have accomplished.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was, when Rachel bore Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, send me away and I shall go, to my place and to my lands. Give me my wives and my children, for whose sake I have worked for you, and I shall go: because you know to what my works for you have amounted.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Other legends

After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Let me go, so that I may return to my homeland. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go, for you know how well I have served you."

The Heritage Bible

And it was that Rachel bore Joseph, and Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, and I will walk to my own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me walk, because you know by seeing my work with which I have worked for you.

New American Bible (2002)

After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban: "Give me leave to go to my homeland. Let me have my wives, for whom I served you, and my children, too, that I may depart. You know very well the service that I have rendered you."

New American Bible (2011)

Jacob Outwits Laban.

[30:25–43] Jacob's deception of Laban. Jacob has been living in Laban's household as an indentured worker paying off the bride price. Having paid off all his obligations, he wants to settle his accounts with Laban. His many children attest to the fulfillment of the Lord's promise of numerous progeny; the birth of Joseph to his beloved Rachel signals the fulfillment in a special way. To enter into the Lord's second promise, the land, he must now return to Canaan.

After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban: "Allow me to go to my own region and land. Give me my wives and my children for whom I served you and let me go, for you know the service that I rendered you."

New Jerusalem Bible

When Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, 'Release me and let me go home to my own country. Give me my wives for whom I have worked for you, and my children, and let me go. You are well aware how long I have worked for you.'

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

After Rachel had given birth to Yosef, Ya'akov said to Lavan, "Send me on my way, so that I can return to my own place, to my own country. Let me take my wives, for whom I have served you, and my children; and let me go. You know very well how faithfully I have served you."

The Complete Tanach

It came to pass when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, and I will go to my place and to my land.

when Rachel had borne Joseph: When the adversary of Esau was born, as it is said (Obadiah 1:18): "And the house of Jacob shall be fire and the house of Joseph a flame, and the house of Esau shall become stubble." Fire without a flame does not burn anything a distance away. As soon as Joseph was born, Jacob trusted in the Holy One, blessed be He and desired to return [to Canaan]. — [from B.B. 123b, Targum Jonathan ben Uzziel, Gen. Rabbah 73:7]

Give [me] my wives and my children for whom I worked for you, and I will go, for you know my work, which I have worked for you."

Give [me] my wives, etc.: I do not wish to leave without permission. — [from Zohar vol. 1, 158b]

exeGesés companion Bible

And so be it, when Rachel births Yoseph, that Yaaqov says to Laban, Send me away, to go to my own place and to my land: give me my women and my children for whom I served you and let me go: for you know the service I served you.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)	After Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Give me leave to go back to my own homeland. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, that I may go; for well you know what services I have rendered you.”
Kaplan Translation	After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, 'Let me leave [Some say that Rebecca had sent the promised word (Genesis 27:45) to him (Sefer HaYashar).]. I would like to go home to my own land. Let me have my wives and children, since I have earned them by working for you, and I will go. You are well aware of the service that I rendered you.'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Yosef, that Ya'akov said unto Lavan, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own makom (place, home) and to my erez. Give me my nashim and my yeladim, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my avodah which I have done thee.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible	<p>Jacob Tricks Laban</p> <p>·After the birth of [At the time that Rachel gave birth to] Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Now ·let me [L send me away that I might] go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children and let me go. I have earned them by working for you, and you know that I have served you well.”</p>
Kretzmann’s Commentary	<p>Verses 25-36</p> <p>The Contract Between Laban and Jacob</p> <p>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. The fourteen years of Jacob's service had now come to a close, and, since he did not consider Mesopotamia his home, but a strange country, he longed to go back to his own land, to Canaan. Therefore he asked for his dismissal. 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. Laban had to concede the faithfulness of Jacob in all his work, particularly since he had, till now, had all the better of the bargain.</p>
NET Bible®	<p><i>The Flocks of Jacob</i></p> <p>After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, “Send me on my way so that I can go home to my own country [<i>Heb</i> “to my place and to my land.”]. Let me take my wives and my children whom I have acquired by working for you [<i>Heb</i> “give my wives and my children, for whom I have served you.”]. Then I’ll depart, because you know how hard I’ve worked for you [<i>Heb</i> “for you, you know my service [with] which I have served you.”].”</p>
The Pulpit Commentary	<p>And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph,—either at or about the expiry of the second term of seven years. Jacob’s family now consisted in all of eleven sons and one daughter, unless Dinah’s birth occurred later in the next term of service (Keil). Since these were all born within seven years, the chronological cannot be the order observed by the historian in recording the events of the preceding paragraphs. Rather the births of the children are arranged in connection with the mothers from whom they sprang. Hence the possibility of acquiring so large a family in so short a time. The six sons of Leah might be born in the seven years, allowing one year’s complete cessation from pregnancy, viz; the fifth; Bilhah’s in the third and fourth years; Zilpah’s in the beginning of the sixth and seventh; and Rachel’s toward the end of the seventh, leaving Dinah to be born later (cf. Keil in loco)—that Jacob said unto Laban (if not immediately, certainly soon, after Joseph’s birth), Send me away (meaning that Laban should permit him to depart), that I may go (literally, and I will go) unto mine own place, and to my country—to Canaan in general, and to that part of it in particular where he had formerly resided (cf. Genesis 18:33; Genesis 31:55). Give me (suffer me to take) my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go (literally, and I will go): for thou</p>

knowest my service which I have done thee—implying that he had faithfully implemented his engagement, and that Laban was aware of the justness of his demand to be released from further servitude.

The Voice

After Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob asked Laban *for release*.

Jacob: It's time for me to return home, to my own people and country. Please release me with my wives and my children. I have worked for you *a long time* to obtain them, and you know how well I have served you.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and it came to pass, just as Rahhel ^[Ewe] brought forth Yoseph ^[Adding], Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] said to Lavan ^[White], send me and I will walk to my place and to my land, give my women and my boys which I served with you in them and I will walk given that you knew my service which I served you,...

English Standard Version

Jacob's Prosperity

As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go, for you know the service that I have given you."

Modern English Version

Jacob's Agreement With Laban

When Rachel had given birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, so that I may go to my own place, to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go. For you know the service that I have given you."

NASB

Jacob Prospers

Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you."

New European Version

Jacob Increases His Wealth

It happened, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go to my own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service with which I have served you.

New King James Version

Jacob's Agreement with Laban

And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you."

Young's Updated LT

And it comes to pass, when Rachel has borne Joseph, that Jacob says unto Laban, "Send me away, and I go unto my place, and to my land; give up my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and I go; for you—you have known my service which I have served you."

The gist of this passage:

After Rachel gives birth to Joseph, Jacob requests Laban to send him away.

Genesis 30:25a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Without a specific subject and object, the verb hâyâh often means <i>and it will come to be, and it will come to pass, then it came to pass</i> (with the wâw consecutive). It may be more idiomatically rendered <i>subsequently, afterwards, later on, in the course of time, after which</i> . Generally, the verb does not match the gender whatever nearby noun could be the subject (and, as often, there is no noun nearby which would fulfill the conditions of being a subject).			
When the object of this verb is preceded by the lâmed preposition, hâyâh often means <i>to become [something that it was not before]</i> .			
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced <i>k^e</i>]	<i>like, as, according to; about, approximately</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #453
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, ka'âsher (כְּאֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>kah-uh-SHER</i>] means <i>as which, as one who, as, like as, as just; because; according to what manner, in a manner as</i> . Back in 1Samuel 12:8, I rendered this <i>for example</i> .			
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced <i>yaw-LAHD</i>]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
The NET Bible: <i>The perfect verbal form is translated as a past perfect because Rachel's giving birth to Joseph preceded Jacob's conversation with Laban.</i> ³²⁴			
Râchêl (רָחֵל) [pronounced <i>raw-KHALE</i>]	<i>ewe and is transliterated Rachel</i>	feminine proper noun	Strong's #7354 BDB #932
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Yôwçêph (יֹוֹצֵף) [pronounced <i>yoh-SAYF</i>]	<i>he adds, he increases; transliterated Joseph</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #3130 BDB #415

Translation: And it is, when Rachel gave birth to Joseph,...

This gives us the time frame for what follows. After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob had worked for Laban for 14 years. It was time for him to return to his land. Enough time had passed to where he believed that he could return.

³²⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

Based upon the bargaining done for wages which will follow, it does not appear that there was an agreement between Jacob and Laban up to this point (apart from working 7 years for each wife). Most commentators believe that all of this has taken place and we are now at the end of year 14 and beginning year 15, the time for a renegotiation of the contract between the two men.

From years 7–14, all of the children were born (except that Jacob will have one more son from Rachel). Leah had one child each year, but with a year and a half or so between #4 and #5. This would suggest that Leah's 6th child was not much older than Joseph, Rachel's only child to this point.

I believe that it is possible for this to be year 16 or 17—after the first 14 years of service, Laban could have told Jacob, "Now, this is what you will be paid for your service to me." Now, that is pure speculation, but it does give us another year or so for all of those births to take place.

Genesis 30:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
This is the first time Laban's name occurs in this chapter.			
shâlach (שָׁלַח) [pronounced shaw-LAKH]	<i>send, send off, send away [back], dismiss, give over, cast out, let go, set free, shoot forth [branches], shoot [an arrow]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7971 BDB #1018
The NET Bible: <i>The imperatival form here expresses a request.</i> ³²⁵			
The NET Bible: <i>For Jacob to ask to leave would mean that seven more years had passed. Thus all Jacob's children were born within the range of seven years of each other, with Joseph coming right at the end of the seven years.</i> ³²⁶			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וַ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect; with the cohortative hê	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

³²⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

³²⁶ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

Genesis 30:25b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
^ʿ el (אֵל) [pronounced eh]l]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced maw-KOHM]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
^ʿ erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced EH-rets]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land, territory, country, continent; ground, soil; under the ground [Sheol]</i>	feminine singular noun with the definite article; with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #776 BDB #75

H. C. Leupold: "Let me go" is a bit stronger in the original and could be rendered, "send me away" or "dismiss me." "My place and my country" are mentioned side by side in the sense where we sometimes refer first to a more definite then to a more general object; therefore we could render: "that I may go to my place, and in general to my country." ³²⁷

Translation: ...that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away so that I may go to my place and to my land.

Jacob makes a formal request to Laban to be able to leave. This would acknowledge the work which Jacob had performed for Laban.

Jacob has lived in Haran for the past 14+ years.³²⁹ His wives are here and his children are all born here. But this is not Jacob's country; it is not his destiny. God placed Jacob here temporarily (just as God will later place Jacob and his family temporarily in Egypt).

Jacob (more properly, Jacob's line) has a destiny in the land that he came from. This land is a part of the land contract that God granted to Abraham, his grandfather. Jacob is heir to this promise.

When I first began to study this passage, I took the point of view that Jacob is beginning to recognize that he has a destiny and that he has a place in God's plan and it is not with Laban. We know that God has given Jacob the land of Palestine and that is where he is to dwell. However, based upon extensive study, I do not think that Jacob is responding to the promises which God has made to him; nor is he thinking about his inheritance promised him by God—I think that Jacob is mostly angry with Laban. Laban tricked him into marrying Leah, and let me suggest to you that bit of deception was much more in the forefront of Jacob's mind than his promised inheritance. "I

³²⁷ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

³²⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

³²⁹ Either in Haran or somewhere near Haran.

agreed to this, but you are one bent SOB, Laban, and I cannot wait to put distance between us,” might better describe Jacob’s attitude at this time. Now, it is clear that Jacob does not say that; he is much more respectful; but Laban tricked him, and don’t think for a moment that Jacob has forgotten that.

In any case, it is not yet time for him to return to Canaan.

It is easy to confuse this chapter with the next. Jacob talks about returning to Canaan here; in the next chapter, God tells him in a dream to return to Canaan. Jacob proposes an agreement with Laban, and it will involve the oddly-colored sheep and goats. In Jacob’s vision, God will speak about these oddly-colored sheep and goats. However, we need to separate these two chapters in time and in our minds. There is probably 5 or 6 years between Genesis 30 and 31 (with the exception of Genesis 30:43, which acts as a bridge between the two chapters). I believe that Jacob speaks of returning to Canaan here as a bargaining chip more than as a real threat. “I think it is time I moved back to Canaan,” Jacob said. “No, don’t do that, stay here. I will pay you what you want,” Laban responded. “Okay,” Jacob agreed. That is the gist of their conversation, apart from what the terms of their agreement would be.

Genesis 30:25–26a *And after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban and said to him, “Send me away so that I may return to my place of origin; to my land. Give to me my wives and Children for whom I have served you, and I will leave.*

People read this and think, *Jacob is really thinking about his future, about the promises of God, and what God will do for him in the future—for him and his descendants.* Personally, I think that is reading too much into this conversation that he and Laban are having. Look at this more as a salary negotiation rather than as a statement of a renewed faith, and it will make much more sense to you.

Discussing how much credit ought to be given to Jacob when he wants to leave

Several commentators say things along the lines of: *Jacob is ready to leave, and he announces his intentions to Laban.*³³⁰ However, once Laban gives Jacob his counteroffer (which is, “Just name your salary, Jacob”), Jacob drops this whole *return to my country* stuff like a hot potato.³³¹

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Laban again that he has fulfilled his end of the contract for Rachel and thus seeks his release so that he might return to his homeland and family.*

Wenstrom continues: *Several factors would have contributed to Jacob’s desire to leave. First, his attitude toward Laban would not have been positive at this point since Laban had deceived him by sending Leah and not Rachel into his tent on his wedding night, thus delaying his return to the land of Canaan seven years longer than he had expected. Undoubtedly, Jacob wanted to return home to his family.*³³²

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr. adds: *Also, Jacob would be itching to leave Laban because the Lord had promised him that he would someday return to the land of Canaan (28:10-22). Jacob demands that Laban release to him his wives and children since he has fulfilled his end of the contract by paying the “bride-price” for both Leah and Rachel through his fourteen years of service for Laban as payment. The “service” to which Jacob is referring to is of course, the fourteen years that he served Laban, which constituted the “bride-price” or the payment to secure both Leah and Rachel as his wives.*³³³

³³⁰ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_30b.pdf accessed September 8, 2017.

³³¹ Obviously, I cannot look into Jacob’s soul; I make the judgment based upon what he does and says.

³³² From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 477); accessed September 9, 2017.

³³³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 478); accessed September 9, 2017.

Discussing how much credit ought to be given to Jacob when he wants to leave

On the one hand, verse-by-verse ministries writes:

Why does Jacob need to ask Laban to let him go?

- *The culture of the day placed tremendous authority in the leader of a tribe or clan*
- *Jacob has come under the authority of Laban since the time Jacob was welcomed into Laban's house*
- *And since Jacob was bound by his word to work for Laban to pay for his wives, only Laban could release Jacob*
- *So Jacob is asking for Laban to honor his agreement and release Jacob according to the terms of the deal.*³³⁴

Allow me to add one more reason: Jacob could use this, "I am ready to move back to my home and my country" as a bargaining chip. For anyone who has ever bargained for a higher salary or a better position, it is clear that, "I can walk out that door and get a better offer from Company XYZ," can be a very effective bargaining tool (when it is true). Not so effective if you are bluffing and the boss calls your bluff.

Jacob actually does not have very much to finance such a move. He has worked for Laban at least 14 years, and has nothing to show for that, except for his two wives and children. And perhaps he has worked another year or so (not factored into the narrative) where he might have saved up a few dollars. But, could Jacob simply pick up and leave at this time with his family? I would suggest that he could not. Maybe emotionally he wanted to; maybe he was angry enough at Laban to want to pack up and go back to Canaan, but does he really have the wherewithal to do this?

It is my opinion that Jacob is threatening to move to get a favorable salary from Laban.

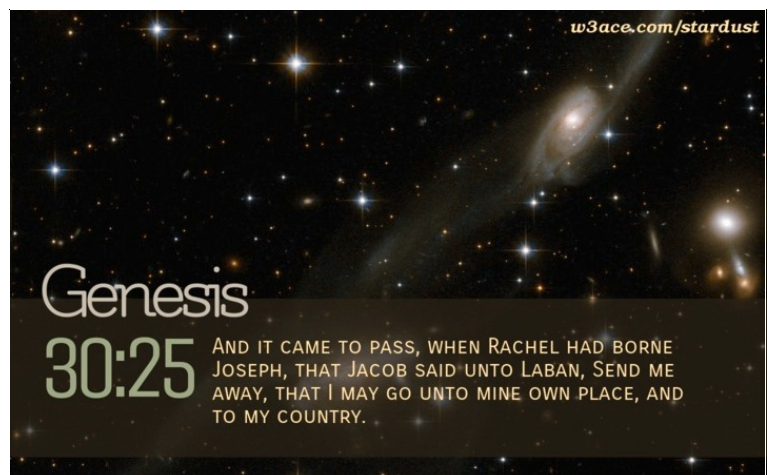
[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:25 (a graphic); from w3ace.com; accessed September 15, 2017.

Genesis 30:25 And when Rachel had borne Joseph, it happened that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away so that I may go into my own place and to my country.

Jacob knows that the land of Canaan is given to him and to his sons. Now he has a boatload of sons; so it is time to return to his home. He has also fulfilled his contract to Laban. So at least 14 years have passed. However, as stated, there is nothing in what Jacob says which makes us think that this is what is on his mind. There is nothing that he says which indicates that Jacob full-on understands the plan of God. In the next chapter, Jacob will apparently be giving God more thought, but also in the next chapter, God will speak to him. Now, if there is anything to recharge Jacob, if only briefly, it is another interaction with God.



Since Jacob married Leah after 7 years of work; since she has had 7 children; and since there was a period of time between child #4 and #5; let me suggest that this is at least year 16 or 17 (this is making the assumption that Jacob goes to Laban *after* the 12 children are born³³⁵). These 12 children (which includes Dinah) are born over a period which is less than 12 years (= the 7 years of service + some additional time). Jacob works for Laban 14 years for his two daughters; and then he works an additional 6 years.

³³⁴ From https://www.versebyverseministry.org/images/uploads/genesis_30b.pdf accessed September 8, 2017.

³³⁵ I am including Dinah in the list; and there is another sister (at least one more). We do not know when they were born.

We do not know when Jacob began thinking about leaving Laban's ranch. Logically, if Leah has 7 children, with a gap of time between #4 and #5; and if all of the children are born as listed above, Jacob's expressed desire to leave would have occurred between years 16³³⁶ and 18.³³⁷ If Dinah was born later (Dinah seems to be added into the list of children as almost an afterthought); then these events could certainly be taking place immediately after year 14, after Jacob has sired 11 children.

Genesis 30:25 *And after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban and said to him, "Send me away so that I may return to my place of origin; to my land.* This is quite a specific verse when it comes to the timing. Jacob speaks to Laban about leaving *after* Joseph is born.

At the first, I assumed that all of this takes place immediately after year 14. However, Jacob's expressed desire to leave and the subsequent salary negotiation does not have to take place immediately at the beginning of year 15. Recall that Jacob has been working all of this time for Laban's daughters. He has nothing saved up. So, perhaps Laban said, "Now that you have paid your debt to me, I will continue to employ you, but with this salary." And he would name a salary. Jacob then works for a year or two under that salary and then comes to Laban and asks to leave. I am fairly certain that could be what happened, and it would not contradict any of what is found in this chapter.

The other option is, this is an emotional decision on Jacob's part, and he is so mad at Laban that he is ready to move out right now; but that would mean that Jacob has, in fact, very little besides his family.

When considering motivation, we must always keep in mind that Jacob is very different from Abraham or from his own father Isaac. Abraham had some understanding of God's promises; and God repeated these promises to him on several occasions. Abraham often acted in faith, based upon those promises (testified to in Hebrews 11:9). But Jacob is not the same caliber of spiritual maturity as Abraham is.

Commentators go to great lengths to explain how Jacob fathered 11 children in 7 years; but only thing we really need concentrate on are Leah's children. The number of children a man sires over a given period of time is, by necessity, tied to the woman who bears the children, not the man. It would appear that Leah had 6 sons in a period of 7 years, which is certainly possible—but it requires her to spend most of those 7 years pregnant. Understanding that Jacob goes to Laban 1 or 2 years after the 14 years is up gives us a little more breathing room. This is not required, of course. It just allows us to fit these events to the time in a slightly different way.

Whedon³³⁸ and others go in for a complex explanation of how Leah's last male child was born after Joseph. Their explanation about the birth order here tends to be rather convoluted. Many place Joseph's birth between the births of Leah's last two male children.

Genesis 30:25 *And it is, when Rachel gave birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away so that I may go to my place and to my land.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:25 *And after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban and said to him, "Send me away so that I may return to my place of origin; to my land.*

³³⁶ Jacob marries Leah in year 7 and she has 7 children. That would take at least 8 years. If there is a gap between two children, then figure 9 years, taking us to year 16.

³³⁷ There needs to be a period of time during which Laban is not honest with Jacob about his wages, and this must occur over a long enough period of time for Jacob's wives to agree with him.

³³⁸ See *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:24, if you are interested.

Giving Jacob too much credit when he says, “Send me away.” (A discussion)

Matthew Henry: *[Jacob] retained his affection for the land of Canaan, not only because it was the land of his nativity, and his father and mother were there, whom he longed to see, but because it was the land of promise; and, in token of his dependence upon the promise of it, though he sojourn in Haran he can by no means think of settling there. Thus should we be affected towards our heavenly country, looking upon ourselves as strangers here, viewing the heavenly country as our home, and longing to be there, as soon as the days of our service upon earth are numbered and finished. We must not think of taking root here, for this is not our place and country, (Hebrews 13:14).*³³⁹

The problem here is, no such affection is stated; no mention of Canaan as the Land of Promise is suggested in what Jacob says. And, most importantly, when Laban tells Jacob, “Go ahead, name your salary,” all of a sudden, Jacob is no longer interested in packing up and returning to Canaan. If Jacob’s reasons for returning to Canaan are spiritual, a fulfilling of God’s promises to him, then how could Laban’s offer of a good salary change his mind so easily?

Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary: *In this declaration there was something more than the mere longing of the natural man for the land of his nativity; we behold in it the strong and influential faith of these ancient patriarchs, believing implicitly the promises of their God, that the land, of which not an acre belonged to them, should, in due time, be wholly theirs; that their seed should be as the stars of heaven, and that from their loins should spring the Saviour of the world. In looking to Canaan, they looked to the heaven which it typified. They saw the promises afar off. (Hebrews 11:13; Hebrews 11:16).*³⁴⁰

Throughout, the Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary gives Jacob far too much credit. Near the end of his life, Jacob is going to say and do things which make it clear that he understands a great deal about the promises which God has made to him. However, that time is *not* now, in this narrative.

Abraham seemed to be the most spiritually aware of the 3 patriarchs; and Jacob seemed to be the least faithful of the 3. About 6 years from now, we will find Jacob wrestling with God in the desert, because that illustrates what his life has been up until that point. Now, if in the future, Jacob is wrestling with God, that suggests that this time that we are studying is not some great spiritual step that he is taking in his life.

The Pulpit Commentary also gives Jacob way too much credit: *Jacob’s Respectful Request of Laban. At the close of fourteen years harsh and exacting service, Jacob desires permission to take his wives and children and return to Canaan. The motives which induced him were probably—*

1. *The termination of his contract, which released him from a servitude both galling and oppressive.*
2. *The remembrance of God’s covenant, which had assigned him the land of promise as his true inheritance.*
3. *The joy occasioned by the birth of Rachel’s child, whom he seems to have regarded as the theocratic heir.*
4. *A desire to provide for his now rapidly-increasing household.*³⁴¹

1. We do not know that Jacob’s service was galling and oppressive. He watched Laban’s sheep and did a good job of it.
2. Jacob says nothing about God’s covenant, God’s will, God’s promises, or his true inheritance. Believers who know the Old Testament are well-aware of this. Assuming that Jacob is a spiritual giant standing upon the promises of God seems to fly in the face of everything else that we know about him. Remember that Jacob and God will wrestle in the future, because that represents their relationship for all of these years.
3. Jacob will dote on his son Joseph. There is no indication that Jacob ever considered who his theocratic heir would be. He does hold onto his son Joseph, shower him with affection, and make his brothers seethe with jealousy, but that is because Jacob is playing favorites, something which occurred in his

³³⁹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

³⁴⁰ *The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:25 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

³⁴¹ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 30:25–43 (homiletics).

Giving Jacob too much credit when he says, “Send me away.” (A discussion)

- family.
- The final reason is also without merit. We have Jacob prospering at the end of this chapter—but that is a result of him working for Laban and now having a method of being paid (and God is greatly blessing Jacob). When Jacob and Laban come to their first agreement at the end of this chapter, there is no indication that Jacob has anything to start with. As a lifelong shepherd and rancher, you have to have the animals to start with. Jacob does not appear to have that at this time. What Jacob is saying, from the beginning, is somewhat unrealistic. What exactly is he going to leave Haran with, apart from his family? What will sustain him? How will he go?

People tend to elevate Jacob to spiritual greatness or they grind him into the dirt. Jacob very much represents God’s grace; he gets so much that he does not deserve (which describes my life and the lives of many believers that I know).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Whereas The Pulpit Commentary appeared to get everything about Jacob wrong, they seem to understand Laban quite well:

The Pulpit Commentary on Laban’s point of view

Jacob’s Selfish Hindrance by Laban.

That Jacob’s uncle and father-in-law was unwilling to acquiesce in his departure and solicitous to retain him was due to—

- His appreciation of Jacob’s qualities as a flock-master. Jacob felt he could appeal to "the service he had done" for the past fourteen years.
- His discovery of a latent connection between Jacob’s presence and his own augmenting prosperity. Laban, poor enough before his nephew’s arrival, had shrewdly noted that the day of Jacob’s coming had been the day of fortune’s turning in his favor, and that, wherever his clever "brother" went, flocks and herds broke out beside him.
- His secret hope of effecting easy terms with Jacob. Though ostensibly willing to take him at his own price, he was clearly calculating that he would not have much difficulty in over-reaching the man whom already he had cheated in the matter of his daughters.

The Pulpit Commentary; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 30:25–43 (homiletics).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
nāthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>give, grant, place, put, set; make; deliver [over, up]; yield</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the cohortative hê	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

Genesis 30:26a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾīshshâh (אִשָּׁה) [pronounced eesh-SHAW]	woman, wife	feminine plural noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #802 BDB #61
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally to, toward	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
y ^e lâdîym (יְלָדָיִם) [pronounced y ^e -law-DEEM]	children, descendants	masculine plural noun and the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #3206 BDB #409
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who, whom; where	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
ʿâbad (עָבַד) [pronounced ġaw ^b -VAHD]	to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #5647 BDB #712
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	you; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally to you, toward you	sign of the direct object affixed to a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê; pausal form	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

The NET Bible: *Following the imperative, the cohortative with the prefixed conjunction indicates purpose or result.*³⁴²

Translation: Give [to me] my wives and my children, [for] whom I have served you and I will go.

Jacob could not just leave in the middle of the night; nor did he necessarily want to. His family had too many moving parts; there were 12³⁴³ children and 2 wives and 2 mistresses. In the ancient world, a mistress was not a woman hidden from the wife but she was a part of the family as was the wife.

Genesis 30:26a Give [to me] my wives and my children, [for] whom I have served you and I will go.

³⁴² From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

³⁴³ 12 includes Dinah.

“Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you” (Commentators)

The NET Bible: *In one sense Laban had already “given” Jacob his two daughters as wives (Gen 29:21, 28). Here Jacob was asking for permission to take his own family along with him on the journey back to Canaan.*³⁴⁴

Matthew Henry: *[Jacob] was desirous to go to Canaan, though he had a great family to take with him, and no provision yet made for them. He had got wives and children with Laban, but nothing else; yet he does not solicit Laban to give him either a portion with his wives or the maintenance of some of his children. No, all his request is, Give me my wives and my children, and send me away.*³⁴⁵

H. C. Leupold: *Since Jacob had pledged himself to seven years of additional service for the possession of Rachel, he could not strictly call his whole family his own until the second seven years were fulfilled. He now wants Laban to acknowledge the fulfilment of his contract by giving him his wives and his children that he might depart. In a sense all had been Laban’s or at least under Laban’s acknowledged jurisdiction. Laban is asked to admit that this is cancelled.*

H. C. Leupold continues: *Jacob’s experience with Laban has not been such as to make Jacob desirous of staying with him any longer. Jacob realizes that the service he has rendered during all these years was in an eminent sense marked by faithfulness, so he remarks, “thou knowest what service I have rendered to thee.” Jacob implies that what he has done will bear closest scrutiny and must be acknowledged to be a faithful performance of his own part of the agreement. There is no obsequiousness 2.818 about Jacob’s attitude, no diffidence. He knows his father-in-law must be dealt with firmly.*³⁴⁶

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Let me point out that Jacob uses the word $\gamma^{\text{e}}\text{l}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{d}\ddot{\text{y}}\text{m}$ (יְלָדָיִם) [pronounced $\gamma^{\text{e}}\text{-law-DEEM}$] which means *children, descendants*; rather than the word for *sons* ($\text{b}\ddot{\text{a}}\text{n}\ddot{\text{y}}\text{m}$). This implies to me that this discussion takes place after Dinah is born—and it is still possible for Leah to bear 7 children over a period of 7 years. Although I will discuss at least one other option for the time of this conversation, I lean toward this discussion to take place a year or so after the end of year 14.

Genesis 30:26b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong’s #3588 BDB #471
’attâh (אַתָּה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong’s #859 BDB #61

³⁴⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

³⁴⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

³⁴⁶ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Genesis 30:26b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
yâda' (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHG]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
'ăbôdâh (עֲבֹדָה) [pronounced gû ^b -vo-DAWH]	<i>labour, work, service</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5656 & #5647 BDB #715
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'âbad (עָבַד) [pronounced gaw ^b -VAHD]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712

Translation: For you [certainly] know [of] the [excellent] service [lit., my service] which I gave [lit., served] to you.”

There is an excess of *you's* in this verse; but that indicates an emphasis upon Laban, to whom Jacob is speaking. Laban knows of Jacob's service. Jacob may have been a roguish sort, but he did not do these things in order to get out of work. He worked hard for Laban, and Laban knew this. This is the kind of thing a man emphasizes when he wants a raise. Notice that Jacob nowhere says, “You know that God has given me and my descendants that land in Canaan, so I must return to that place.”

Genesis 30:26 Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served you, and let me go. For you know my service which I have done you.”

Genesis 30:26 Give [to me] my wives and my children, [for] whom I have served you and I will go. For you [certainly] know [of] the [excellent] service [lit., my service] which I gave [lit., served] to you.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

It seems clear that Jacob has worked well under Laban. He is ready to go (or, he seems ready to go to Laban), and Laban recognizes that Jacob has been helpful to him. So Laban will persuade Jacob to stay. We don't know for how long, but all of this would take place at least 16 years after Jacob began to work for Laban.

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob's request implies that Laban as the head of the family possessed control over his married daughters and their children, who were included in Jacob's wages.*³⁴⁷

³⁴⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:26.

I believe that the Cambridge Bible misinterprets Jacob's request to Laban. Jacob is simply pointing out that he has fulfilled the conditions of their agreement in order to marry his two wives; and now he would like to depart with his family. I think that Jacob asking permission here is simply common courtesy; but with an eye towards the fact that Laban is not a man to be trusted.

Although I have introduced some various options as to when this occurs, it is possible that Dinah has not yet been born, if we are speaking of this conversation taking place immediately at the end of year 14.

Genesis 30:25–26 And it is, when Rachel gave birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away so that I may go to my place and to my land. Give [to me] my wives and my children, [for] whom I have served you and I will go. For you [certainly] know [of] the [excellent] service [lit., *my service*] which I gave [lit., *served*] to you." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:25–26 And after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban and said to him, "Send me away so that I may return to my place of origin; to my land. Give to me my wives and Children for whom I have served you, and I will leave. You certainly know of the excellent service which I have given to you for them." (Kukis paraphrase)

Jacob has more than earned his keep from Laban. He was worked for at least 20 years and Laban has been greatly prospered. Laban married his daughters and it cost him very little. He does not want to lose Jacob. What he will say will be surprising.

And so says unto him Laban, "If please I have found favor in your [two] eyes, I have learned by divination [or, *experience*] and so is blessing me Yehowah in a cause of you." And so he says, "Define your wages upon me and I will give [it]."

Genesis
30:27–28

Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, I have learned by divination [or, *experience*] that Yehowah is blessing me on account of you." He also said, "Specify your wages against me and I will give [you what you ask for]."

Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, let me tell you that I have learned by experience that Jehovah is blessing me because of you." He also said, "Specify your wages against me and I will give you what you ask for."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says unto him Laban, "If please I have found favor in your [two] eyes, I have learned by divination [or, <i>experience</i>] and so is blessing me Y ^e howah in a cause of you." And so he says, "Define your wages upon me and I will give [it]."
Targum (Onkelos)	And Laban said to him, If now I have found grace in thine eyes, I have proved that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Certify [Or, "distinguish."] thy wages with me, and I will give.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	But Laban said to him, If now I have found grace in thy eyes, [JERUSALEM. I have observed.] I have observed by divination that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint thy wages with me, and I will give thee.
Revised Douay-Rheims	Laban said to him: Let me find favour in your sight: I have learned by experience, that God has blessed me for your sake. Appoint your wages which I shall give you.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Laban said to him, "If now I have found favour in your eyes, stay here, for I have divined that Mar-Yah has blessed me for your sake." He said, "Appoint me your wages, and I will give it."

Peshitta (Syriac)	And Laban said to <u>Jacob</u> , If I have found favor in your eyes, I have proven by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake. Then he said, Specify your wages, and I will give them.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Laban said to him, If I have found grace in your sight, I would augur well, for the Lord has blessed me at your coming in. Appoint me your wages, and I will give <i>them</i> .

Significant differences: The Syriac has *Jacob* rather than *him*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban said, If you will let me say so, do not go away; for I have seen by the signs that the Lord has been good to me because of you. Say then what your payment is to be and I will give it.
Easy English	Laban said to Jacob 'If you are happy with me then please stay. I know that the Lord has blessed me. That is because you are here.' Laban continued, 'Say what you want. And I will pay it.'
Easy-to-Read Version—2006	Laban said to him, "Please, let me say something. I know that the Lord has blessed me because of you. Tell me what I should pay you, and I will give it to you."
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob replied, "You know well what my work has meant to you and how your livestock has flourished under my care. The little you had when I arrived has increased greatly; everything I did resulted in blessings for you. Isn't it about time that I do something for my own family?" "So, what should I pay you?" At least 2 translations attribute v. 27 to Jacob.
Names of God Bible	Laban replied, "Listen to me. I've learned from the signs I've seen that Yahweh has blessed me because of you." So he offered, "Name your wages, and I'll pay them."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Laban said to him, "Do me this favor. I've discovered by a divine sign that the Lord has blessed me because of you, so name your price and I will pay it."
Contemporary English V.	But Laban told him, "If you really are my friend, stay on, and I'll pay whatever you ask. I'm sure the LORD has blessed me because of you."
The Living Bible	"Please don't leave me," Laban replied, "for a fortune-teller that I consulted told me that the many blessings I've been enjoying are all because of your being here. How much of a raise do you need to get you to stay? Whatever it is, I'll pay it."
New Berkeley Version	Laban answered him, "I beg of you to stay if you care enough for me; for I have divined [This may mean divination, that is, consulting omens; else, that he had so reasoned out for himself.] that the LORD has blessed me on your account"; then added, "Name to me your wages and I will pay them."
New Life Version	But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me. I have learned that the Lord has brought good to me because of you." Then he said, "Tell me what you want to be paid, and I will pay it."
New Living Translation	"Please listen to me," Laban replied. "I have become wealthy, for the Lord has blessed me because of you. Tell me how much I owe you. Whatever it is, I'll pay it."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And Laban replied: 'If I've found favor in your eyes, it's a good sign for me, because Jehovah has blest me by your coming here. Now, tell me how much I owe you and I'll pay it.'
Beck's American Translation	"If you're kind to me—" Laban answered him. "I've watched the signs, and the LORD has blessed me on account of you." He added, "Set the wages I should pay you, and I'll pay them."

International Standard V	Then Laban responded, "If I've found favor in your sight, please stay with me, because I've learned through divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wage, and I'll give it to you."
Revised Knox Bible	Let me ask a favour of you, said Laban. Proof needs none that it is for your sake God has made me prosper so. Work for me still, and name your own hire.
Translation for Translators	But Laban said to him, "If you are pleased with me, stay here, because I have found out by performing a magic ritual that Yahweh has blessed me because of what you have done for me. Tell me what you want me to pay you for continuing to work for me, and that is what I will pay you."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Laban was to say: I am to have found favor in your eye, for I am to have observed the signs, even Jehovah was to give favor to me, by your turnings. He was to say: Be specifying your wages, and I was to give them.
Conservapedia	Laban said to him, "Please stay, if you like me at all. The auguries have told me that the LORD's blessings on me are due to you." He said, "Specify your wages, and I will pay them."
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Laban persuades Jacob to become his Chief Shepherd But he replied ; " Name your wages to me and I will give you them."
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then said Laban unto him: If I have found favour in your sight (for I suppose that the Lord has blessed me for your sake) appoint what your reward shall be, and I will give it you.
HCSB	So Jacob said to him, "You know what I have done for you and your herds. For you had very little before I came, but now your wealth has increased. The Lord has blessed you because of me. And now, when will I also do something for my own family?" Laban asked, "What should I give you?" Vv. 25–26 are included for context. I did not see anyone else translated Jacob as saying the words of v. 27.
H. C. Leupold	And Laban said unto him: If I have found favour in thy sight I have consulted the omens and find that Yahweh hath blessed me for thy sake. Besides he said: Fix the wages I am to pay thee, and I will pay them.
Tree of Life Version	But Laban said to him, "If I've found favor in your eyes—I've looked for good omens, and <i>ADONAI</i> has blessed me because of you." Moreover he said, "Name your own price and I'll pay it."
Urim-Thummim Version	Then Laban replied to him, if I have found acceptance in your eyes I have divined that YHWH has blessed me because of you. So he said, specify to me your wages and I will give it to you.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Laban said to him, "So in your judgement, have I pleased you? I can already predict the answer, and Yahweh will bless me because of you." And he said to him: "Affirm your wages for me, and I shall give them."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Laban said, "If I have won your friendship... I have learned from signs that Yahweh has blessed me because of you." He then added, "Say what you want for wages and I will pay you."
The Heritage Bible	And Laban said to him, Please, if there is grace to me in your eyes, I whisper a spell [whisper a spell , nachash, to hiss, to divine, to whisper a magic spell. See Deut 18:10- 11. Laban did not hesitate to practice witchcraft to get what he wanted, but God out maneuvered him. See Gen 31:30.]: Jehovah will bless me on account of you. And he said, Puncture out [puncture out , naqab, to puncture as in making a mark in something, or puncturing it so as render it useless, or to violate it with words. The word is used in the sense of punching out names to specify them, 1Chr

12:31, to puncture a hole in a bag to render it useless, Hag 1:6, to puncture the Name of Jehovah in cursing and thus to blaspheme, Lev 24:16, and other similar uses.] to me your wages, and I will give it.

New American Bible (2002)	Laban answered him: "If you will please..." I have learned through divination that it is because of you that God has blessed me. So," he continued, "state what wages you want from me, and I will pay them."
New American Bible (2011)	Laban answered him: "If you will please! I have learned through divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you." He continued, "State the wages I owe you, and I will pay them."
New Jerusalem Bible	Laban replied, 'If I have done what pleases you . . . I have learnt by divination that Yahweh has blessed me because of you. So name your wages,' he added, 'and I will pay.'
New RSV	But Laban said to him, 'If you will allow me to say so, I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me because of you; name your wages, and I will give them.'
Revised English Bible	Laban answered, "I should like to say this -- I have become prosperous and the LORD has blessed me through you. So now tell me what wages I owe you, and I shall give you them."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Lavan answered him, "If you regard me favorably, then please listen: I have observed the signs that Adonai has blessed me on account of you. (v) Name your wages," he said; "I will pay them."
The Complete Tanach	And Laban said to him, "If only I have now found favor in your eyes! I have divined, and the Lord has blessed me for your sake."

I have divined: He was a diviner. [He said:] I ascertained with my divination that a blessing came to me through you. When you came here, I had no sons, as it is said (above, 29:6): "and behold, his daughter Rachel is coming with the sheep" (is it possible that he has sons, yet sends his daughter along with the shepherds?). Now, however, he had sons, as it is said (31: 1): "And he heard the words of Laban's sons." - [from Tanchuma Shemoth 16]

Then he said, "Specify your wages for me, and I will give [them]."

Specify your wages: Heb. הִבְדִּיקָה, [to be interpreted] as the Targum renders: שִׁיבֵהָ אֶתְּ הַגָּאָה, specify your wages.

exeGesés companion Bible	And Laban says to him, I beseech you, if I have found charism in your eyes - for I prognosticate that Yah Veh blesses me for your sake. And he says, Appoint me your hire and I give.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And Laban said to him, Please, if I have found favor in your eyes, stay. I have seen omens, also YAHWEH has blessed me because of you. And he said, Set your wages on me and I will give.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	But Laban said to him, "If you will indulge me, I have learned by divination that the Lord has blessed me on your account." And he continued, "Name the wages due from me, and I will pay you."
Kaplan Translation	'Haven't I earned your friendship? [Literally, 'If I have found favor in your eyes.']* replied Laban. 'I have made use of divination [Some say that (Rachel stole the household deities from her father Laban)...was to prevent her father from worshipping them (Bereshith Rabbah 74; Rashi). Others maintain that it was to prevent him from using them in divination to find Jacob (Tanchuma 12; Rashbam; Ibn Ezra; cf. Genesis 30:27; Hosea 3:4, Zechariah 10:2). Still others maintain that Rachel took them to gain her father's pardon (Josephus 1:19:9).] and have learned

	that it is because of you that God has blessed me.' 'Just name your price!' said [Laban]. 'I will give it!'
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Lavan said unto him, Now, if I have found chen (favor, grace) in thine eyes, tarry; for I have learned by nachash (divination) that Hashem hath made a brocha upon me for thy sake.
<i>The Scriptures</i> 1998	And he said, Specify thy sachar (wages, reward), and I will pay it. And Laban said to him, "If I have found favour in your eyes, please stay, for I have diligently watched that הויה has blessed me for your sake." And he said, "Name me your wages, and I give it."

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, stay with me; for I have learned [from the omens in divination and by experience] that the Lord has blessed me because of you." He said, "Name your wages, and I will give it [to you]."
The Expanded Bible	Laban said to him, "If I have pleased you [found grace in your eyes], please stay. I know [or have learned by divination that] the Lord has blessed me because of you. Tell me what I should pay you [Name your price], and I will give it to you."
Kretzmann's Commentary	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. Laban couched his request in the most careful language, although he had only selfish motives in asking Jacob to stay. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. He appears to yield unconditionally to any demand which Jacob might make, but he was really calculating upon Jacob's willingness and humility.
NET Bible®	But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, please stay here [The words "please stay here" have been supplied in the translation for clarification and for stylistic reasons.], for I have learned by divination [Or perhaps "I have grown rich and the Lord has blessed me" (cf. NEB). See J. Finkelstein, "An Old Babylonian Herding Contract and Genesis 31:38f.," JAOS 88 (1968): 34, n. 19.] that the Lord has blessed me on account of you." He added, "Just name your wages – I'll pay whatever you want [<i>Heb</i> "set your wage for me so I may give [it]."]"
The Pulpit Commentary	And Laban said unto him (having learnt by fourteen years' acquaintance with Jacob to know the value of a good shepherd), I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes (the clause is elliptical, the A. V. rightly supplying), tarry: for (this word also is not in the original), I have learned by experience—literally, I have divined; not necessarily by means of serpents (Gesenius, Wordsworth, 'Speaker's Commentary'), or even by consulting his gods (Delitzsch, Kalisch), but perhaps by close observation and minute inspection (Murphy, Bush). The LXX. render οἰωνισάμην; the Vulgate by experimento didici—that the Lord—Jehovah. Nominally a worshipper of the true God, Laban was in practice addicted to heathen superstitions (cf. Genesis 31:19, Genesis 31:32)—hath blessed me (with material prosperity) for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages. Literally, distinctly specify thy hire upon me, i.e. which I will take upon me as binding. Laban's caution to be clear and specific in defining the terms of any engagement he might enter into was much needed, and would doubtless not be neglected by Jacob, whose past experience must have taught him he was dealing with one who, in respect of covenants and contracts, was eminently treacherous. And I will give it.
The Voice	Laban: If you look upon me with favor, please stay here. You are a good omen. The Eternal One has blessed me because of you. Name your price, and I will give it to you.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Lavan ^[White] said to him please, if I found beauty in your eyes, I will divine and YHWH ^[He Exists] respected me on account of you, and he said, pierce through your wage upon me and I will give,...
Concordant Literal Version	And saying to him is Laban, "If, pray, I find grace in your eyes! I augur that Yahweh's blessing me is due to your coming. And saying is he, "Specify your hire to me, and I will give it.
Context Group Version	And Laban said to him, If now I have found favor in your eyes, [tarry]: [for] I have used divination and [found that] YHWH has esteemed me for your sake. And he said, Appoint me your wages, and I will give it.
Darby Translation	And Laban said to him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes -- I have discovered that Jehovah has blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint to me thy wages, and I will give it.
Modern English Version	Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. For I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me on account of you." He said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."
NASB	But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account." He continued, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."
New European Version	Laban said to him, If now I have found favour in your eyes, stay here, for I have divined that Yahweh has blessed me for your sake. He said, Appoint me your wages, and I will give it.
New King James Version	And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."
Third Millennium Bible	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." And he said, "Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it."
Updated Bible Version 2.11	And Laban said to him, If now I have found favor in your eyes, [tarry]: [for] I have used magic and [found that] Yahweh has blessed me for your sake. And he said, Appoint me your wages, and I will give it.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Laban said to him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, <i>tarry: for</i> I have learned by experience, that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.
Young's Updated LT	And Laban says unto him, "If, I pray you, I have found grace in your eyes—I have observed diligently that Jehovah does bless me for your sake." He says also, "Define your hire to me, and I give."

The gist of this passage: Laban understands that he has been blessed by God through Jacob. He therefore throws it out to Jacob to make an offer to keep him there.

27-28

Genesis 30:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55

Genesis 30:27a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'el (אל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Lâbân (לַבָּן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
'îm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
nâ' (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	a primitive particle of incitement and entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609
mâtsâ' (מָצָא) [pronounced maw-TSAW]	<i>to attain to, to find, to detect, to happen upon, to come upon, to find unexpectedly, to discover; to meet (encounter)</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #4672 BDB #592
chên (חֵן) [pronounced khayn]	<i>grace, favor, blessing</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2580 BDB #336
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced gay-nah-YIM]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

This phrase is literally *in your eyes*, but it can be translated *in your opinion, in your estimation, to your way of thinking, as you see [it]*. The dual and plural forms of this word appear to be identical. Possibly, this could also mean, *as you please, as you want, as you desire, whatever you think is right*.

Translation: Laban said to him, “Now, if I have found grace in your sight,...

Laban realizes that God has blessed him because of Jacob; and Laban would certainly prefer him to stay.

It is fascinating to hear this sort of language from Laban, and I automatically want to ascribe ill-motives to his words. It is my thinking that Laban simply wants to continue to manipulate circumstances so that they favor him. He certainly knows that Jacob is upset with him (or *upset* might be too strong of a term; maybe *leery* or more accurate), even though 7 years have passed since Laban bamboozled Jacob. So, in a way, Laban is saying, “If you can cut me a little slack, then let me see if we can come to an agreement.”

As a manipulator, Laban does not want to come off as some kind of villain. He accords Jacob his due respect and after this amount of time, Laban certainly recognizes that Jacob has been good for his business. So, the intent here is to keep Jacob on the ranch for as long as possible.

As an aside, Laban has sons who are watching his flocks, about whom little is said (apart from their apparent greediness for whatever Jacob earns in the next chapter). I would have to assume that Laban's sons are not yet cutting it as shepherds, or otherwise, Laban would quickly say, "Well, good luck to you, Jacob. I will just have my sons take over your responsibilities." Since they are not in the picture until Genesis 31, we may reasonably assume that they are young—perhaps even in their early or middle teens and that it is simply not time for them to assume so much responsibility. Assuming that Jacob is speaking to Laban here after 14 years of service, these boys are not really in the picture until Jacob serves Laban for another 6 years (recall that Rachel looked after Laban's flocks when Jacob met her). Laban's boys are possibly not old enough even at this time to assume these duties. Whatever the case—whether Laban's sons are shepherding for him now or not—they are likely not old enough to take over Jacob's responsibilities. So Laban has determined that he needs to hold onto Jacob for a few more years at least.

Interestingly enough, this is a sentence which Laban begins, but does not complete, or Jacob forgets when he said after. We find in v. 27 ellipsis of the latter clause—that is, we find the *if* but we do not have a *then*. Context should be clear enough to supply the apodosis. The full thrust of this verse is, *if I have found grace in your sight, remain with me and listen to my offer for your wages*. Laban recognizes that he has been blessed because of Jacob, therefore would like Jacob to remain with him; and is willing to pay for somewhat of a raise. Whether Laban left the tail end of this off because what he wanted was obvious; or whether Jacob simply forgot what Laban said next, we don't know.

H. C. Leupold: *Laban is quite deferential to this son-in-law whom he respects for his character and his success. He begins with the somewhat elaborate oriental courtesy: "If I have found favour in thy sight" — an ellipsis. Perhaps it involves a courteous protest like, "please don't talk about leaving,"*³⁴⁸

Genesis 30:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâchash (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced naw-KHAHSH]	<i>to practice divination, to divine; to observe signs or omens; to communicate with demons; to whisper</i>	1 st person singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #5172 BDB #638
<p>The full set of BDB meanings are: <i>to practice divination, divine, observe signs, learn by experience, diligently observe, practice fortunetelling, take as an omen</i>. However, that is for the word in general; and for the Piel stem, they only offer, <i>to practice divination; to observe the signs or omens</i>. I should mention that we only find the Piel in Scripture; but those other meanings ought to explain the differences in the translation of Genesis 30:27.</p>			
<p>Given the context, <i>learning by experience</i> seems to be the most applicable meaning. However, we ought not to miss the fact that these two sets of meanings are quite disparate.</p>			
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253

³⁴⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Genesis 30:27b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bârak ^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced <i>baw-RAHK^e</i>]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1288 BDB #138
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
gâlâl (לָלַג) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWL</i>]	<i>an circumstance, cause, reason</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1558 BDB #164

Together, the bēyth preposition and gâlâl mean *because of, on account of, for the sake of*.

Translation: ...I have learned by divination [or, experience] that Y^ehowah is blessing me on account of you."

There have been hints throughout that this family has drifted from Y^ehowah Elohim, and this is yet another one—that Laban has used some kind of divination to find that he is blessed by his association with Jacob.

God spoke to people in all kinds of ways prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, which has caused some confusion today. No one today hears the voice of God. We do not need to. His plan for our lives is so perfect that all we need is His Word and not only do we have guidance, but we have maturity and our lives are a greater spiritual impact today than at any time in the past. We do not need dreams to tell us what we are thinking; we do not need astrologers to tell us how our lives will turn out; and we do not need the voice of God to tell us whether we should make a left or a right turn. God is so perfect and His plan is so perfect, that all we need is His Word properly explained to us and we can lead out lives in glory to Him.

However, back then, God spoke in an audible voice; He came to men in dreams, He operated by divination—but, apparently, to only a very few select individuals. I think that it is quite likely that Laban actually recognizes that he has been blessed because of Jacob and that this blessing came from God. He sounds ready to give Jacob whatever Jacob wants and it sounds as though he intends to be fair. So Jacob is taken aback and is immediately on guard (or, if he is not, perhaps he should be). He should be careful about trusting Laban.

In order to pull the wool over one's eyes in a scam or a scheme, there has to be some truth there, but mixed with error. What Laban is admitting is quite true. He has been blessed, and he has been blessed by God because of Jacob. Laban readily admits to this, right from the start. No doubt, this catches Jacob's attention. In addition to this, there is some flattery involved. Laban is saying, "Listen, Jacob, I know that I am blessed by God because of you." That is a pretty flattering statement. Is this true? Certainly. Does Laban completely believe what he is saying? That is unclear. Personally, I think that he does believe this, for the most part.

Note the comments on this particular verb in the Hebrew exegesis above.

Genesis 30:27 And Laban said to him, "Please, if I have found favor in your eyes, stay. For I have seen omens, that Jehovah has blessed me for your sake."

Laban recognizes that he has been blessed because of Jacob. He had a so-so business before; and now his business (ranching) is booming. He appears to understand, to some degree, **blessing by association**.

I have seen omens is the Piel verb *nâchash* (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAHSH*], which means, *to practice divination, to divine; to observe signs or omens; to communicate with demons; to whisper*. Strong's #5172 BDB #638. We know very little about Laban and the things which he believed. We will later find out that he has small manufactured gods, which his daughter Rachel will take. Did Laban see some kind of wizard? Did he attempt to communicate with the spirits? This seems to be the suggestion; but it is not outright stated, apart from the use of this word and the pagan statues that we will find later.

However, we may certainly understand this word to mean, *to learn by (through) experience*; which is certainly logical here. Laban has watched Jacob over a period of 14 years. He may have had some suspicions about him at first, wondering why he shows up out of the blue with nothing in hand, even though he comes from a successful family. However, Laban has seen his business grow in the hands of Jacob. We do not know how many *hands* Laban employed or if Jacob was his sole shepherd; but Laban clearly was prospering with Jacob over his flock. Although Laban's sons will enter into the picture in the near future, we do not know whether they are shepherding flocks at this point in time or not.

So, by means of his experience with Jacob, Laban recognizes that God has blessed him through Jacob. This also suggests that, even though Jacob did not speak much about God at his arrival to Haran (unlike his grandfather's servant in Genesis 24), there was enough mutual understanding of Abraham's God between Laban and Jacob, for Laban to remark: "I pray you, if I have found favor in your eyes, tarry; for I have learned by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." (Niobi SB)

In the alternative, Laban is claiming some spiritual insight here—perhaps obtained through divination, magic or some sort of contact with God (by his claim)—that he is blessed because of Jacob. Let me propose two possibilities: (1) Laban uses this loaded word, which could be understood in two different ways; and he will allow Jacob to simply to sort it out in his own mind. Or, (2) Laban is trying to make out like he is very spiritual and in touch with the spiritual side of things (as his family in the west all appear to be); and that he recognizes, through spiritual discernment (by whatever means) that God has blessed him through Jacob.

That Laban has been blessed by having Jacob oversee his flocks—this should be obvious to anyone with the slightest sense of ancient wealth. Whether or not Laban is ahead of the game—whether or not he has been prospered by God—that ought to be a simple matter of observation. Most people can consider their net worth (however it is determined) and recognize where they were and where they are today. Laban would be looking back over a period of 14 years, and I would think it easy to recognize—not by using some sort of hocus pocus—to figure out that he has been greatly prospered over those years.

The spiritual discernment, which he appears to be claiming, is that, he knows that God has used Jacob to bless him.

Genesis 30:27 Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, I have learned by divination [or, experience] that Yehowah is blessing me on account of you."

There are two sets of fundamentally different meanings given to the key verb, so commentators line up, for the most part, on one side or the other.

Commentators on, "I have learned by divination..."

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *This verb is taken from a noun, which means a serpent. It seems to have such a meaning as, "to ascertain by means of a close, subtle, and insidious inspection."* Alford says that the word literally means, "I have used divination, I have learned by consulting omens."³⁴⁹

Clarke: *I have learned by experience* - יַתְּשַׁח *nichashti*, from תַּשַׁח *nachash*, to view attentively, to observe, to pry into. I have diligently considered the whole of your conduct, and marked the increase of my property, and find that the Lord has blessed me for your sake.³⁵⁰

Dr. Peter Pett: *"I have divined."* By means of divination Laban has become aware of Yahweh's influence in all this. He is not a worshipper of Yahweh but as with Balaam later (Numbers 22-24) Yahweh makes His way known through those who are not His.³⁵¹

Dr. Bob Utley: The word "divined" is from the root "hiss" or "whisper" (BDB 638 II). It is an attempt to know and control the future through physical means apart from trusting YHWH. It is condemned in Leviticus 19:26; Num. 23:23-24; and Deut. 18:10.³⁵²

The Cambridge Bible: *Lit. "I have observed signs."* The word occurs in Genesis 44:5; Genesis 44:15, where it is used of obtaining an answer by means of magic. Here Laban means he has "discerned" by clear indications. Perhaps there may be a reference to the custom of consulting the household gods or teraphim. Cf. Genesis 31:19. LXX οἰωνισάμην, Lat. *experimento didici*.³⁵³

College Press Bible Study: *Laban deferentially replies that he has "divined" that Jehovah was blessing Jacob's endeavors, and through His blessing of Jacob's service was indirectly blessing him, i.e., Laban himself, with material prosperity, What is the import of the word "divined" as used here (Genesis 30:27)? Does it mean simply close observation and minute inspection (Murphy)? Or is there a reference here to augury, divination, or something of the kind? Leupold gives it, he had "consulted omens."* "What heathen device Laban had resorted to in consulting the omens cannot be determined. But the act as such does reveal a departure from the true service of God and practically stamps him as an idolator. His reference to God as Yahweh is merely a case of accommodating himself to Jacob's mode of speech. Laban did not know Him as such or believe in Him."³⁵⁴

Whedon: *The words indicate that Laban had become, to some extent at least, involved in heathen and idolatrous practices. Compare Genesis 31:19; Genesis 30:32. Some, however, take the word in the wider signification of diligent inquiry and examination, a meaning not sustained by general usage. Laban rather claims to have discovered, by some sort of augury, that Jacob's God, Jehovah, had favoured him for Jacob's sake.*³⁵⁵

H. C. Leupold: *What heathen device Laban had resorted to in consulting the omens cannot be determined. But the act as such does reveal a departure from the true service of God and practically stamps him as an idolater. His reference to God as Yahweh is merely a case of accommodating himself to Jacob's mode of speech. Laban did not know Him as such or believe in Him. Any man with even a measure of insight could have determined without augury what Laban claimed had been revealed to him by augury. Jacob's faithful service of Yahweh was not kept hidden by him.*³⁵⁶

³⁴⁹ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:27.

³⁵⁰ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:27 (slightly edited).

³⁵¹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:27-28.

³⁵² Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:27.

³⁵³ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:27.

³⁵⁴ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25-43.

³⁵⁵ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874-1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:27.

³⁵⁶ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Commentators on, “I have learned by divination...”

Henry M. Morris: *Laban had been somewhat perplexed by the fact that Jacob’s care of his flocks had resulted in such a great increase in his own wealth. Accordingly, he had in some way either carried out ascertain divination practices of his own, or else consulted some kind of soothsayer or oracle, seeking the secret. Laban, it becomes clear, though related to Abraham and knowing about Jehovah, had become to some degree a pagan mystic. At any rate, God so overruled his enchantments that, even through them, he had gotten the message that Jacob was under the special care of Jehovah and that it was because of this that God had bless his service.*³⁵⁷

This may be the correct understanding of Laban and what he said. He will have some small deity statues in his tent which Rachel will later steal from him. That he had been prospered has to be quite obvious to him.

Most of the words related to this word are related to divination of some form. This may be the only passage where *to learn from experience* as a translation is reasonable. When all of the passages have one meaning; and one passage has a different meaning, then sometimes a reassessment is needed for the odd passage.

My take on this—and this is admittedly has little basis—Laban uses a word which could be understood in either way, and it kind of makes him seem a little more *plugged in*, as it were, to have these special messages coming to him from the universe. Laban, as a normal businessman, can look at his flocks, check his books, and tell that he is doing much better than before (part of the reason is, populations grow exponentially and not linearly³⁵⁸).

Is Laban saying something like this to suggest that he has learned from a paranormal experience, just because it sounds better? There is no evidence that Laban experienced anything paranormal, outside of perhaps his own fertile imagination.

Simple bookkeeping and observation would tell Laban that his business is doing well. The divination comes into the picture in this way: Laban says he knows that this blessing is ultimately from Y^ehowah through Jacob.

Apart from the divination part, what Laban is saying here is quite reasonable.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Application: Sadly, in our culture, many people do not recognize God’s blessing. There is a very active contingent of atheists in this nation who would love to see Christianity removed or taken down a notch. They do not see any connection between believers in the United States and the great blessing conferred upon the United States by God. Many will argue that the United States is not a very great nation and that there are nations all over the world which are better nations where people are better off (for some reason, these people never seem to move to one of these better nations).

Unbelievers do not believe that there is a God, they think that Christians are the cause of most wars (they will argue the reformation—knowing nothing about it—and even claim that Hitler was a Christian³⁵⁹). And they honestly (or dishonestly) believe that, either a removal of Christians or a concentrated effort to stifle Christians and their influence would be to the betterment of our country. Atheists and the like will make these arguments, despite having well-documented evidence that Russian and China, in trying to stomp out opposition and Christianity, killed millions upon millions of people in the 20th century. They neither made their nations better nor did they wipe out Christianity. There are a great many liberal atheists in the United States; but there are very few who decide to become a Russian and Chinese citizen in order to enjoy a better society. Do they honestly believe what they proclaim? Laban, not the greatest man in the Bible, is at least able to recognize God’s hand in his blessing.

³⁵⁷ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; p. 471.

³⁵⁸ A population growing exponentially means, there will be a curve upwards. Linear growth means, the growth can be plotted by a straight line. An exponential curve will always overtake a linear curve.

³⁵⁹ This, in their minds, makes WWII into a religious war.

As we have seen, Jacob did not start out by being the greatest person in the world; and as we study his life more, that will continue to be the case. However, he is a good worker. It is typical for a person to have good points and bad. It is typical for the Bible to reveal positive and negative aspects of individuals.

This suggests that all of this is taking place almost exactly 14 years later, after Jacob fulfilled his obligation to Laban. Laban wants him to remain, and will try to work things out between them. Perhaps Laban, after 14 years, stated what he would pay Jacob; and that has been their agreement up to this point.

There is nothing which requires all of Jacob's children to be born; and then Jacob goes to Laban about his wages. There could be some overlap here, where some children are born after this talk with Laban (although, clearly Joseph was born before Jacob spoke to Laban³⁶⁰). However, in general, I would assume that this information is given in chronological order—the births and the renegotiation of wages. Furthermore, we have the birth of Joseph tied directly to Jacob wanting to leave and speaking to Laban. Since he is the youngest child, we must assume that the other children have all been born already.

Many lessons ago, I suggested that Rachel was given to Jacob prior to him working for her. This is further supported by the time factor in this narrative. If she became his wife in year 14, and gave birth in year 15 or 16, then she would not have been panicked about having no children. However, if she watches her sister have children, one right after the other; and the two maids, then her concern of her barrenness is appropriate.

Genesis 30:27 Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, I have learned by divination [or, experience] that Yehowah is blessing me on account of you." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:27 Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, let me tell you that I have learned by experience that Jehovah is blessing me because of you."

As we have studied, Laban may have said, "I have learned by divination." It would be common observation and bookkeeping which would tell Laban that he is making money—that his business was doing well. The *divination* part of it is figuring out *how* or *why* he was doing so well. He recognizes that he is blessed by means of Jacob.

Laban Recognizes that God Has Blessed Him through Jacob (Many Commentators)

J. Vernon McGee: *This is quite interesting. You may recall that Abimelech, king of Gerar, found that he was blessed when Isaac was in his midst. Now Uncle Laban has discovered that God is with Jacob and has blessed him for Jacob's sake. So Uncle Laban says, "My boy, don't rush off; don't leave me. I've been blessed, and I want to raise your wages."*³⁶¹

Dr. Peter Pett: *[I]t is to Jacob's credit that Laban does not want him to leave. He recognises the prosperity that has come to the tribe through Jacob's presence and activities. And he acknowledges that this is partly due to the God whom Jacob worships, even Yahweh.*³⁶²

Matthew Henry: *Churlish selfish men know how to give good words when it is to serve their own ends. Laban found that his stock had wonderfully increased with Jacob's good management, and he owns it, with very good expressions of respect both to God and Jacob: I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for thy sake. Observe, 1. 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. 2. Laban's lesson. He owns that his prosperity was owing to God's blessing: The Lord has blessed me. Note, worldly men, who choose their portion in this life, are often blessed with an abundance of this world's goods. Common blessings are given plentifully to many that have no title to covenant-blessings.*³⁶³

³⁶⁰ It is possible that Dinah was born later.

³⁶¹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

³⁶² Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:27–28.

³⁶³ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

Laban Recognizes that God Has Blessed Him through Jacob (Many Commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[Laban] had found, from long observation, that the blessing of heaven rested on Jacob, and that his stock had wonderfully increased under Jacob's management. This was a remarkable testimony that good men are blessings to the places where they reside. Men of the world are often blessed with temporal benefits on account of their pious relatives, though they have not always, like Laban, the wisdom to discern, or the grace to acknowledge it.*³⁶⁴

I give Laban some credit for recognizing that he had been blessed through his association with Jacob.

Trapp did not; he said this of Laban: *This miserable muckworm, so he may advance his own ends, abased himself to his servants, colloquing or anything, to curry favour, and compass commodity. But he that is swallowed up of the earth (as Korah was), his ears stopped, his heart stuffed, and all passages for God's Spirit obstructed by it, shall have earth enough when he dies: his mouth shall be filled with a spadeful of mould, and his never-enough quit with fire-enough, in the bottom of hell.*³⁶⁵ A bit harsh, in my estimation, particularly since Laban, insofar as I can tell, has believed in the Revealed God.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:28

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
nâkab (בָּכַן) [pronounced naw-KA ^{BV}]	<i>bore [a hole], perforate; thrust through; separate, distinguish; designate, specify, call by name; curse [to pierce with cursing]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative with the cohortative hê	Strong #5344 BDB #666
sâkâr (שָׂכָר) [pronounced saw-KAWR]	<i>remuneration, hire, wages</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #7939 BDB #969
'al (לְעַ) [pronounced gah/]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752

³⁶⁴ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:27.

³⁶⁵ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:27.

Genesis 30:28

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678

Translation: He also said, “Specify your wages against me and I will give [you what you ask for].”

On a few occasions, we have a person speaking, and then, he speaks some more, and we have additional words like, *and he also said*. In the English, we understand this to mean something like, *oh, by the way, he also said this*. Whether the Hebrew has the same connotation, I could not say. Perhaps this was edited in at a later time (which could have been added by the original author).

This is a rather long conversation and Jacob later remembers bits and pieces of it and records it for us. Recall that before, Laban said roughly the same thing to Jacob. “You can’t work for me for free, just because we are relatives—tell me your price, and I will give it!” Whereupon, Jacob said, “I will work 7 years in order to marry your daughter, Rachel.” So, Laban is trying the same thing. “Look, *you* tell me what is fair; you tell me what you want to be paid; I am sure we can work something out.” In the previous chapter, I speculated about the power of suggestion and that Laban knew what Jacob would ask for and the time he would offer because this had been suggested to Jacob (probably by someone who appeared to be a neutral 3rd party). That was pure speculation, as there are no clues that I could point to in order to back that up. Manipulators are smart and Laban is very smart. I think the first time, he did set up Jacob using the power of suggestion. However, this second time, I don’t think Laban did that.

What Jacob suggested the first time makes perfect sense. He was clearly in love with Rachel; and all Laban had to do for a month was somehow get Jacob to think about the figure 7 years. But this time, it is not clear what Jacob wants. Is he just mad and disgusted and wants to leave? Can he be reasoned with? Laban wants to keep Jacob on, but he also tricked Jacob. Now, by telling Jacob from the jump, “Tell me what you want to make,” Laban can always reject Jacob’s salary demands.

Laban here is willing to pay him whatever he desires. Laban is essentially giving Jacob a blank check. That has worked for him well in the past. Laban’s approach, and his need to keep Jacob on, tells us a number of things: (1) Laban has too many sheep and goats to be handled by his own sons; or, (2) Laban’s sons are too young to be completely trusted with all of his sheep (both are strong possibilities). (3) Laban is too old to manage his flocks personally. (4) Laban means what he says, that he recognizes that God, through Jacob, has blessed him (I have no reason to doubt what he says).

Genesis 30:28 He also said, “Specify your wages against me and I will give [you what you ask for].” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:28 He also said, “Specify your wages against me and I will give [you what you ask for].”

Laban to Jacob: “Name your salary...” (Various Commentators)

College Press Bible Study: *Laban, an eminently selfish man, was ready to go to almost any limit to retain a man whose service had been so advantageous to himself. “He makes Jacob a proposition which at once substantially alter’s Jacob’s status. From the position of a bond servant he is raised to that of a partner who may freely dictate his own terms. Now, indeed such an offer is not to be despised, for it puts Jacob in a position where he can build up a small fortune of his own and removes him from the necessity of returning home practically a penniless adventurer, though a man with a good-sized family.”*³⁶⁶

Gill: *“Say what you will have, fix what salary you think is sufficient, and I will agree to it, and punctually pay it”: this Laban craftily said, not choosing to propose anything himself, but leaving it to Jacob, knowing very well the honesty and modesty of Jacob, that he would mention less wages than he could have the face to offer him.*³⁶⁷

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Laban was willing to make almost any bargain with Jacob that would keep him working for him since he profited so much from Jacob. Seven years prior Laban let Jacob name his own wages and had gotten the better end of the bargain and now he does the same by letting Jacob name his own wages. All Jacob would have to do is name his price and Laban assured him that he would meet it, if Jacob would only keep working for him. Since Laban had no other daughters to offer Jacob, the agreement between himself and Jacob would have to be an actual payment of money or property.*

Wenstrom continues: *Laban’s statement “name your wages” reveals that he is always occupied with money and echoes the first deal that he made with Jacob and anticipates that he intends to deceive Jacob once again. This statement also indicates that Laban is proposing a change of status for Jacob, going from an indenture servant to a partner since he lets Jacob name his terms and yet it reveals that Laban views his relationship with Jacob on a purely economic level rather than a blood relationship.*³⁶⁸

H. C. Leupold: *Laban is ready to go almost any limit to retain a man whose services have been so advantageous to himself. Laban is an eminently selfish man. He makes Jacob a proposition which at once substantially alters Jacob’s status. From the position of a bound servant he is raised to that of a partner who may freely dictate his own terms. Now, indeed, such an offer is not to be despised, for it puts Jacob in a position where he can build up a small fortune of his own and so removes him from the necessity of returning home practically a penniless adventurer, though a man with a good-sized family.*³⁶⁹

I do not think that Laban fully appreciates that Jacob will be making money off of him—and that will become an irritant to Laban, as well as to his sons.

The end result for Jacob is, he could build up an estate for himself and his family, which would allow him to move, if he believed that to be his best option in life. I do not doubt that Jacob has some negative thoughts about Laban, after being tricked into marrying one daughter that he did not want to marry.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

³⁶⁶ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:27–43.

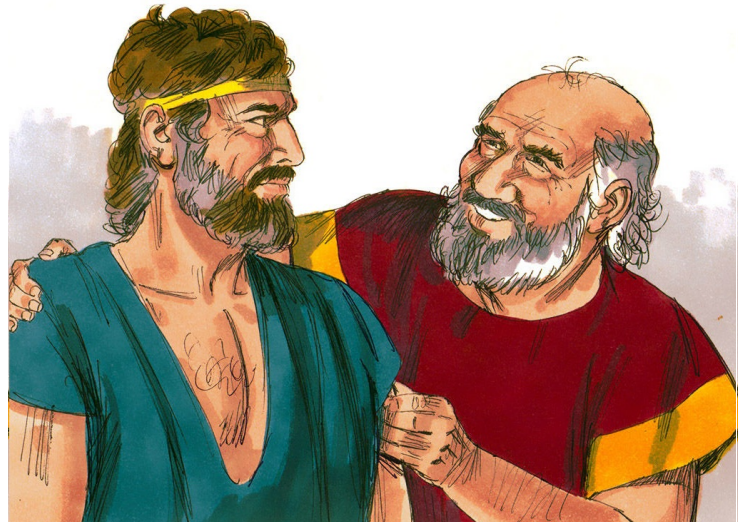
³⁶⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:28 (edited).

³⁶⁸ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 478); accessed September 9, 2017.

³⁶⁹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Jacob told Laban that he wanted to return to his homeland (a graphic); from [Free Bible Images](#); accessed September 15, 2017.

Bear in mind that all of Jacob's true blessings are in the Land of Promise; his blessings are in Canaan—not where he has been living for the past 14 years. This has to be somewhere in the back of Jacob's mind; but it is apparently not in the forefront, because Jacob never speaks of his promised heritage. In fact, I doubt that Jacob has put it together in his brain that God is blessing him with many children, all of whom would inherit the land (along with their descendants).



Application: What God does in our lives is not always immediately apparent. Sometimes we need some perspective on our lives, and we are able to look back and think, “God really came through.” As a much younger believer, I recall R. B. Thieme, Jr. teaching about various kinds of tests, and I told God, “I’d like to try the prosperity test.” One day—I think I was sitting in my fireplace pit, possibly taking notes on what I was being taught (listening to a Thieme lesson), and then I looked around me and thought, “I am in the midst of prosperity.” It was a fascinating revelation at the time.

My point being, Abraham had one son who was in the line of promise; and he had only one son in the line of promise; but Jacob will have 11 sons right now, all of whom will become the patriarchs for nation Israel. God is starting to fulfill His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I do not think that Jacob is fully cognizant of this. It may take up a small part of his brain; but much of his thinking is devoted to his wives, his family, various conflicts which occur in his family; and what to do regarding Laban. Somewhere, maybe way, way back in the recesses of his mind, Jacob gives some thought to God's close involvement in his life.

Genesis 30:28 And he said, “Appoint your wages and I will give.”

Here, we have an circumstance where Laban appears to be telling Jacob, “Look, I recognize that you are worth whatever wage you want to command. Tell me what you want to be paid, and I will pay you that.” Bear in mind that Laban is the man who cheated Jacob in his marriage, substituting Leah for Rachel. So, even though Laban recognizes Jacob's importance as an employee, that does not mean he is going to start treating him fairly. He has worked Jacob to his own advantage and will continue to do so.

Even though Laban has a bunch of grandchildren by Jacob, Laban is not changing his opinion of Jacob. Laban will continue to work Jacob like a mark.

Even though Laban has seemed to have made a very generous offer here (“You choose what you want to work for”), he can always pull back and say, “Now, don't you think that is a bit too greedy?” What Laban will find more problematic than he expects is, when Jacob begins to take from his flock, as agreed to, he is going to see that as his wealth going out the window, so to speak. That is going to bother him much more than he expects it to; and it will bother his sons a great deal as well.

Genesis 30:27–28 Laban said to him, “Now, if I have found grace in your sight, I have learned by divination [or, experience] that Yehowah is blessing me on account of you.” He also said, “Specify your wages against me and I will give [you what you ask for].” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:27–28 Laban said to him, “Now, if I have found grace in your sight, let me tell you that I have learned by experience that Jehovah is blessing me because of you.” He also said, “Specify your wages against me and I will give you what you ask for.” (Kukis paraphrase)

A New Deal can prolong our stay (a graphic); from [Slide Player](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

I have a problem with the message of this graphic. The Bible does not tell us that, *if you are in a bad situation, you need to get out of it*. That very much depends upon the situation itself and God's will for you life. First of all, God had not communicated to Jacob, "Time to return to Canaan." As has already been made clear, Jacob's threat to return to Canaan seems to be more of a bargaining chip than an expression of God's will. Jacob makes certain that Laban knows two things: (1) "You have been prospered in association with me" and (2) "I am ready to return to Canaan." There is actually nothing wrong with Jacob remaining in Laban's hire.

A New Deal can prolong our stay

Genesis 30:27–28 ²⁷ But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, please stay here, for I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me on account of you." ²⁸ He added, "Just name your wages – I'll pay whatever you want."

- Laban's motivation for keeping Jacob:
 - Not his daughters
 - Not his grandkids
 - Jacob is profitable to him
- Laban is willing to write a new contract
- What will keep you in a bad situation?
 - Higher pay, promotion, job description, new contract?
 - Family obligations?

Worse yet, this graphic says, *What will keep you in a bad situation? Higher pay, promotion, job description, new contracts? Family obligations? Well, hell yes! What if you perceive your job—assuming it to be legitimate and not a life of crime—to be a bad situation? What if you are unhappy in your job? Does this mean, that, despite family obligations, you get to just leave it? Really? Paul tells us, a man who does not provide for his own is worse than an infidel.* For the Christian man, your primary earthly concern is your family and taking care of them. The only problem I see for Jacob is, he uses his return to Canaan as a bargaining chip.

In glancing through some of these slides, in a show called *Fed Up Genesis 30:25–43*, I found there to be quite a number of unhelpful messages and misapplications of Scripture.

Now, you may think, well, this is just the way that they understood it and that is how this chapter spoke to them. No! It does not work that way. We are not given the right to understand a chapter in any willy nilly way, and to make application from that. What we learn in any given chapter must be compared to other chapters. Here, this implication is, *if you are in a bad job, then it is okay to change jobs; and family obligations is not enough of a reason to keep you in that job.* We all have difficulties on the job; most days, we have a problem or two or twenty. But, the believer has responsibilities, which includes those to his family. And, because there is no perfect job and no perfect set of circumstances, the believer makes a mistake when he pursues the perfect job or perfect circumstances. This does not mean that, you cannot pursue a different career path; this does not mean that you cannot make a change. But, whatever changes in your life needs to be laid side-by-side Bible doctrine. Furthermore, if you are a new believer, it is best for you to make as few life changing decisions as possible (best number of life-changing decisions that a new believer should make is zero). And, just the opposite of what that slide above seems to say, just because your job is tough or you are facing difficulties on the job, that does not mean you *ought* to find a different job. In some cases *yes*, and in other cases, *no*.

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:25–28 [Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have served you." But Laban said to him, "if I have found favor in your eyes, stay, I have used occult practices to learn that yhwh has blessed me because of you." And he said, "name your wage and let me give it."](#)

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:25–28

1. The birth of Joseph is keyed to the end of the second seven year period which Jacob worked for
2. At that time Jacob has had enough and requests his dismissal from the hire of Laban.
3. From what he says it seems apparent that Jacob recognized that this was not truly his place.
4. He desired to return to the land of Canaan, a fact I attribute to his spiritual growth during this time.
5. He states that he is planning to take his wives which he has rendered service for, as well as all his children.
6. We do not know exactly how many children he had at this time, but we do know that he had 11 of his 12 sons by this time.
7. The request for a formal dismissal is designed to acknowledge that their contract was fulfilled, and that Jacob owed Laban nothing.
8. Jacob cites his hard, faithful work for Laban, a fact which Laban would be well aware of.
9. In spite of the fact that Laban had cheated and deceived Jacob, Jacob had been faithful to work equally hard the final 7 years.
10. Jacob cites his integrity to Laban, a fact which Laban has already recognized.
11. Laban politely requests Jacob to reconsider and not leave his employ.
12. Laban now confirms the fact that he was a religious reversionist and an idol worshiper.
13. He claims that he used occult means to ascertain that YHWH had blessed him on account of Jacob's presence.
14. This should have been obvious, but when people reject the plan of God, they often resort to this sort of superstitious activity to live their lives.
15. We are not told specifically what form of divination that Laban employed, but common methods
 - 1) Chresmology--consulting a seer or prophet for a divine message.
 - 2) Oneiromancy--interpreting dreams for guidance.
 - 3) Astrology--consulting the stars and planets.
 - 4) Necromancy--contacting the dead, through mediums.
 - 5) Haruspicy--study of the entrails of animals.
 - 6) Augury--analyzing the movements of animals, esp. birds.
 - 7) Omens and portents, attributing supernatural character to common phenomena.
 - 8) Mechanical means--dice, lots, water, fire, drawing straws, etc.
16. Laban is a superstitious believer who recognizes that he has a good thing in Jacob, and would be wise to keep him in his employ.
17. His actions are based on greed and selfishness.
18. He offers Jacob carte blanche in terms of an agreement, Jacob is free to name what he desires to work for.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so he says unto him, “You [even] you have known how I have served you and how was your cattle with me; for a little was to you to my faces and so he breaks out to abundance. And so blesses Y^ehowah you to my foot and now when I will do also—me—for my house.”

Genesis
30:29–30

Jacob [lit., *he*] then said to him, “You yourself know [just] how I have served you and [you know] how your cattle have been with me—for [there was] to you a small [herd] before me, [and it] has spread abroad abundantly. Therefore, Y^ehowah has blessed you wherever I turned, but now I [must] attend to my [own] household.”

Jacob then said to him, “You certainly know just how well I have served you. You began with a small herd before I came here, and now they have spread across the land in great abundance. Jehovah has blessed you at each turn, but it is now time for me to provide for my own household.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so he says unto him, “You [even] you have known how I have served you and how was your cattle with me; for a little was to you to my faces and so he breaks out to abundance. And so blesses Y ^e howah you to my foot and now when I will do also—me—for my house.”
Targum (Onkelos)	And he said to him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and what thy flocks have been with me; for thou hadst few before me, and they have increased into a multitude: and the Lord hath blessed thee for my sake [Sam. Vers. "through my help."]. But now, what shall I do also for my (own) house?
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And he said to him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle have been kept by me: for the little flock which thou hadst before me hath increased greatly, and the Lord hath blessed thee at my foot, that I have been profitable to thee from (the time of) my coming into thy house. <u>And now when shall I do the work for which I am bound, to nourish the men of my house.</u>
Revised Douay-Rheims	But he answered: you know how I have served you, and how <u>great your possession</u> has been in my hands. You had but little before I came to you, and now you are become rich: and the Lord has blessed you at my coming. It is reasonable therefore that I should now provide also for my own house.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He said to him, "You know how I have served you, and how your livestock have fared with me. For it was little which you had before I came, and it has increased to a multitude. Mar-Yah has blessed you wherever I turned. Now when will I provide for my own house also?"
Peshitta (Syriac)	And <u>Jacob</u> said to him, You yourself know the service which I have given you, and how your cattle have prospered with me. For it was little which you had before I came, and now it has increased abundantly; and the LORD has blessed you for my sake; and now what shall I do in order to provide for my own household also?
Septuagint (Greek)	And <u>Jacob</u> said, You know in what things I have served you, and how many cattle of yours are with me. For it was little you had before my time, and it is increased to a multitude, and the Lord God has blessed you since my coming; now then, when shall I set up also my own house?

Significant differences: The Aramaic may or may not have *Jacob* instead of *he*. The Greek has *Jacob* as well and appears to leave off *to him*. The Latin as *great your possession* rather than *flocks* or *cattle*. The 3rd and 4th phrases that Jacob says are somewhat difficult, but the idea is, Laban had a limited number of animals when Jacob started with him, and now he has a great abundance. The other ancient translations agree with this.

Owens understands *to my foot* to mean, *in whatever direction I turn*. One targum has *for my sake* or *through my help*. The PJ targum appears to add an additional sentence at the end of this passage (although its translation of the final sentence is questionable as well). It is common when a word or phrase is difficult to translate, for other ancient translations to become more *imaginative*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	Then Jacob said, You have seen what I have done for you, and how your cattle have done well under my care. For before I came you had little, and it has been
------------------------	--

greatly increased; and the Lord has given you a blessing in everything I have done; but when am I to do something for my family?

Easy English

Jacob said 'You know how much I have worked for you. And you know how many more animals you have. You had a small number of sheep and goats before I came. Now the number of them is much bigger. And anywhere that I have been, the Lord has blessed you. But now I want to give my family what they need.'

Easy-to-Read Version–2006

Jacob answered, "You know that I have worked hard for you. Your flocks have grown and been well while I cared for them. When I came, you had little. Now you have much, much more. Every time I did something for you, the Lord blessed you. Now it is time for me to work for myself—it is time to do things for my family."

Good News Bible (TEV)

Jacob answered, "You know how I have worked for you and how your flocks have prospered under my care. The little you had before I came has grown enormously, and the Lord has blessed you wherever I went. Now it is time for me to look out for my own interests."

International Children's B.

Jacob answered, "You know that I have worked hard for you. Your flocks have grown while I cared for them. When I came, you had little. Now you have much. Every time I did something for you, the Lord blessed you. But when will I be able to do something for my own family?"

The Message

Jacob replied, "You know well what my work has meant to you and how your livestock has flourished under my care. The little you had when I arrived has increased greatly; everything I did resulted in blessings for you. Isn't it about time that I do something for my own family?"

NIRV

Jacob said to him, "You know how hard I've worked for you. You know that your livestock has done better under my care. You had only a little before I came. But that little has become a lot. The Lord has blessed you everywhere I've been. But when can I do something for my own family?"

New Simplified Bible

Jacob responded: »You know how much work I have done for you and what has happened to your livestock under my care. »The little that you had before I came has grown to a large amount. Jehovah has blessed you wherever I have been. When may I do something for my own family?«

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible

Jacob said to him, "You know how I've worked for you, and how well your livestock have done with me. While in my care, what little you had has multiplied a great deal. The Lord blessed you wherever I took your livestock. Now, when will I be able to work for my own household too?"

Contemporary English V.

Jacob answered: You've seen how hard I've worked for you, and you know how your flocks and herds have grown under my care. You didn't have much before I came, but the LORD has blessed everything I have ever done for you. Now it's time for me to start looking out for my own family. Sometimes the CEV has quotation marks and sometimes not?

The Living Bible

Jacob replied, "You know how faithfully I've served you through these many years, and how your flocks and herds have grown. For it was little indeed you had before I came, and your wealth has increased enormously; Jehovah has blessed you from everything I do! But now, what about me? When should I provide for my own family?"

New Berkeley Version

He replied, "You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock has fared with me; for the little you had before I came has broadened to a great many. The LORD has blessed you at my footsteps. Now when am I to provide for my own family?"

New Century Version

Jacob answered, "You know that I have worked hard for you, and your flocks have grown while I cared for them. When I came, you had little, but now you have much.

Every time I did something for you, the LORD blessed you. But when will I be able to do something for my own family?"

New Life Version Jacob said to him, "You know how much I have served you and how I have cared for your cattle. For you had little before I came. But now it has become very much. The Lord has brought good to you everywhere I turned. But when will I be able to give much to those of my own house also?"

New Living Translation Jacob replied, "You know how hard I've worked for you, and how your flocks and herds have grown under my care. You had little indeed before I came, but your wealth has increased enormously. The LORD has blessed you through everything I've done. But now, what about me? When can I start providing for my own family?"

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible And Jacob said: 'You know how many ways I've served you and how many of your cattle I've [taken care of]. You didn't have many before I came here, and now there are many! So, Jehovah God has blest you since I arrived. And now, let me establish my own house.'

Beck's American Translation "You know how I've worked for you," he answered him, "and what's happened to your stock in my care. Before I came, you had only a little. But now it has grown to be much, and the LORD has blessed you in what I did for you. And now, when can I do something for my own family too?"

International Standard V But Jacob replied to Laban, "You know how I've served you and how your cattle thrived under my care. What you had previously was only a few head, but the herd has now multiplied, because the LORD has blessed you through my efforts [Lit. *my foot*]. But now, when am I going to be able to provide for my own household?"

Revised Knox Bible None knows better than you, answered Jacob, how hard I have worked for you, and how these herds of yours have increased under my care. It was little enough you had before I came to your house, and now you have become rich; the Lord has blessed you from the day when I came hither. Now it is time that I should I think of my own household too.

Translation for Translators Jacob said to him, "You know how I have worked for you, and you know that your livestock have increased greatly as I have taken care of them. 30 You had only a few animals before I came here. But now you have very many, and Yahweh has caused them to increase greatly in number wherever I have taken them. But now I need to start taking care of the needs of my own family."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible He was to say: You have known how I have served you, and how is your livestock, for little was to be yours turned before them, and it was to spread out into an abundance. Jehovah is to have given you favor, me setting foot here, even extend to me, I was to attain for my house.

Conservapedia And he said to him, "You know how I have served you, and how your cattle herd has grown under my management. You started out with few cattle before I came, and your herd has swelled to a multitude, and the LORD has blessed you since I came. Now when do I start providing for my own household as well?"

Ferrar-Fenton Bible So he answered him ; " You know how I have served yon, and how your 30 herds have been with me ; for they were small that were with you before me, and they have spread out to many, and the EVER-LIVING has blessed you at my feet. Yet have I gained even a house of my own ? "

God's Truth (Tyndale) But he said unto him: you know what service I have done you, and in what taking your cattle have been under me: For it was but little that you had before I came, and now it is increased into a multitude, and the Lord has blessed you for my sake. But now when shall I make provision for mine own house also?

HCSB	So Jacob said to him, "You know what I have done for you and your herds. For you had very little before I came, but now your wealth has increased. The Lord has blessed you because of me. And now, when will I also do something for my own family?"
H. C. Leupold	And he said to him. Thou thyself knowest what service I have rendered thee and how thy cattle fared under my care; for it was but a little that thou didst own before I came, but it expanded tremendously and Yahweh let blessings follow wherever I went. And now when am I to provide for my own house also?.
Lexham English Bible	Then he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your livestock have been with me. For you had little before me, and it has increased abundantly. And Yahweh has blessed you {wherever I turned}. So then, when shall I provide for my own family also?"
Tree of Life Version	Then he said to him, "You yourself know how I've served you and how your livestock fared with me. For you had very little before I came, and it has been busting at the seams in abundance. So <i>ADONAI</i> blessed you with my every step. So now, when am I myself going to make something for my household also?"
Urim-Thummim Version	So he said, specify to me your wages and I will give it to you. And he replied to him, you know how I have labored for you and how your livestock was in my care. You had little before I came, and it has now increased greatly plus YHWH has blessed you since my coming. But now, when will I be tending for my own house?
Wikipedia Bible Project	And he said to him-- "You know how I have worked for you; and how your livestock fared, with me. Because the little that you had before has expanded into a multitude, and Yahweh has blessed you, at my choice of path; and now, when shall I earn for myself, for my own household?"

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Ja cob said, "You know how well I have served you and how your cattle have prospered with me. For you had little when I came, but since I have been with you there has been a considerable increase and Yahweh has blessed you. But now, when am I to do something for my own household?"
The Heritage Bible	And he said to him, You know by seeing how I have worked for you, and what your livestock have become with me. Because facing back it was little which was yours, and it has broken out into an abundance; and Jehovah has blessed you at my foot, and now when shall I do for my own house also?
New American Bible (2002)	Jacob replied: "You know what work I did for you and how well your livestock fared under my care; the little you had before I came has grown into very much, since the LORD'S blessings came upon you in my company. Therefore I should now do something for my own household as well."
New American Bible (2011)	Jacob replied: "You know what work I did for you and how well your livestock fared under my care; the little you had before I came has grown into an abundance, since the LORD has blessed you in my company. Now, when can I do something for my own household as well?"
New Jerusalem Bible	He replied, 'You know how hard I have worked for you, and how your stock has fared in my charge. The little you had before I came has increased enormously, and Yahweh has blessed you wherever I have been. When am I to provide for my own household too?'
Revised English Bible	"You know how I have served you," replied Jacob, "and how your herds have prospered under my care. The few you had when I came have increased beyond measure, and wherever I went the LORD brought you blessings. But is it not time for me to make provision for my family?"

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible Ya'akov replied, "You know how faithfully I have served you and how your livestock have prospered under my care. The few you had before I came have increased substantially; Adonai has blessed you wherever I went. But now, when will I provide for my own household?"

The Complete Tanach And he said to him, "You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock was with me.

and how your livestock was with me: The small amount of your livestock that came into my hands-how many were they?

For the little that you had before me has increased in multitude, and the Lord blessed you upon my arrival; but now, when will I, too, provide [something] for my household? "

upon my arrival: lit., to my foot, with my foot; because of the arrival of my foot, the blessing came to you, like (Exod. 11:8):"the people that follow you (וְלִגְרֵב)"; (Jud. 8:5):"to the people that follow me (וְלִגְרֵב!)," who come with me. — [from Gen. Rabbah 73:8]

when will I, too, provide [something] for my household: For the needs of my household. Now only my children work for my needs, and I too must work with them to assist them. This is the meaning of "too."

exeGesés companion Bible And he says to him,
You know how I served you
and how your chattel was with me:
for you had little ere I came at your face;
and now it breaks forth in abundance
and Yah Veh blesses you at my foot.
And now, when work I - I also for my own house?

Hebraic Roots Bible And he said to him, You know how I have served you and what your livestock has become with me. For little was yours before my presence, and it has spread out into a host. And YAHWEH has blessed you at my foot. And now when shall I work for my house, I also?

JPS (Tanakh—1985) But he said, "You know well how I have served you and how your livestock has fared with me. For the little you had before I came has grown to much, since the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. And now, when shall I make provision for my own household?"

Kaplan Translation 'You know full well how I worked for you,' replied [Jacob], 'and how your livestock fared with me. You had very little before I came, but since then it has increased and become very substantial. God blessed you with my coming. But when will I do something to build my own estate?'

Orthodox Jewish Bible And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy mikneh fared with me
For it was me'at (little) which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and Hashem hath made a brocha upon thee since my coming; and now when shall I do for mine own bais also?.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible Jacob answered him, "You know how I have served you and how your possessions, your cattle *and* sheep *and* goats, have fared with me. For you had little before I came and it has increased and multiplied abundantly, and the Lord has favored you with blessings wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household?"

The Expanded Bible Jacob answered, "You know that I have worked hard for you, and [how] your ·flocks [herds; or cattle] have ·grown while I cared for them [have done with me]. When I came, you had little, but now you have ·much [increased many times].

·Every time I did something for you [Wherever I turned; ^LAt my feet], the Lord blessed you. But when will I be able to do something for my own ·family [household; ^Lhouse]?"

Kretzmann's Commentary

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, the blessing of Jehovah had, literally, followed Jacob's feet: and now, when shall I provide for mine own house also? There was really a strong hint in these words, telling Laban that he would do well to set him up in the cattle business for himself. But Laban repeated his question.

NET Bible®

"You know how I have worked for you," Jacob replied [*Heb* "and he said to him, 'You know how I have served you.'" The order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons, and the referent of the pronoun "he" (Jacob) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], "and how well your livestock have fared under my care [*Heb* "and how your cattle were with me."]. Indeed [Or "for."], you had little before I arrived [*Heb* "before me."], but now your possessions have increased many times over [*Heb* "and it has broken out with respect to abundance."]. The Lord has blessed you wherever I worked [*Heb* "and it has broken out with respect to abundance."]. But now, how long must it be before I do something for my own family too? [*Heb* "How long [until] I do, also I, for my house?"]"

The Pulpit Commentary

And he (Jacob) said unto him (Laban), Thou knowest how (literally, what) I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me—literally, and what thy cattle has been (or become) with me, i.e. to what a number they have grown. For it was little which thou hadst before I came,—literally, for little (it was) was to thee before me; i.e. not in place, ἰναντίον ἐμοῦ? (LXX.), but in time, i.e. before my arrival—and it is now increased—literally, broken forth (cf. Genesis 30:43)—unto a multitude; and the Lord (Jehovah) hath blessed thee since my coming (literally, at my foot, i.e. wherever I have gone among your flocks): and now when shall I provide (literally, do) for mine own house also?

The Voice

Jacob: You know how well I have served you. You have seen your livestock flourish and your herds grow under my supervision. You had little before I arrived, but your wealth has increased significantly since the Eternal One has blessed you in whatever I did for you. But now, when will it be time for me to provide for my own household?

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.

...and he said to him, you know that I served you, that your livestock existed with me, given that the small amount which existed to you before me and he will break out to the abundance and YHWH ^[He Exists] will respect you to my foot and now, how long will I make also for my house,...

Concordant Literal Version

And saying is Jacob to him, "You know how I have served you, and what becomes of your cattle with me. For little was that which came to be yours before, and breaching is it into much. And blessing you is Yahweh, at my footsteps. Yet now, when shall I do something, moreover I, for my own household?"

Context Group Version

And he said to him, You know how I have served you, and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased to a multitude; and YHWH has esteemed you wherever I turned: and now when shall I provide for my own house also?

Modern English Version

Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you, and how your livestock have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it is now increased to a multitude. The LORD has blessed you since I came, and now when may I also provide for my own house?"

New King James Version

So *Jacob* said to him, “You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?”

Young’s Updated LT

And he says unto him, “Thou—you have known that which I have served you in , and that which your substance was with me; for it is little which you have had at my appearance, and it breaks forth into a multitude, and Jehovah blesses you at my coming; and now, when do I make, I also, for mine own house?”

The gist of this passage:

Jacob argues that he has provided for Laban; but now it is time for him to provide for his own family.

29-30

Genesis 30:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
’âmar (אמר) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHR</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
’el (אל) [pronounced <i>ehl</i>]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong’s #413 BDB #39
’attâh (אתה) [pronounced <i>aht-TAW</i>]	<i>you</i> (often, the verb <i>to be</i> is implied)	2 nd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong’s #859 BDB #61
yâda’ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHĠ</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see; to learn; to recognize [admit, acknowledge, confess]</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong’s #3045 BDB #393
’êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	untranslated generally; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong’s #853 BDB #84
’âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong’s #834 BDB #81

Together, they mean *how, that which, what, whatever; whom, whomever.*

Genesis 30:29a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
‘ābad (עָבַד) [pronounced <i>gaw^b-VAHD</i>]	<i>to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5647 BDB #712

Translation: Jacob [lit., *he*] then said to him, “You yourself know [just] how I have served you...”

Jacob is repeating himself from v. 26, leaving out one word. This suggests that he had thought through to some degree what he was going to say to Laban. He is not simply speaking off the top of his head. Perhaps even Jacob had in his mind that he would threaten to leave and that Laban would capitulate to his salary demands. I think what Laban said (“Just name your salary, Jacob”) was not what Jacob was expecting.

“Clearly, you know how I have served you.” Jacob has worked hard for Laban. Jacob might have been a chiseler, but he was still a hard worker. What Jacob has been doing put money into Laban’s pocket (that is, Laban was prospered greatly by Jacob’s work).

Jacob has used the word ‘ābad (עָבַד) [pronounced *gaw^b-VAHD*] (or a form of it) 4 times in vv. 26–29.³⁷⁰ This word means *to work, to serve, to labor; to be a slave to*. Strong's #5647 BDB #712. “I have worked for you; I have labored for you; I have acted almost as your slave!” is a refrain which Jacob keeps repeating, adding to that, “**And you yourself know that I have served you!**” Jacob, in speaking to Laban, will use God’s proper name but once; but he will make reference to his own service 4 times. So, on the one hand, Jacob is not completely and totally divorced from God; but what he emphasizes to Laban is his work. “We had an agreement that I would work for you, and I have fulfilled that agreement.” So, when a commentator tries to tell you just how much Jacob was focused on the land and God’s promises, that never seems to come up in this conversation. Jacob does *not* say, “And you know how God has given me and my descendants that land of Canaan.”

When we consider motivations, we have to concentrate on what the men say and what they do. We have already seen the emphasis that Jacob has made in his words. Now, watch what happens when Laban offers him a salary. Does Jacob say, “No, I belong in the land of Canaan, which God has given to me and my family”? No, he does *not* say that.

Genesis 30:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וַ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wāw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
’ēth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
’āsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>uh-SHER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Together, they mean *how, that which, what, whatever; whom, whomever*.

³⁷⁰ It was Uteley’s commentary which made me acutely aware of this. Dr. Bob Uteley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–26.

Genesis 30:29b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
mîq ^e neh (מִקְנֵה) [pronounced mik-NEH]	<i>cattle, livestock (specifically sheep, cows and goats); herds, flocks</i>	masculine singular (collective) plural noun	Strong's #4735 BDB #889
<p>This noun is built on the verb qânâh (קָנָה) [pronounced kaw-NAWH] which means, <i>to get, acquire, obtain; [of God] to found, to originate, to create; to possess; to redeem [His people]; [of Eve] to acquire; to acquire [knowledge, wisdom]; to buy [purchase, redeem]</i>. Strong's #7069 BDB #888. Furthermore, wealth in the ancient world was defined by the number of animals a person had, so such a word could reasonably come to mean <i>wealth, possessions, acquisition, substance</i>.</p>			
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85
<p>This preposition can also refer to being in one's possession or in one's keeping. This can also mean <i>to proceed from someone</i>. The key to this word is <i>close association with, close proximity to</i> beyond simple geographical proximity.</p>			

Translation: ...and [you know] how your cattle have been with me—...

Jacob has been in charge of Laban's cattle; that has been his chief responsibility, which this suggests.

Genesis 30:29 He [Jacob] said to him, "You know how I have served you, and what your cattle have become with me.

Clearly, Laban's herds have increased dramatically under Jacob. Laban will clearly admit this to Jacob. He has no problem about being honest here. Laban has already admitted to recognizing that he is blessed because of Jacob.

When it comes to lying to someone, this needs to be mixed with some truth. Con men will do such things; they will admit to whatever truths are mutually obvious.

Genesis 30:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
m ^e aṭṭ (מְאֹט) [pronounced m ^e -GAHT]	<i>a little, fewness, few</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #4592 BDB #589
'ăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced uh-SHER]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

Genesis 30:30a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Literally, this would be translated *to faces of me, to my faces*. Together, these words mean *before me, before my face, in my presence, in my sight, in front of me; before me (in the sense of, before my time), prior to my being here*.

Translation: ...for [there was] to you a small [herd] before me,...

The phrase *to my faces* can mean *before my time, before me, prior to my being here*. At one time, before Jacob had come there, Laban had a small herd. You may recall that he had his daughter Rachel in charge of them. We do not know how small is small; Jacob might be referring to 20–40 in Laban's possession; whatever, it is a lot less than they have now.

Genesis 30:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pârats (פָּרַץ) [pronounced paw-RATS]	<i>to break, to break down, to destroy; to break asunder, to scatter, to disperse, to spread abroad; to break forth upon, to produce by breaking through; to act violently; to break through [negative volition, a bad attitude, a mindset, or whatever]; to spread, to distribute</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6555 BDB #829
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 30:30b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
rôb (רֹב) [pronounced roh ^b v]	<i>multitude, abundance, greatness</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #7230 BDB #913
<p>In 1Chronicles 4:38, Gesenius suggests that pârats is the infinitive of it verbal cognate, which, considering the lâmed prefix, makes sense. We have the same construction here. The verb means <i>to become much, to be many, to increase</i>. Here (1Chronicles 4:38 12:40), we might render this, <i>to increase, to become great in number</i>; or let me suggest <i>to an abundance; in great abundance</i>. In 1Chronicles 12:40, ESV, HCSB and NRSV moved this further back into the verse and rendered it <i>abundant provisions of</i> (in combination with a previous noun); so did <i>The Amplified Bible</i> rendering it <i>abundant supplies of</i>; God's Word™ also moved it further back in the verse, rendering it <i>plenty of</i>; so did the NASB (<i>great quantities of</i>) and NAB (<i>in great quantity of</i>). Others have rendered this as follows: <i>abundantly</i> (MKJV, NKJV); <i>in abundance</i> (HNV, Rotherham, Tanakh, WEB); <i>abundant</i> (Owen); <i>to great plenty</i> (LTHB).</p>			
<p>Owens has that this is instead the Qal infinitive construct of:</p>			
râbab (רָבַב) [pronounced raw ^b -VAH ^B V]	<i>to become many, to become great in number, to be great in number, to increase</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7231 BDB #912

Translation: ...[and it] has spread abroad abundantly.

However, Laban's cattle have increased greatly under Jacob. Jacob, over these 14 years, has increased Laban's wealth tremendously.

The description of Jacob's property is much more extensive when we come to v. 43.

Genesis 30:29–30b Jacob [lit., *he*] then said to him, "You yourself know [just] how I have served you and [you know] how your cattle have been with me—for [there was] to you a small [herd] before me, [and it] has spread abroad abundantly. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:30c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bârak ^e (בָּרַךְ) [pronounced baw-RAHK ^e]	<i>to invoke God, to praise, to celebrate, to adore, to bless [God]; to bless [men], to invoke blessings; to bless [as God, man and other created things], therefore to cause to prosper, to make happy; to salute anyone [with a blessing]; to curse</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #1288 BDB #138

Genesis 30:30c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	<i>you</i> ; untranslated mark of a direct object; occasionally <i>to you</i> , <i>toward you</i>	sign of the direct object affixed to a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #853 BDB #84
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
regel (לָגַל) [pronounced <i>REH-ge</i>]	<i>foot</i> ; metaphorically <i>step, gait</i> , <i>pace; turn</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7272 BDB #919

Owens renders this combination *wherever I turned*. This same idiom is found in Isaiah 41:2 ([Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step? He gives up nations before him, so that he tramples kings underfoot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow.](#)).

This is also translated *wherever I turned* (CGV, Exp. Bible); *wherever I worked* (the NET Bible); *with my coming* (Kaplan); *since my coming* (NKJV).

Gill: *[Or,] since my coming; or "at my foot" (n); ever since he set foot in his house.*³⁷¹

Poole: *[Or,] Since my coming; Heb. at my foot, i.e. upon my coming; since my feet entered into thy house: or, by my foot, i.e. by my ministry and labour, as this phrase is used.*³⁷²

Whedon: *Since my coming* — Hebrew, *at my feet; as if the blessings of Jehovah had broken forth and followed Jacob's footsteps wherever he went.*³⁷³

Translation: Therefore, Y^ehowah has blessed you wherever I turned,...

Jacob recognizes that it is God who has prospered Laban. Jacob seems to be saying that God has worked through himself to bless Laban.

No matter which way Jacob turned, it was clear that God had blessed both him and Laban. I believe that the idea is, whether Jacob looked to his left or to his right, or straight ahead, he would see a manifestation of God's blessings to Laban, which would have been an increased animal population.

³⁷¹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:30.

³⁷² Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:30.

³⁷³ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:30.

Genesis 30:30a-c (a graphic); from [Pinterest](#); accessed September 15, 2017. Jacob points out to Laban, that God blessed him on every side. Laban had to agree and wanted to retain Jacob in his service.

The picture that Jacob is painting is this: he looks around, he looks to his left and to his right, and everywhere that he looks, he sees the abundance of Laban, which he himself has been integral in producing.

“Listen, mate,” Jacob is saying, “For 14 years, I have made you rich; I have made your wealth so abundant, that you can look out in any direction, and your increased wealth is apparent.”

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines



Genesis 30:30c Therefore, Y^ehowah has blessed you wherever I turned,...

“You know how God has blessed me,” claims Jacob (Various Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The possession of livestock in the patriarchal period was a sign of wealth. The little Laban had has now multiplied because of Jacob’s service on behalf of him. In Genesis 30:29-30, Jacob drives the point home to Laban that he had been prospered by the Lord because of being associated with him. Jacob’s statement “you yourself know” emphasizes that Laban is well aware of the fact that he has been prospered by the Lord due to his association with Jacob since prior to his arrival in Paddan Aram, Laban was not prospering .*

Wenstrom continues: *Jacob’s statement “the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned” means that Laban was blessed by association with him and is an expression of his humility in that he ascribes these blessings to God, acknowledging that the Lord has been fulfilling His promises to bless him while in exile (See Genesis 28:10-13). By making this statement Jacob is giving glory to God by bearing witness to Laban that the Lord is the cause of his increase in wealth and not himself. Though, Jacob states that he was faithful and honest in his service to Laban, he still points out to Laban that the Lord was the ultimate cause of his increase of livestock.*³⁷⁴

H. C. Leupold: *Apparently, before Jacob began to take steps to leave Laban had never admitted that he owed his newly won prosperity to Jacob. Since he admits at least so much, Jacob improves the situation by driving home that point and emphasizing it. Again he tells Laban that he is very well aware of the type of service his son-in-law has been rendering: this is the emphasis conveyed by the statement “you certainly know this.”*³⁷⁵

H. C. Leupold continues: *Jacob adds as a particular illustration how well Laban’s cattle have fared. For in the case of nomads practically their entire wealth consisted in cattle. The phrase “ittî must mean “under my care,” or literally “with me.” Apparently, Laban had had but indifferent success before. Jacob frankly tells Laban that Laban had “but a little” before his coming, lephanay (literally: “before my face or presence”). A change must have been apparent at once upon Jacob’s arrival, for from that time onward Laban’s wealth “expanded tremendously” (larobh — “unto a multitude”).*

³⁷⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 479); accessed September 9, 2017.

³⁷⁵ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017 (edited).

“You know how God has blessed me,” claims Jacob (Various Commentators)

Leupold continues: "Yahweh let blessings follow wherever I went." This last statement really reads: "Yahweh blessed me upon the foot." Now *leraghli*, "to my foot," usually means "after me," as 1 Sam. 25:42; Hab. 3:5 show. From this it follows, if blessing go after him, blessings attend wherever he goes. Where such is the case, a very high measure of blessings is certainly being bestowed.³⁷⁶

What is clearly in view here is the doctrine of **Blessing by Association** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:30d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
‘attâh (אתָּה) [pronounced <i>gah-t-AWH</i>]	<i>now, at this time, already</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #6258 BDB #773
When followed by an imperative or an interrogative, w ^e + the adverb ‘attâh mean <i>and so, thus, things being so, therefore, now therefore, now then</i> . Sometimes, the concept of time is lost when this combination is used to incite another.			
mâthay (מָתַי) [pronounced <i>maw-THAH-ee</i>]	<i>when, at which time; when?</i>	interrogative adverb of time; adverb of time	Strong's #4970 BDB #607
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
The full set of Qal meanings from BDB: <i>to do, work, make, produce; to do; to work; to deal (with); to act, act with effect, effect; to produce; to prepare; to make (an offering); to attend to, put in order; to observe, celebrate; to acquire (property); to appoint, ordain, institute; to bring about; to use; to spend, pass</i> . It is possible that this ought to be <i>to provide for</i> .			
E. W. Bullinger: <i>Hebrew the verb to do, which by Metonymy (of the Cause), means to provide, or, do for.</i> ³⁷⁷			
gam (גַּם) [pronounced <i>gahm</i>]	<i>also, furthermore, in addition to, as well; even, moreover</i>	adverb	Strong's #1571 BDB #168
’ânôkîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me; (sometimes a verb is implied)</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun	Strong's #595 BDB #59
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>le</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, residence; household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

³⁷⁶ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

³⁷⁷ E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:30.

Translation: ...but now I [must] attend to my [own] household.”

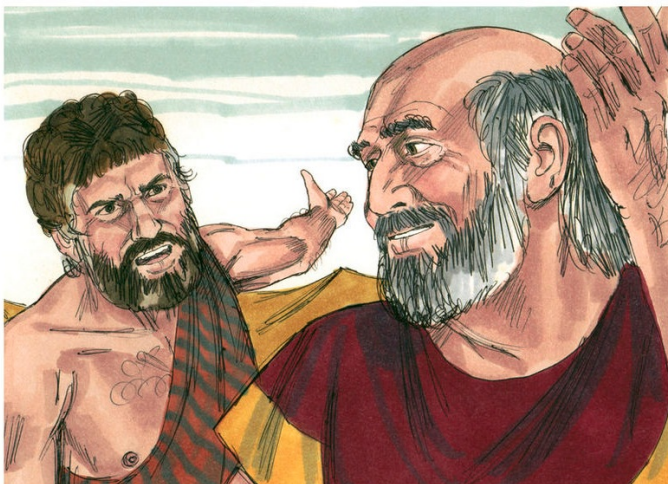
What Jacob has not done is attend to his own household. At this point, he has 2 wives and 2 mistresses and 12 children. It is time for him to think about his own family and to provide for them. He has fed them; but he has no land and no animals for his family.

It should be obvious that Jacob is not looking to provide anything for *his house* but for his family and household. This is a metonymy³⁷⁸ where the Hebrew word which is properly translated *house* actually refers to his family and household.

Jacob appears to have followed the basic principle: 1Timothy 5:8 **But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

Genesis 30:30c-d **Therefore, Y^ehowah has blessed you wherever I turned, but now I [must] attend to my [own] household.”** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

What has been happening for the past two decades is that Jacob has been providing for Laban's household yet Jacob now has two wives, two mistresses and 11 sons, yet he is still under slave labor to Laban. Laban recognizes this, but did not want to lose Jacob if at all possible. He also apparently recognizes that he has been blessed by God to a great extent because of Jacob (although I tend to be suspicious of anything that Laban says; no doubt that Jacob is suspicious as well).



“When will I attend to my own household?” (A graphic); from [Wikimedia](#); from Biblical illustrations by Jim Padgett, courtesy of Sweet Publishing, Ft. Worth, TX, and Gospel Light, Ventura, CA. Copyright 1984. Accessed September 15, 2017.

Genesis 30:30 For you had little before I came, and it has now increased to a multitude. And Jehovah has blessed you since my coming. And now when will I provide for my own house also?”

Laban's wealth has increased dramatically; and he clearly recognizes that. However, Jacob basically has his wives and children; but very little by way of personal wealth. Jacob needs to consider the future and the care of his wives and children. Based upon that, it would be

a bad idea for Jacob to just up and leave, as he has no wealth or substance to take with him (I suspect that Jacob knows this as well).

*Clarke: Jacob had already served fourteen years; and had got no patrimony whatever, though he had now a family of twelve children, eleven sons and one daughter, besides his two wives, and their two maids, and several servants. See Genesis 30:43. It was high time that he should get some property for these; and as his father-in-law was excessively parsimonious, and would scarcely allow him to live, he was in some sort obliged to make use of stratagem to get an equivalent for his services.*³⁷⁹

Again, this suggests that Jacob has recently completed his 14 year commitment to Laban (7 years for each daughter), and he now needs to provide for his own family.

³⁷⁸ When one word stands for another concept, it is called a metonymy

³⁷⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:35. The wealth named in Genesis 30:43 was not true of Jacob at this moment in the narrative.

There is the possibility that this conversation took place shortly after the 14th year and before all of Jacob's children just listed were born; but there is no compelling reason to think that this is out of chronological order.

Genesis 30:29–30 Jacob [lit., *he*] then said to him, “You yourself know [just] how I have served you and [you know] how your cattle have been with me—for [there was] to you a small [herd] before me, [and it] has spread abroad abundantly. Therefore, Y^ehowah has blessed you wherever I turned, but now I [must] attend to my [own] household.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:29–30 Jacob then said to him, “You certainly know just how well I have served you. You began with a small herd before I came here, and now they have spread across the land in great abundance. Jehovah has blessed you at each turn, but it is now time for me to provide for my own household.” (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen. 30:29–30 Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?" (ESV)

Jacob States His Case (Several Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob puts his case. His activity has turned their fortunes and their flocks and herds have multiplied. And he agrees with Laban that this is due to Yahweh his God. But now it is time for him to consider his own prosperity. He wants flocks and herds of his own for the benefit of his family.*³⁸⁰

Poole: *[Jacob told Laban and his flock was prospered at his hand, based upon] How carefully it was managed, and how greatly improved by my care and industry.*³⁸¹

H. C. Leupold: *The rest of Jacob's argument now runs modestly as follows: I have done all in my power to provide for you and have done my work very successfully; "when am I to provide for my own house also?" The fairness of the demand can hardly be questioned.*³⁸²

I would not be surprised to know that Jacob is bluffing here—that he had no intention of moving back to Canaan at this point, unless Laban gives him no other choice. Do not forget that, even though Jacob is a hard and honest worker, he is still a manipulator.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:25–30 Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart."

But Laban said to him, "If now it [I have found favor in your eyes] pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account."

He continued, "Name me your wages, and I will give it."

But he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also."

Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:25–30: God Prospers Jacob at Laban's Expense

1. The birth of Jacob's 11th son (12th child) marks the dividing line between the 2nd and 3rd stages of

³⁸⁰ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:29–31.

³⁸¹ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:29.

³⁸² From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:25–30: God Prospers Jacob at Laban's Expense

- Jacob's employment.
2. The first stage was non eventful with the love-struck Jacob working for the sole purpose of gaining Rachel as his wife.
 3. The second stage was very eventful with the birth of 12 children by four wives over a 84 month period (7yrs).
 4. The interpreter is challenged to fit the births into a seven year period considering the constraints imposed by the narrative.
 5. There is no way the pregnancies could have been one after the other as that would require 108 months (9 x 12).
 6. If Leah's first four sons came one right after the other then 36 months (or 3 years) of the 84 are accounted for.
 7. At this point Leah quit bearing because she wasn't having sexual relations with Jacob due to Rachel's interference.
 8. Rachel's angst over this development spurred her to take a proactive measure and she offered Jacob her maid Bilhah as wife which produced the fifth son Dan.
 9. This was no doubt done while Leah was pregnant with Judah (4th son).
 10. If Bilhah conceived immediately after Leah became pregnant with Judah, then five of the sons can be accounted for in a little in the first three years of the seven year cycle(36+ months).
 11. Leah and Rachel's maid Bilhah were with child during the 4th nine month cycle with Judah born first and Dan born shortly thereafter.
 12. Bilhah conceives one more time starting the 5th nine month cycle concluding with 45 months of the 84 month cycle.
 13. If Leah joined the competition giving her maid Zilpah to Jacob as wife at the outset of the 2nd pregnancy of Bilhah, then the 5th nine month cycle begins and ends with about 45 months into the 84 month period being accounted for.
 14. The two maids were with child at the same time during this cycle.
 15. At this juncture 45 months have elapsed with the birth of 7 sons.
 16. Zilpah, like her counterpart Bilhah, has a 2nd and final pregnancy, which accounts for the 6th nine month cycle, making a grand total of 54 months of the 84 month period.
 17. Now we have accounted for the birth of 8 sons over a 54 month period with 30 months left and four children to go.
 18. Immediately after this, Leah resumes sexual relations with her husband and bears him sons' # 5 and 6 (sons 9 and 10), bringing the total number of children to 10, while the number of months elapsed is about 72 (periods 8 and 9).
 19. Leah becomes pregnant one more time and nine months later gives birth to a daughter bringing the 7 year era to the c. 81st month (9x9).
 20. This does not leave any time for the Rachel pregnancy.
 21. So, it must be that Rachel became pregnant shortly after Leah became pregnant with Dinah.
 22. In period #9 Leah and Rachel are pregnant simultaneously.
 23. Four months are left over out of the 83 month or 7 year era to be inserted at intervals to account to the overlapping pregnancies or Leah/Bilhah, Bilhah/Zilpah, and Leah/Rachel.
 24. The advantage of this scheme is that it keeps the pregnancies within the 84 month period, and it follows the sons' order of birth as narrated in chapters 29 and 30.
 25. Leah was pregnant 63 months out of the 84 months!
 26. There is about 18 months when she "stopped bearing" between the births of Judah and Issachar.
 27. Bilhah and Zilpah were with child 18 months respectively.
 28. Rachel was pregnant with Joseph the last 9 months of the seven year period.
 29. Upon the birth of Joseph and the end of the 2nd seven years of "free" labor Jacob approaches Laban for permission to return to his homeland with his wives and children (vv. 25-26).
 30. Having fulfilled his agreement to work seven more years so he could have Rachel wife he has no further obligation to Laban.
 31. "Send me away" is absent any polite interjection.

Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:25–30: God Prospers Jacob at Laban's Expense

32. Where he desires to go his "my own place and to my own country/homeland."
33. This shows that Jacob's heart was still connected to the land of the covenant.
34. The land was his by promise (cf. 28:4, 13).
35. Jacob wants his freedom and to keep his wives and children.
36. Jacob reminds Laban that he has served him with all due diligence as incentive for his timely release (v. 26b "for you know my service which I have done for you.").
37. Laban's exceptional prospering during the 14 years Jacob tended his flocks speaks for itself.
38. Laban's lead-in to his solicitation of Jacob's goodwill is a part of the front he put forth to gain an advantage.
39. His words "If I have found favor in your eyes" are polite but ring hollow.
40. Laban is a user whose politeness is butters up his would-be victim.
41. Laban admits that his recent prospering is to be explained in light of the doctrine of blessing by association (v. 27).
42. Laban's colorful speech has him saying "I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account."
43. Laban probably did not engage in divination although it would not have been beneath him if he thought he could prosper by it.
44. His expression here is simply a figure of speech for "I have learned by experience..."
45. The verb 'to divine' (nachash) is well attested in the OT for the practice of sorcery/divination.
46. The cognate noun nachash means "divination " or "serpent" as the context specifies.
47. Again, Laban seeks to butter-up Jacob.
48. His observation with respect to his material prospering is none-the-less true.
49. For individuals blessed by association through heirs of the covenant, there is Lot, Abimelech, Potiphar and Pharaoh.
50. Laban owed Jacob nothing and if Jacob was to leave with nothing more than wives and children, he must work another seven years.
51. Laban feels he cannot let go a man who has brought him such prosperity.
52. Without any further elaboration he commands Jacob to set his wages (v. 28).
53. Laban also figures that he can get the better of Jacob.
54. Being the negative type believer that he is Laban does not factor in divine intervention on Jacob's behalf even though he admits that his prosperity is due to Jacob.

Ballinger's title is actually for vv. 25–43.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

I was considering shaving off Laban's and separating out a v. 31a; but I decided against that.

And so he says, “What shall I give to you?” And so says Jacob, “You will not give to me anything; if you do for me the word the this: let me return; I will shepherd your flock; I will guard [them]. I will pass through every flock of yours the day removing every lamb speckled and patched and every lamb black in the lambs and patched and speckled in the goats—and was my wage. And answers in me my righteousness in a day tomorrow, for you will come upon my wage to your faces. All which are not speckled and patched in the goats and black in the lambs stolen him with me.”

Genesis
30:31–33

Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] said, “What should I give you?” And Jacob answered, “You will not give me anything, if you do this thing for me: let me return [and] I will shepherd and guard your flock. I will pass through all your flocks today, removing every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb among the lambs, along with the speckled and patched [animals] among the goats—[such as] would be my wage. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you come to my wage [that is] before you. All the goats which are not speckled or patched or black lambs [that are] with me [after this time will be considered] stolen.”

Laban therefore asked, “What exactly should I give to you?” Jacob answered, “You will not give me anything if you can do this one thing for me: let me return and I will shepherd and guard your flock. Furthermore, I will pass through all of your flocks today and remove every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb from among your lambs; and the speckled and patched goats as well—those animals which could be mistaken for my wages. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you consider my wage. Furthermore, the goats and lambs with me that are not speckled, patched or black will be considered stolen.”

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)

And so he says, “What shall I give to you?” And so says Jacob, “You will not give to me anything; if you do for me the word the this: let me return; I will shepherd your flock; I will guard [them]. I will pass through every flock of yours the day removing every lamb speckled and patched and every lamb black in the lambs and patched and speckled in the goats—and was my wage. And answers in me my righteousness in a day tomorrow, for you will come upon my wage to your faces. All which are not speckled and patched in the goats and black in the lambs stolen him with me.”

Targum (Onkelos)

And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me anything; but if thou wilt do with me this matter, I will return, and, pasturing thy flocks, will keep (them). I will pass through all thy flocks to day, and set apart from them every lamb streaked and speckled, and every black lamb among the lambs, and the streaked and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. And my righteousness shall be testified in the day following, when thou wilt come upon my reward that shall be before thee: every one which is not streaked or speckled among the goats, and black among the lambs, that shall be (as if) stolen by me.

Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)

And he said, What shall I give thee ? And Jakob said, Thou shalt not give me anything else, (but) do me this thing, and I will return and pasture thy flock, and keep them. I will pass through thy whole flock to-day, and will set apart every lamb streaked and spotted, and every black lamb among the lambs, and spotted and streaked among the goats, and they shall be my wages. [JERUSALEM. Every lamb spotted and streaked, and every black lamb among the lambs, and the spotted and streaked among the goats.] And my righteousness shall testify for me tomorrow, when my wages shall be brought before thee. Every one which is not streaked or spotted among the goats, or black among the lambs, shall be as if it had been a theft of mine.

Revised Douay-Rheims	And <u>Laban</u> said: What shall I give you? But <u>he</u> said: I require nothing: but if you will do what I demand, I will feed, and keep your sheep again. Go round through all your flocks, and separate all the sheep of divers colours, and speckled: and all that is brown and spotted, and of divers colours, as well among the sheep, as among the goats, shall be my wages. And my justice shall answer for me to morrow before you when the time of the bargain shall come: and all that is not of divers colours, and spotted, and brown, as well among the sheep as among the goats, shall accuse me of theft.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	He said, "What shall I give you?" Ya'aqub said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will <u>again</u> feed your flock and keep it. I will pass through all your flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. This will be my hire. So my righteousness will answer for me hereafter, when you come concerning my hire that is before you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, that might be with me, will be counted stolen."
Peshitta (Syriac)	And <u>Laban</u> said, What shall I give you? And Jacob said, You shall not give me anything; if you will do for me the thing which I will tell you, I will go back to feed and keep your flock. I will pass through all your flock today, and select for myself from it every speckled and spotted lamb, and every brown lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and of such shall be my wages. Just as my innocence is evident today, so it will be in the future when my wages are brought before your presence; every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and brown among the white sheep, that shall be counted stolen by me.
Septuagint (Greek)	And <u>Laban</u> said to him, What shall I give you? and Jacob said to him, You shall not give me anything; if you will do this thing for me, I will <u>again</u> tend your flocks and keep them. Let all your sheep pass by today, and separate thence every grey sheep among the rams, and every one that is speckled and spotted among the goats-- this shall be my reward. And my righteousness shall answer for me on the morrow, for it is my reward before you: whatever shall not be spotted and speckled among the goats, and grey among the rams, shall be stolen with me.

Significant differences: The Latin, Greek and Aramaic may have *Laban* rather than *he*. The Latin has *he* rather than *Jacob*. Hebrew has *I will return*; the Greek (and possibly Aramaic) have *again*.

There is at least a difference in the order between the Greek and the Hebrew when it comes to Jacob passing through Laban's flock of sheep (that he took care of). The Latin lacks *lamb in the lambs*; and is somewhat different in what Jacob will separate out. The Aramaic appears to lack *in the lambs*. *Wage (s)* is the same as *hire, reward*.

The final 4 phrases are somewhat difficult to translate, and so there are minor differences among these ancient translations.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And Laban said, What am I to give you? And Jacob said, Do not give me anything; but I will again take up the care of your flock if you will only do this for me: Let me go through all your flock today, taking out from among them all the sheep which are marked or coloured or black, and all the marked or coloured goats: these will be my payment. And so you will be able to put my honour to the test in time to come; if you see among my flocks any goats which are not marked or coloured, or any sheep which is not black, you may take me for a thief.
------------------------	---

Easy English

Laban asked 'What must I give you?' Jacob replied, 'Do not give me anything. But do one thing for me. Then I will still care for your animals. And I will see that nothing bad happens to them. Let me go among all your animals today. And let me remove any animal that has a mark on it. Let me remove any animal that has more than one colour on its skin. I will take them from your sheep and from your goats. These animals will be what I receive from you. And this will show that I am honest. You can check on my animals when you want to. I may have a sheep or a goat that does not have more than one colour on its skin. Then you can say that I have taken it from you.'

Easy-to-Read Version—2006

Laban asked, "Then what should I give you?"

Jacob answered, "I don't want you to give me anything! I only want you to let me do this one thing: I will go back and take care of your sheep. But let me go through all your flocks today and take every lamb with spots or stripes. Let me take every black young goat and every female goat with stripes or spots. That will be my pay. In the future you can easily see if I am honest. You can come to look at my flocks. If I have any goat that isn't spotted or any sheep that isn't black, you will know that I stole it."

God's Word™

Laban asked, "What should I give you?"

"Don't give me anything," Jacob answered. "Instead, do something for me, then I'll go back to taking care of and watching your flocks again. Let me go through all of your flocks today and take every speckled or spotted sheep, every black lamb, and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages. My honesty will speak for itself whenever you come to check on my wages. Any goat I have that isn't speckled or spotted or any lamb that isn't black will be considered stolen."

Good News Bible (TEV)

"What shall I pay you?" Laban asked.

Jacob answered, "I don't want any wages. I will continue to take care of your flocks if you agree to this suggestion: Let me go through all your flocks today and take every black lamb and every spotted or speckled young goat. That is all the wages I want. In the future you can easily find out if I have been honest. When you come to check up on my wages, if I have any goat that isn't speckled or spotted or any sheep that isn't black, you will know that it has been stolen."

International Children's B.

Laban asked, "Then what should I give you?"

Jacob answered, "I don't want you to give me anything. Just do this one thing. Then I will come back and take care of your flocks. 32Today let me go through all your flocks of white sheep and black goats. I will take every spotted or speckled lamb. I will take every black lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. That will be my pay. 33In the future you can easily see if I am honest. You can come to look at my flocks. If I have any goat that isn't speckled or spotted or any sheep that isn't black, you will know I stole it."

The Message

"So, what should I pay you?"

Jacob said, "You don't have to pay me a thing. But how about this? I will go back to pasture and care for your flocks. Go through your entire flock today and take out every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb, every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages. That way you can check on my honesty when you assess my wages. If you find any goat that's not speckled or spotted or a sheep that's not black, you will know that I stole it."

NIRV

"What should I give you?" Laban asked.

"Don't give me anything," Jacob replied. "Just do one thing for me. Then I'll go on taking care of your flocks and watching over them. Let me go through all your flocks today. Let me remove every speckled or spotted sheep. Let me remove every dark-colored lamb. Let me remove every speckled or spotted goat. They will be my pay. My honesty will be a witness about me in days to come. It will be a witness every time you check on what you have paid me. Suppose I have a goat that

doesn't have speckles or spots. Or suppose I have a lamb that isn't dark colored. Then it will be considered stolen."

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Laban said, "What will I pay you?" Jacob said, "Don't pay me anything. If you will do this for me, I will take care of your flock again, and keep a portion. I will go through the entire flock today, taking out all of the speckled and spotted sheep, all of the black male lambs, and all of the spotted and speckled female goats. That will be my price. I will be completely honest with you: when you come to check on our agreement, every female goat with me that isn't speckled or spotted and every male lamb with me that isn't black will be considered stolen."
Contemporary English V.	"How much do you want me to pay you?" Laban asked. Then Jacob told him: I don't want you to pay me anything. Just do one thing, and I'll take care of your sheep and goats. Let me go through your flocks and herds and take the sheep and goats that are either spotted or speckled and the black lambs. That's all you need to give me. In the future you can easily find out if I've been honest. Just look and see if my animals are either spotted or speckled, or if the lambs are black. If they aren't, they've been stolen from you.
New Berkeley Version	When Laban asked, "What shall I pay you?" Jacob replied, "Pay me nothing. I will go back and pasture and tend your stock, if you will agree with me on this: Today I will inspect all your livestock and separate from them all the speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and all the spotted and speckled of the goats; these will compose my wages. My fairness will testify for me in the days ahead. When you examine my wages before you and find among the goats any that are not speckled or spotted and among the sheep any that are not black, you may consider them stolen."
New Century Version	Laban asked, "Then what should I give you?" Jacob answered, "I don't want you to give me anything. Just do this one thing, and I will come back and take care of your flocks. Today let me go through all your flocks. I will take every speckled or spotted sheep, every black lamb, and every spotted or speckled goat. That will be my pay. In the future you can easily see if I am honest. When you come to look at my flocks, if I have any goat that isn't speckled or spotted or any lamb that isn't black, you will know I stole it."
New Life Version	Laban said, "What should I pay you?" Jacob said, "Do not pay me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again feed and take care of your flock. Let me go through your whole flock today. Let me take out of it every sheep and every goat that has spots, and every black lamb. These will be my pay. So my fair actions will answer for me later, when you come to look at what I have been paid. If you find any sheep or goat without spots or any lamb that is not black, you may think of them as stolen."
New Living Translation	"What wages do you want?" Laban asked again. Jacob replied, "Don't give me anything. Just do this one thing, and I'll continue to tend and watch over your flocks. Let me inspect your flocks today and remove all the sheep and goats that are speckled or spotted, along with all the black sheep. Give these to me as my wages. In the future, when you check on the animals you have given me as my wages, you'll see that I have been honest. If you find in my flock any goats without speckles or spots, or any sheep that are not black, you will know that I have stolen them from you."

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Then Laban asked: 'What should I give you?'
------------------------	---

And Jacob replied, 'Don't give me anything... just do this one thing for me: I will continue to watch over your flocks and tend them, and as your sheep pass by each day, let me set aside the dark sheep and the speckled and spotted goats as my reward. So tomorrow, my righteousness will answer for me, because this will be my reward from you. You can steal back any goats that aren't spotted or speckled, or any sheep that aren't dark.'

Beck's American Translation "What should I give you?" he asked.

"Don't give me anything," Jacob answered. "I'll feed and watch your flock again if you'll do one thing for me. I'll go through your whole flock today and take out of it every speckled or spotted sheep and every black lamb and any of the goats that are spotted and speckled. That will be my pay. My honesty will speak for me any day you come and look at the animals you pay me with. If I have any goat that isn't speckled or spotted, any lamb that isn't black, it's stolen."

International Standard V

"What do I have to give you?" Laban asked.

Jacob responded, "You don't have to give me anything. Just do this for me: Let me tend your flock again and watch over it. Let me walk among your flocks today and remove every speckled or spotted sheep, along with every black lamb, and let me do the same with the speckled and spotted goats. These will be my wages. In the future, you'll be able to verify my honesty because, when you come to checkp what I've earned, if you find a goat that's not speckled or spotted or a sheep that's not black, then it will have been stolen by me."

Revised Knox Bible

What shall I give you? Laban asked. Give me nothing, said he; but I will consent to feed and tend your herds still on this condition. Go round all your flocks, now, and remove from them every sheep that is speckled, or has a blotched fleece. And the hire you are to pay me shall be all the lambs that are born, even so, grey or spotted or speckled; and so with the kids. So, later, when our agreement is fulfilled, my honesty shall be on its trial; if I keep for myself any beast except those which are speckled or spotted or grey, whether it be lamb or kid, call me a thief.

Translation for Translators

Laban replied, "What do you want me to give you?" Jacob replied, "I do not want you to pay me anything. But if you will do this one thing for me, I will continue to take care of your flocks and protect them. Allow me to go and look at all of your flocks today and remove from them all the speckled sheep, all the spotted sheep, and every dark-colored lamb, all the goats that are speckled, and all the goats that are spotted, *and keep them for myself*. They will be my wages. In that way, in the future, you will be able to know whether I have been honest regarding what you have paid me. If any of my goats are neither speckled or spotted, or if any of my lambs are not dark-colored, you will know that I have stolen them from you."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

He was to say: I was to give to you. Jacob was to say: Was you to give me anything? - I was to do a concern, even was I to turn back, and was to tend, and was to keep them; I was to pass through your small cattle today, and am to turn aside the speckled, and they being spotted ones of small cattle, and the dark ones of the small cattle, of the sheep, and they being spotted and speckled, of the goats; even are these to be my wages. My righteousness is to have testified for me, in the days to come. Was it to come in, that of my wages, turned before you, there is all of them speckled and being spotted, of the goats, and dark, of the sheep - Is it being stolen?"

Conservapedia

And he said, "What would you have me give you?" And Jacob said, "Don't give me anything. Just do this one thing for me, and I will graze ["To graze" means "to allow to graze" here.] and keep your flock. I will pass through your whole flock today, to take away from it all the speckled and flecked cattle, and all the brown lambs among the sheep, and the flecked and speckled goats. This will be my wage My

righteousness will answer for me in future, when it will come for my wages before you: every one that is neither speckled nor flecked among the goats, nor brown among the sheep, that is in my possession, you may consider stolen." A common technique even today: anticipate the possible use of "fighting words."

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

But he replied ; " What shall I give ? "

Then Jacob answered ; " You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me I will conduct your sheep and guard them. I will go over all your sheep to-day counting, Every sheep speckled or spotted, and every black sheep among the lambs, and every spotted or speckled in the rams, they shall be my wages ; and you shall assign them justly to me from to-day forward, as my wages from you. All that is not spotted or speckled in the goats, or black in the sheep, it shall be a theft with me."

God's Truth (Tyndale)

And he said: what shall I give you? And Jacob answered: you shall give me nothing at all, if you will do this one thing for me: And then will I turn again, and feed your sheep and keep them.

I will go about all your sheep this day, and separate from them all the sheep that are spotted and of diverse colors, and all black sheep among the lambs, and the party and spotted among the kids: And the same shall be my reward. So shall my righteousness answer for me: when the time comes that I shall receive my reward of you: So that whatsoever is not speckled and party among the goats and black among the lambs, let that be theft with me.

H. C. Leupold

And he said: What shall I give thee? And Jacob said: Thou shalt not give me anything. Yet I will again pasture thy flocks; yea, and guard them, if thou wilt do for me this thing: I shall pass through thy entire flock today removing from it every sheep that is speckled and spotted and every one of the lambs that is black, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; that shall be my pay. Then my righteousness shall answer for me on any future day, if thou shalt come upon my hire before thee; everything that is not speckled or spotted among the goats or black among the lambs, it shall count with me as a thing stolen.

Lexham English Bible

And he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "Do not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed your flocks and keep [them]. Let me pass through all your flocks today, removing all the speckled and spotted sheep from them, along with every dark-colored sheep among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. That shall be my wages. And my righteousness will answer for me {later} when you come concerning my wages before you. Every [one] that [is] not speckled or spotted among the goats, or dark-colored among the sheep shall be stolen [if it is] with me."

Tree of Life Version

Then he said, "What can I pay you?"

Jacob said, "You don't need to pay me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will shepherd your flock again and watch it: let me pass through your flock today, removing every colorfully spotted lamb from there and every dark-colored lamb among the sheep as well as the colorfully spotted among the goats—and that will be my salary. So tomorrow my honesty will testify on my behalf when you come to check on my salary you agreed to. Every one that isn't colorfully spotted among the goats or dark-colored among the sheep with me, it is stolen."

Unlocked Literal Bible

So Laban said, "What will I pay you?" Jacob said, "You will not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it. Let me walk through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. These will be my wages. My integrity will testify for me later on, when you come to check on my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, if any are found with me, will be considered to be stolen."

Urim-Thummim Version And he answered, what will I give you? And Jacob replied, don't give me anything except do this one thing for me, I will return to feed and guard your flocks. Then let me pass through all your flocks today, removing from all of them the speckled and spotted flocks, and all the brown sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled from among the goats, and this will comprise my wages. So will my righteousness testify for me in the future, whenever you personally verify my wages: everyone then that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, or brown among the sheep, you will count those stolen by me.

Wikipedia Bible Project And he said, "What shall I give you", and Jacob said "You will not give me a thing--- if you do for me this one thing, I will return to keeping your flock, and herding it. Go over all your sheep, and remove every sheep which is dotted and spotted, and every brown sheep; the spotted and dotted goats; and these will be my wages. And on my honor, if you will come upon my wages before you: every one which is not dotted or spotted among the goats, and the brown sheep, I will consider to have been stolen."

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Laban asked, "What shall I give you?"
Jacob replied, "You will give me nothing, but if you do for me what I ask, I will continue to pasture and look after your flock. Today I shall go through your flock removing from it every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; these shall be my wages. My honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages. Any goat among my herd that is not spotted or speckled, any lamb found among the sheep in my possession that is not black will be counted as stolen."

The Heritage Bible And he said, What shall I give you? And Jacob said, You shall not give me a speck; if you will do this word for me, I will turn again to shepherd your flock, hedging them about I will cross over all your flock today, turning away from there all the flock animals speckled, and spotted, and all the brown flock animals from the young sheep, and the spotted and speckled from the goats; and it shall be my wages. And my righteousness shall answer for me in days to come, because it shall come before your face about payment; everyone that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and brown among the young sheep that is with me is stolen.

New American Bible (2002) "What should I pay you?" Laban asked. Jacob answered: "You do not have to pay me anything outright. I will again pasture and tend your flock, if you do this one thing for me: go through your whole flock today and remove from it every dark animal among the sheep and every spotted or speckled one among the goats. Only such animals shall be my wages. In the future, whenever you check on these wages of mine, let my honesty testify against me: any animal in my possession that is not a speckled or spotted goat, or a dark sheep, got there by theft!" Dark . . . sheep . . . spotted or speckled goats: In the Near East the normal color of sheep is light gray, whereas that of goats is uniform dark brown or black. Ordinarily, therefore, Jacob would have received but few animals.

New American Bible (2011) Laban asked, "What should I give you?" Jacob answered: "You do not have to give me anything. If you do this thing for me, I will again pasture and tend your sheep. Let me go through your whole flock today and remove from it every dark animal among the lambs and every spotted or speckled one among the goats.* These will be my wages. In the future, whenever you check on my wages, my honesty will testify for me: any animal that is not speckled or spotted among the goats, or dark among the lambs, got into my possession by theft!"

New Jerusalem Bible Laban said, 'How much am I to pay you?' Jacob replied, 'You need not pay me anything. I shall change my mind and go on tending your flock, if you do this one thing for me.'

'Go through your entire flock today and remove every black animal among the sheep, and every speckled or spotted one among the goats. These will be my wages, and my uprightness will answer for me later: when you come to check my wages, every goat I have that is not speckled or spotted, and every sheep that is not black will count as stolen by me.'

New RSV

He said, 'What shall I give you?' Jacob said, 'You shall not give me anything; if you will do this for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen.'

Revised English Bible

Laban said, "Then what shall I give you?" "Nothing at all," answered Jacob; "I will tend your flocks and be in charge of them as before, if you will do what I suggest. I shall go through your flocks today and pick out from them every black lamb, and all the brindled and the spotted goats, and they will be my wages. This is a fair offer, and it will be to my own disadvantage later on, when we come to settling my wages: any goat amongst mine that is not spotted or brindled and any lamb that is not black will have been stolen."

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Laban said, "What should I give you?" "Nothing," answered Ya'akov, "just do this one thing for me: once more I will pasture your flock and take care of it. I will also go through the flock and pick out every speckled, spotted or brown sheep, and every speckled or spotted goat; these and their offspring will be my wages. And I will let my integrity stand as witness against me in the future: when you come to look over the animals constituting my wages, every goat that isn't speckled or spotted and every sheep that isn't brown will count as stolen by me." Laban replied, "As you have said, so be it."

The Complete Tanach

And he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall give me nothing; if you do this thing for me, I will return, I will pasture your flocks, [and] I will watch [them]. I will pass throughout all your flocks today, removing from there every speckled and spotted kid, and every brown lamb among the sheep, and [every] spotted and speckled [one from] among the goats, and this shall be my wages.

speckled: Heb. דָּקָה, spotted with small patches like dots, poynture in Old French, speckled.

spotted: Heb. מְפֹלֵט, an expression of patches, wide spots.

brown: Heb. בָּרוּךְ, [Onkelos renders] שֶׁבֶט, somewhat reddish, rosso in Italian, reddish brown, russet. In the language of the Mishnah (B.B. 83b): "[If someone purchases] red (רֹדֵף) [wheat] and it was found to be white," regarding grain.

and this shall be my wages: Those that will be born from now on speckled or spotted among the goats or brown among the sheep shall be mine. Those that are here now, separate from them and entrust them with your sons, so that you do not say to me concerning those born from now on, "These were there from the beginning," and furthermore, so that you should not say to me, "Through the males that are speckled and spotted, the females will give birth to similar animals from now on."

And my righteousness will testify for me at a future date for it will come upon my wages before you. Whatever is not speckled or spotted among the goats or brown among the sheep [shall be counted as] stolen with me."

And my righteousness will testify for me, etc.: If you suspect me of taking anything of yours, my righteousness will testify for me. My righteousness will come and testify about my wages before you, that you will find in my flock only speckled and spotted ones, and whatever you find among them that is not speckled or spotted or brown, I have obviously stolen from you, and [only] through theft is it in my possession.

exeGeses companion Bible

And he says, What give I you?
 And Yaaqov says, You - give me naught
 - if you work this word for me:
 I return and tend and guard your flock:
 I pass through all your flock today,
 and turn aside from there
 all the branded and spotted lambs
 and all the brown lambs among the lambs
 and the spotted and branded among the goats:
 and they become my hire.
 Thus my justness answers for me
 in the day of the morrow,
 when it comes for my hire at your face:
 all that is not branded and spotted among the goats
 and brown among the lambs,
 that be counted stolen with me.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

He said, "What shall I pay you?" And Jacob said, "Pay me nothing! If you will do this thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flocks: let me pass through your whole flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted animal—every dark-colored sheep and every spotted and speckled goat. Such shall be my wages. In the future when you go over my wages, let my honesty toward you testify for me: if there are among my goats any that are not speckled or spotted or any sheep that are not dark-colored, they got there by theft."

Kaplan Translation

'What shall I give you?'
 'Do not give me anything. Just do this one thing for me. I will come back and tend your sheep, giving them the best care [Or 'waiting' (HaKethav VeHaKabbalah)]. I will go through all your flocks [with you] today. Remove every lamb that is spotted or streaked, every sheep that has dark markings. [Also remove] every goat that is streaked or spotted. It is with that kind that I will be paid.
 'In the future, this will be a sign of my honesty. I will let you inspect all that I have taken as my pay. Any goat that is not spotted or streaked, or any sheep without dark markings, that is in my possession can be considered stolen.'

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And he said, What shall I give thee? And Ya'akov said, Thou shalt not give me any thing; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again tend and be shomer over thy tzon. I will pass through all thy tzon today, removing from there speckled and spotted seh, and every dark seh among the kesavim, and the spotted and speckled among the izzim; and of such shall be my sacha.
 So shall my tzedakah answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my sachar before thy face; every one that is not speckled and spotted among the izzim, and dark among the kesavim, that shall be counted a ganav's with me.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible

Laban asked, "What shall I give you?" Jacob replied, "You shall not give me anything. But if you will do this one thing for me [which I now propose], I will again pasture and keep your flock: Let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every dark or black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and those shall be my

wages. So my honesty will be evident for me later, when you come [for an accounting] concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and dark among the young lambs, *if found* with me, shall be considered stolen.”

The Expanded Bible

Laban asked, “Then what should I give you?”

Jacob answered, “I don’t want you to give me anything. Just do this one thing, and I will come back and take care of [feed and watch] your flocks. Today let me go [pass] through all your flocks. I will take [remove] every speckled or spotted sheep, every black lamb, and every spotted or speckled goat. That will be my pay [wage; hire]. In the future you can easily see if I am honest [my honesty/righteousness will answer for me]. When you come to look at my flocks, if I have any goat that isn’t speckled or spotted or any lamb that isn’t black, you will know I stole it.”

Kretzmann’s Commentary

And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me anything; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock. It was now cunning against cunning, for Jacob declined to trust himself to the generosity of Laban, having learned to read the character of his uncle aright. 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. The terms of this contract were based upon the fact that the goats in the Orient are usually black or dark-brown, seldom white or speckled with white, the sheep on the contrary usually white, seldom black or speckled. The proposition, therefore, seemed to be very one-sided in favor of Laban. 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. If Laban should at any time find in his flocks such animals as did not measure up to this description, he was at liberty to accuse Jacob of theft.

NET Bible®

So Laban asked [*Heb* “and he said.” The referent (Laban) has been specified in the translation for clarity.], “What should I give you?” “You don’t need to give me a thing,” Jacob replied [The order of the introductory clause and the direct discourse has been rearranged in the translation for stylistic reasons.], “but if you agree to this one condition [*Heb* “If you do for me this thing.”], I will continue to care for [*Heb* “I will return, I will tend,” an idiom meaning “I will continue tending.”] your flocks and protect them: Let me walk among [*Heb* “pass through.”] all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb [Or “every black lamb”; *Heb* “and every dark sheep among the lambs.”], and the spotted or speckled goats [*Heb* “and the spotted and speckled among the goats.”]. These animals will be my wages [*Heb* “and it will be my wage.” The referent collective singular pronoun (“it”) has been specified as “these animals” in the translation for clarity.]. My integrity will testify for me [*Heb* “will answer on my behalf.”] later on [*Heb* “on the following day,” or “tomorrow.”]. When you come to verify that I’ve taken only the wages we agreed on [*Heb* “when you come concerning my wage before you.”], if I have in my possession any goat that is not speckled or spotted or any sheep that is not dark-colored, it will be considered stolen [*Heb* “every one which is not speckled and spotted among the lambs and dark among the goats, stolen it is with me.”].”

The Pulpit Commentary

And he (Laban, unwilling to part with so profitable an assistant) said, What shall I give thee? He was apparently prepared to detain Jacob at his own terms. And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me anything. Jacob did not design to serve Laban gratuitously, but chose rather to trust God than Laban for recompense (Wordsworth, Gosman in Lange); or he may have meant that he would have no wages of Laban’s setting, but only of his own proposing (Hughes). If thou wilt do this thing for me (accede to this stipulation), I will again feed and keep thy flock—literally, I will turn, I will tend thy flock, I will keep (sc. 2). I will pass through all thy flock

today,—wrongly rendered παρελθέτω πάντα τὰ πρόβάτα σου (LXX), *gyra per omnes greges tuos*, but "to remove," the verb being in the inf.—**all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats.** Since in Oriental countries sheep are commonly white and goats black, the number of speckled and spotted animals (i.e. sheep with little spots and largo patches of black, and goats with little or large points of white, in their hair) would be unusually small. **And of such shall be my hire**—i.e. the dark-spotted or entirely black sheep and white or white-speckled goats were to be Jacob's reward (Knobel, Delitzsch, Keil, Lunge), which was to be subsequently increased by whatever speckled animals might appear among the one-colored flocks; but it seems more probable that Jacob only claimed the latter, and, both to make the bargain more attractive to Laban and to show that he wanted nothing from Laban but only what God might be pleased in accordance with this arrangement to bestow, he suggested that the flocks and herds should be purged of all such speckled and spotted animals to begin with (Tuch, Baumgarten, Kurtz, Rosenmóller, Kalisch, Candlish; Murphy, 'Speaker's Commentary,' Clarke, Bush). **So shall my righteousness** (literally, and my righteousness) **answer for me** (or bear testimony in my behalf) **in time to come**,—literally, in the day, tomorrow; meaning in the future (Gesenius) rather than the day following (Delitzsch)—**when it shall come for my hire before thy face.** Either, (1) for it (my righteousness) shall come, concerning my wages, before thy face, sc. for consideration (Calvin); or, (2) when thou shalt come to my reward, connecting "before thy face" with the previous clause (Chaldee, Rosenmóller, Ainsworth, Lange); or, (3) when thou shalt come to my wages before thee (Murphy), or to inspect it (Kalisch). **Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me—and therefore to be delivered up to thee.**

The Voice

Laban: What do you want me to give you?

Jacob: I don't want you to give me anything. I only ask for one favor. Do this for me, and I'll keep on feeding and taking care of your flocks. Let me go through the flock today and put aside *for myself* every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and also the spotted and speckled goats, and this is how you can pay me. My honesty will be evident when you come to check on me. If you find one lamb or goat *among my flocks* that isn't speckled, spotted, or black, then you may count it as stolen.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and he said, what will I give to you, and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] said, you will not give to me anything if you will do to me this word, I will turn back, I will feed your flock, I will guard, I will cross over in all your flocks today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted ones of the flock and all of the black ones of the flock with the sheep and the spotted and speckled with the she-goats and he will exist as my wage, and my correctness will answer in me in a later day given that you will come because of my wage before you, all which are without the speckled and the spotted in the she-goats and the black in the sheep, he is stolen with me,...

Concordant Literal Version And saying to him is Laban, "What shall I give to you? And saying is Jacob, "Naught shall you give me. If you will do for me this thing, I will return: Graze will I your flock and keep it, pass will I among all your flock today to take away thence every speckled and flecked flockling, also every brown flockling among the sheep, and all the flecked and speckled among the goats, and it becomes my hire. And responding is my righteousness for me, on the morrow day, for on account of my hire shall it come before you. Every one in which there is no speck and fleck among the goats, and brown among the sheep, stolen is it if with me.

Modern English Version Laban said, "What may I give you?"

And Jacob said, “You may not give me anything, but if you will do this one thing for me, I will continue to feed and keep your flock. I will pass through all your flock today, removing from it all the speckled and spotted sheep, and every brown sheep from among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. These shall be my wages. So my integrity will answer for me in time to come. When you come to examine my wages, every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep that are with me will be considered stolen.”

NASB

So he said, “What shall I give you?” And Jacob said, “You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and *such* shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, *if found* with me, will be considered stolen.”

New European Version

He said, What shall I give you? Jacob said, You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed your flock and keep it. I will pass through all your flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted one, and every black one among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. This will be my hire. So my righteousness will answer for me hereafter, when you come concerning my hire that is before you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, that might be with me, will be counted stolen.

A Voice in the Wilderness

So he said, What shall I give you? And Jacob said, You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will turn back to feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages. So my righteousness shall testify for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if it is with me.

Young’s Updated LT

And he says, “What do I give to you?” And Jacob says, “You will not give me anything; if you do for me this thing, I turn back; I have delight; your flock I watch; I pass through all your flock to-day to turn aside from thence every sheep speckled and spotted, and every brown sheep among the lambs, and speckled and spotted among the goats—and it has been my hire; and my righteousness has answered for me in the day to come, when it comes in for my hire before your face; —every one which is not speckled and spotted among my goats, and brown among my lambs—it is stolen with me.”

The gist of this passage:

Laban asks what is a fair settlement; and Jacob offers to take all of the spotted and blotched lambs and goats.

31-33

Genesis 30:31a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

Genesis 30:31a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מַה) [pronounced maw]	<i>what, how, why; what [thing]; anything, something, whatever</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle; indefinite pronoun; relative pronoun	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
<p>(1) Mâh can also be used as an exclamatory adverb <i>how</i>; as in "How incredible is this place!" (Genesis 28:17b). (2) Mâh can also be used as an interrogatory adverb <i>how</i> to express that which is impossible, as in "How shall we justify ourselves?" (Genesis 44:16b). These two uses are often followed by an adjective or verb. (3) Mâh can also be used as an adverb of interrogation, meaning <i>why, wherefore</i>.</p>			
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: [Therefore, Laban](#) [lit., *he*] [said](#), ["What should I give you?"](#)

Laban asks Jacob to define what he believes would be a fair settlement. Bear in mind that Laban wants to keep Jacob working for him, if at all possible. Laban certainly wants to appear to be honest and reasonable.

Genesis 30:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'âmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced yah-ăuh-KOH ^B V]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
lô' (לֹא or לוֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

Genesis 30:31b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
m ^e ûwmâh (מִוּמָהּ) [pronounced m ^e -oo-MAW]	<i>anything, in any way; at all; it is usually found in negative sentences; therefore, with the negative, it is often rendered nothing</i>	indefinite singular pronoun/adverb	Strong's #3972 BDB #548
The NET Bible: <i>The negated imperfect verbal form has an obligatory nuance.</i> ³⁸³			
îm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
‘âsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare, to manufacture; accomplish</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced le]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
zeh (זֶה) [pronounced zeh]	<i>here, this, this one; thus; possibly another</i>	masculine singular demonstrative adjective with a definite article	Strong's #2088, 2090 (& 2063) BDB #260

Together, dâbâr zeh mean *this thing, this matter, this command*. Literally, together, they would be translated *the word the this*.

Translation: And Jacob answered, “You will not give me anything, if you do this thing for me:...

Although Jacob says, “You will not give me anything;” he quickly follows this with what Laban should give him. “Do this thing for me, and we are even,” is what Jacob says. What follows is what Jacob expects from Laban.

This agreement which Jacob will initiate does not require Laban to transfer anything from his bank account to Jacob's. Laban will not have to deliver once a month 10 sheep to Jacob as payment for his services. So, what Jacob is saying is, “You will not be required to take from any of your own personal fortune and give that to me.”

Jacob does not want to be indebted to Laban; he does not want Laban to feel as if he has given him too much. However, that is exactly how it will seem to Laban and his sons.

³⁸³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

Genesis 30:31c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b v]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect with the cohortative hê	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
The hê at the end is called a volunative hê and the verb itself is known as a cohortative and is often translated with the additional word <i>let, may, might, ought, should</i> .			
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced raw-ĠAWH]	<i>to shepherd, to pasture, to tend to graze, to feed; to rule?</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7462 BDB #944
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Also spelled ts ^o ôwn (צֹאֵן) [pronounced tseh-OWN].			
Clarke: צאן tson, implying, as we have before seen, all smaller cattle, such as sheep, goats, etc. ³⁸⁴			
shâmar (שָׁמַר) [pronounced shaw-MAR]	<i>to keep, to guard, to protect, to watch, to preserve</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #8104 BDB #1036

Translation: ...let me return [and] I will shepherd and guard your flock.

A time frame is not given here. Jacob promises that he will return to shepherd and guard Laban's flock. In that regard, things would remain unchanged.

Genesis 30:31 And he said, "What will I give you?" And Jacob said, "You will not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flock.

Genesis 30:31 Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] said, "What should I give you?" And Jacob answered, "You will not give me anything, if you do this thing for me: let me return [and] I will shepherd and guard your flock. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

There is a little curt exchange between the men. Laban says, "What do I need to give you to stay?" Then Jacob comes up with an offer he believes to be reasonable.

Bear in mind that we are dealing with two manipulators here. Laban wants Jacob to stay, but to pay him as little as possible. Jacob probably wants to remain to build up his own resources (I believe that his threat to return to Canaan was an empty threat); and yet, he realizes that he cannot make Laban think that he is taking advantage of him. He wants to make it seem as if this will be nothing to Laban, so that Laban will accept his meager salary demand.

H. C. Leupold: *By his question, "What shall I give you?" Laban admits that Jacob is quite justified in asking for a substantial flock for himself and appears quite ready to give it on the spot. Jacob knows the niggardly disposition of his father-in-law and that he will rue very shortly having parted with any of his goods. So Jacob says: "Thou shalt not give me anything" (me'û'mah, second last syllable*

³⁸⁴ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:32.

accented because the ultima is an old case ending, S. G. 90 f). Yet Jacob will do the work of a shepherd (*'er'eh* — "I will pasture") "yea, also guard them," i. e. use the best of caution in all his work on one condition which he is about to state, v. 32, 33. The plan suggested puts the possibility of acquiring wealth entirely in the providence of God.³⁸⁵

Genesis 30:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâbar (עָבַר) [pronounced <i>ġaw^b-VAHR</i>]	<i>to pass over, to pass through, to pass on, to pass, to go over [beyond], to cross, to cross over; to go away, to depart; to violate [a law]</i>	1 st person singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5674 BDB #716
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, <i>in all</i> . Although I don't have this in the lexicons, it is rendered by the most literal translations as <i>among all, through all, throughout all, with all</i> .			
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Clarke: צֹן <i>tson</i> , implying, as we have before seen, all smaller cattle, such as sheep, goats, etc. ³⁸⁶			
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today or this day (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
çûwr (סוּר) [pronounced <i>soor</i>]	<i>to cause to depart, to remove, to cause to go away; to take away; to turn away from</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
seh (שֶׁה) [pronounced <i>seh</i>]	<i>one of a flock, a lamb, a sheep, a goat; young sheep, young goats; collectively for a flock</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7716 BDB #961
nâqôd (נֶקֶד) [pronounced <i>naw-KODE</i>]	<i>spotted, speckled; marked with a brand</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5348 BDB #666

³⁸⁵ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017 (slightly edited).

³⁸⁶ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:32.

Genesis 30:32a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ṭâlâ' (טָלַא) [pronounced <i>taw-LAW</i>]	<i>patched, variegated; spotted</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #2921 BDB #378
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
seh (שֵׁה) [pronounced <i>seh</i>]	<i>one of a flock, a lamb, a sheep, a goat; young sheep, young goats; collectively for a flock</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #7716 BDB #961
chûwm (חֹמ) [pronounced <i>khoum</i>]	<i>darkened, dark color, dark brown, black</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #2345 BDB #299
Clarke: חֹמ <i>chum</i> . I should rather suppose this to signify a lively brown, as the root signifies to be warm or hot. ³⁸⁷			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
keseb (כֶּסֶב) [pronounced <i>KEH-sehb</i>]	<i>a lamb, a young ram, a sheep</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3775 BDB #461

Translation: I will pass through all your flocks today, removing every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb among the lambs,...

All of the lambs which were not one color would be removed from Laban's flock.

Genesis 30:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ṭâlâ' (טָלַא) [pronounced <i>taw-LAW</i>]	<i>patched, variegated; spotted</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #2921 BDB #378

³⁸⁷ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:32.

Genesis 30:32b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Clarke: <i>Spotted</i> – <i>טולטו talu, spotted with large spot either of the same or different colors, from טלח tala, to patch, to make party-colored or patch-work; see Ezekiel 16:16. I have never seen such sheep as are here described but in the islands of Zetland. There I have seen the most beautiful brown, or fine chocolate color among the sheep; and several of the ring-streaked, spotted, speckled, and piebald among the same; and some of the latter description I have brought over, and can exhibit a specimen of Jacob's flock brought from the North Seas, feeding in Middlesex.</i> ³⁸⁸			
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâqôd (נִקְוֶה) [pronounced <i>naw-KODE</i>]	<i>spotted, speckled; marked with a brand</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5348 BDB #666
Clarke: <i>Speckled</i> , נִקְוֶה <i>nakod, signifies interspersed with variously colored spots.</i> ³⁸⁹			
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʿêz (עֵז) [pronounced <i>gayz</i>]	<i>she-goat; in the plural, it can mean goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
sâkâr (שָׂכָר) [pronounced <i>saw-KAWR</i>]	<i>remuneration, hire, wages</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7939 BDB #969

Translation: ...along with the speckled and patched [animals] among the goats—[such as] would be my wage.

All the patchy and speckled goats would be removed. These kinds of lambs and goats would become Jacob's wage; but those already like that must be removed first.

Here, Jacob culls out all of the non-white goats and lambs, but any which were born thereafter would belong to Jacob.

Jacob has obviously thought about this for sometime. He knows how Laban has deceived him in the past and he wants to devise wages which are fair and equitable and cannot be tinkered with by Laban. Jacob is going to cull all the oddly colored sheep and goats from Laban's herds. Any born after this time will be Jacob's.

What is Jacob suggesting? He is suggesting that he work on commission. I once worked for a pet store for \$5/hour. However, on Sundays, where I would open up the store and be on my own, the owners would give me a quarter of the receipts for that day. If no one showed up, I made nothing; if I rang up \$400, then \$100 of that

³⁸⁸ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:32.

³⁸⁹ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:32.

was mine.³⁹⁰ It was an incentive to show up early, stay late, and to sell, sell, sell. This is not a new concept, even to Jacob. A hired shepherd might work for a percentage of the sheep and goats born.

Genesis 30:32 I will pass through all the flocks today, taking out all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all of the black sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and the speckled among the goats. And these will be my hire.

There has to be a way to separate out what would belong to Jacob and what would belong to Laban. The lambs and goats that are all white would be Laban's; and lambs and goats with spots, blotches or are black—those will be Jacob's. Therefore, it will be easy to separate these animals and to distinguish between them.

What Jacob is suggesting here is a bit confusing. These spotted and speckled sheep that he is culling out of the flock—those are not his. Those will all be given to Laban. Jacob is going to reduce his flock down to white sheep only. Then, any sheep who are not all white, born all these white sheep, will be Jacob's.

Jacob is saying, to some extent, "We will let God (or nature) decide what my wages will be." When he says, *these will be my hire*; he is referring to these categories of sheep. Given what happens in the remainder of this chapter, it is clear that Jacob is not depending upon God, but upon a scheme he has devised.

Jacob also has a plan; he is going to try to outsmart Laban at this point. Or, so he thinks. Bear in mind, both men will try to work situations and circumstances to their own advantage. Both men will look for whenever an advantage over the other can be taken, but they will do this without seeming obvious to the other.

Genesis 30:32 I will pass through all the flocks today, taking out all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all of the black sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and the speckled among the goats. And these will be my hire.

The Lambs and Goats which Jacob Lays Claim to (Various Commentators)

Henry M. Morris: *The dominant color traits in Laban's flocks and herds were evidently white among the sheep, black among the goats, and brown among the cattle. Most of the animals were of these colors, but there were a few that were spotted and speckled among the cattle and goats, and brown among the sheep. It was of such as these that Jacob's pay would be.*³⁹¹

J. Vernon McGee: *In other words, the pure breeds will be Laban's, but the offbreeds, those that are not blue-ribbon cattle, will be Jacob's. Jacob said, "You just let me have these, and that will be my wages." That sounds like a pretty good proposition for Laban.*³⁹²

Dr. Peter Pett: *Jacob is equal to his subtlety. He does not want anything specific now, he is prepared to wait for the future to decide in the terms of the bargain he will now outline. He will accept what God gives him.*³⁹³

My problem with what Dr. Pett has stated is the final sentence. It does not appear to me that Jacob sits back and trusts God. He has a scheme which he thinks will affect the breeding of these animals to give him a favorable outcome—that is where Jacob seems to place his trust. See **Genesis 30:37–42**.

Dr. Peter Pett continues: *Jacob is not here saying that the sheep and goats he separates out will be his. He expects nothing at this point in time (Genesis 30:31 b). They can be removed from the flocks. They will go with Laban (Genesis 30:35). But he is saying that he is prepared to accept any future speckled and spotted goats and black sheep once the flocks have been first purged of the ones that are alive at present.*

³⁹⁰ This was a substantial amount of money for a day's work at this time.

³⁹¹ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; p. 473.

³⁹² From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

³⁹³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:31.

The Lambs and Goats which Jacob Lays Claim to (Various Commentators)

Pett continues: *Considering the fact that most sheep were white, and most goats were dark brown or black, and that, separated from the speckled and black such were unlikely to bear black sheep or speckled offspring, the bargain must have seemed a good one to Laban and his sons. Jacob seemed to be deliberately making things difficult for himself. But what Jacob does not feel it necessary to explain is that he has probably made sure that the non-speckled and spotted goats and the non-black sheep have been carefully impregnated beforehand by the speckled and spotted goats and the black sheep, and that he has thus stacked the odds in his own favour. Two master tricksters are at work.*

Pett also adds: *Throughout the narrative five different words are used to designate the features that distinguished what belonged to Jacob (speckled, spotted, striped, ringstraked, grised and so on). These were no doubt technical terms clearly recognisable to shepherds in the area who would know exactly what was indicated.*³⁹⁴

Barnes: *These were the rare colors, as in the East the sheep are usually white, and the goats black or dark brown. "And such shall be my hire." Such as these uncommon party-colored cattle, when they shall appear among the flock already cleared of them.*³⁹⁵

Carroll: *God had marvelously blessed Laban on account of Jacob. Jacob had attended to his business so well...[so] that Laban did not want to lose Jacob. Jacob makes another proposition: "You shall not pay me any salary, but I propose that we leave it for divine providence to designate how much I ought to get. Most of the sheep are white, brown, or black, an unmixed colour. I propose that my part shall be the speckled, striped or ringstreaked."*³⁹⁶

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob's proposal to Laban is that he should serve for a wage, to be given, not in money, but in animals. The sheep in Syria are nearly always white, and the goats black; cf. Song of Songs. 4:1. Jacob asks that his wage should consist of the sheep that were not white and the goats that were not black. Laban's flocks would be, according to this arrangement, the great mass of the animals. To Jacob's share would fall the exceptions, the spotted and black among the sheep, the spotted and speckled among the goats.*³⁹⁷

Guzik: *This is an agreeable deal to both parties. First, it was a foolproof way to distinguish between the flocks of Laban and Jacob. As well, Laban liked the deal because the odds were stacked in his favor.*³⁹⁸ In fact, when Laban removes those who fit this description, he will stacks the odds against Jacob even more.

Murphy: *You will not give me anything. This shows that Jacob had no stock from Laban to begin with. Remove from there every speckled and spotted sheep, etc. These were rare colours, as in the East the sheep are usually white, and the goats black or dark brown. And such will be my hire. Such as these uncommon parti-coloured cattle, when they will appear among the flock already cleared of them; and not those of this description that are now removed.*³⁹⁹

³⁹⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:31–33.

³⁹⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

³⁹⁶ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

³⁹⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:32.

³⁹⁸ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:28–34.

³⁹⁹ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:31–33 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses) (slightly edited).

The Lambs and Goats which Jacob Lays Claim to (Various Commentators)

Dr. Bob Utley: *Jacob is going to take the off-colored (BDB 378, KB 375, used five times in Genesis 30:32–35) animals from the sheep and the goats. The off-colored animals from the sheep would be dark and the off-colored animals from the goats would be speckled or mottled. These unusually colored animals would normally be rare. This was for the obvious reason that Jacob by this time knew Laban and he did not want any questions about whose was whose in the future (cf. Genesis 30:33).*⁴⁰⁰

College Press Bible Study: *To understand Jacob's stratagem it must be understood that in the Orient sheep are normally white (Psalm 147:16; Song of Songs. 4:2; Song of Songs. 6:6; Dan. 7:9), and goats are normally black or brownish black (Song of Songs. 4:1). Exceptions to this differentiation, it is said, are not numerous, Jacob said at the beginning of the negotiations that Laban should not give him anything: in the proposition he is now making he is not changing his mind: he means simply that in subsequent breeding, separation of his animals from those of his father-in-law shall be determined by the principles of "selective breeding" which he now proposes.*⁴⁰¹

The Jerusalem Bible: *For his wages Jacob asks the abnormal animals (black sheep and white-spotted goats): Laban agrees, shrewdly, as he thinks. Jacob's plot is briefly this: 1. He sees to it that when the goats mate, Genesis 30:37–39, they are in sight of white-striped rods: this affects the formation of the embryo. 2. At the same time he makes sure that the sheep are looking at the black goats in the flock, v. 40. 3. For this operation he selects the robust strains, leaving the weaker animals and their offspring to Laban. In this way Jacob takes his 'honorable revenge'*⁴⁰²

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Normally goats in that land were black or dark brown, seldom white or spotted with white (See Song of Solomon 4:1; 6:5) while sheep were nearly always white, infrequently black or spotted (See Song of Solomon 4:2; 6:6; Isaiah 1:18; Daniel 7:9). Jacob proposes that all speckled and spotted among the sheep and goats and the dark colored lambs was to be his wages and the pure white sheep, the dark goats were to be considered Laban's property. Any spotted or speckled lambs or goats and dark colored sheep born in the future will be Jacob's property.*⁴⁰³

Keil and Delitzsch: *Jacob offered to feed and keep his flock still, upon one condition, which was founded upon the fact, that in the East the goats, as a rule, are black or dark-brown, rarely white or spotted with white, and that the sheep for the most part are white, very seldom black or speckled. Jacob required as wages, namely, all the speckled, spotted, and black among the sheep, and all the speckled, spotted, and white among the goats.*⁴⁰⁴

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob does not know whether it will please God to have him acquire wealth. Now to understand what follows it must be borne in mind that sheep are normally white in the Orient (cf. Ps. 147:16; Song 4:2; 6:6 Dan. 7:9); goats are normally black or brown-black (Song 4:1b). The exceptions to this rule are not numerous. Yet Jacob will take only the exceptions. If he is to acquire wealth according to God's will, the Almighty Disposer of events must grant it. This was a fine act of faith on Jacob's part. He cast himself wholly upon God's mercy.*⁴⁰⁵

Note, in particular, the words of Keil and Delitzsch.

It is not unusual for shepherds of the east to take a percentage of the flock produced in any given year. But Jacob does not even suggest that; he suggests that only specific and rare colors and markings would be his sheep.

⁴⁰⁰ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:32.

⁴⁰¹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

⁴⁰² *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

⁴⁰³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 479); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴⁰⁴ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:25–33.

⁴⁰⁵ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Trapp writes: *[W]hite and black sheep were most set by in Mesopotamia, so were the variously coloured in Palestine, Jacob's country; whence the shepherds there are called Nochudim, { Amos 1:1} that is, keepers of spotted cattle.*⁴⁰⁶ I do not know if this is true, but there are many pictures of such spotted and striped sheep and goats on the internet, and many of them are called *Jacob's sheep* or *Jacob's breed*.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Jacob's Goats (a photo); from [The Scripture Says.org](#); accessed September 15, 2017. Because of this incident, oddly-colored goats are often called *Jacob's goats* in the Middle Eastern world.



Jacob is going to separate out the animals which belong to Laban, but fit the description of the animals that belong to him. Laban will later come and remove them from Jacob's control entirely. He will give them to his sons and they will keep these animals a 3-day distance apart from Jacob's flock (vv. 35–36).

Several commentators state that Jacob, by making this deal, was depending upon God and God working among the sheep and goats to give Jacob his fair share. Morris writes: *Jacob...had put himself entirely in God's mercy. It would be up to the Lord to indicate, by a very unlikely set of circumstances, whether Jacob should prosper personally or not.*⁴⁰⁷ However, we do not find any particular appeals to God by Jacob; we find a breeding scheme which he engages in. My thinking is, he was dependent upon this breeding scheme that he had in mind for his vindication. Furthermore, let me suggest that Jacob thought this scheme to be brilliant and infallible.

Genesis 30:32 I will pass through all the flocks today, taking out all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all of the black sheep among the lambs, and the spotted and the speckled among the goats. And these will be my hire.

The Deal which Jacob and Laban Struck (a discussion)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[This] proposal seemed so much in favor of Laban, that he at once agreed to it.*⁴⁰⁸

Whedon: *The Syrian sheep are said to be usually all white, and the goats black or brown. This seems to have been the case with Laban's flocks, so that Jacob's proposition would leave Laban with by far the larger proportion of the flocks and their probable increase.*⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁶ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:32.

⁴⁰⁷ Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; p. 473.

⁴⁰⁸ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:32.

⁴⁰⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:32.

The Deal which Jacob and Laban Struck (a discussion)

College Press Bible Study: Laban “not only recognizes, almost fawningly, Jacob’s worth to his house, but is even willing to yield unconditionally to his determination—a proof that he did not expect of Jacob too great a demand. But Jacob is not inclined to trust himself to his generosity, and hence his cunningly calculated though seemingly trifling demand. Laban’s consent to his demand, however, breathes in the very expression the joy of selfishness; and it is scarcely sufficient to translate: Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. But Jacob’s proposition seems to point to a very trifling reward, since the sheep in the East are nearly all white, while the goats are generally of a dark color or speckled. For he only demands of Laban’s herds those sheep that have dark spots or specks, or that are entirely black, and those only of the goats that are white-spotted or striped. But he does not only demand the speckled lambs brought forth thereafter, after the present number of such are set aside for Laban (Tuch, Baumgartner, Kurtz), but the present inspection is to form the first stock of his herds (Knobel, Delitzsch)...As often as Laban came to Jacob’s herds in the future he must regard all the increase in speckled and ringstreaked lambs as Jacob’s property, but if he found a purely white sheep or an entirely black goat, then, and not only then, he might regard it as stolen.⁴¹⁰

The Pulpit Commentary: **Jacob’s Remarkable Contract with Laban.** He agrees to serve a third time with Laban on condition of receiving all the speckled and spotted, ringstreaked and brown, animals that Laban’s flocks might produce, after all- of those sorts had been previously removed.

1. The proposal of such a singular condition on the part of Jacob was an act not of folly, but of faith, being tantamount to a committal of his cause to God instead of Laban.
2. The acceptance of it on the part of Laban was a pitiful display of greed, and a proof that the bygone years of prosperity had both awakened in his soul the insatiable demon of avarice and extinguished any spark of kindly feeling towards Jacob that may have once existed in his breast.⁴¹¹

Firstly, we know that Jacob agrees to this contract not from great, abiding faith in God (such faith is not mentioned in this chapter); but Jacob has a plan, which we will study in vv. 37–42.

Laban, at this time, was very successful, and due to Jacob—which Laban is aware of and readily admits to. At this point, I don’t think that Laban has any strong negative feelings towards Jacob, because Jacob has proposed a plan which Laban will get the best of (so he thinks). Now, as time progresses, Laban and his sons will develop some very negative attitudes against Jacob, but that is because Jacob will prosper greatly under this and subsequent agreements.

College Press Bible Study: *[Jacob] would depend on divine providence and his own skill.*⁴¹²

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *in Genesis 30:32-33, Jacob makes a proposition to Laban, which would give the Lord an opportunity to bless him materially as the Lord had blessed Laban materially through his association with Jacob. This proposal would bring blessing to Jacob without taking anything belonging to Laban and thus would give God the glory and would also demonstrate Jacob’s great faith in the Lord.*⁴¹³

I would take issue with some of these opinions, if only in terms of emphasis. I believe that Jacob thought that he had a plan that would not fail, so his faith was in himself and his *brilliance* as a breeder.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Wenstrom suggests that Laban would have agreed to any deal because he was not going to let Jacob leave with any of his herd: *Laban’s question to Jacob, “what shall I give you” sounds reasonable but*

⁴¹⁰ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:27–43.

⁴¹¹ *The Pulpit Commentary*; 1880-1919; by Joseph S. Exell, Henry Donald Maurice Spence-Jones, from e-sword, Genesis 30:25–43 (homiletics) (edited).

⁴¹² *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

⁴¹³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 479); accessed September 9, 2017.

*it is actually a question used to deceive Jacob since later on we see that Laban had no intention of letting Jacob leave with anything of his.*⁴¹⁴

Wenstrom also suggests, with many others, that Jacob's offer shows great faith in God: *Jacob's proposal put himself entirely at the mercy of the Lord and was a great act of faith in the Lord on his part.*⁴¹⁵

I do not recall anything in Genesis 31 which suggests that this was Laban's mindset; but I would certainly not deny that this is a possibility. Laban is clearly a greedy man and he has sons to leave his business and his fortunes to; and he does not appear to have any close ties to Jacob or even to his two daughters and their children. Or, perhaps Laban is open to any agreement which keeps Jacob's family there.

Genesis 30:32 I will pass through all your flocks today, removing every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb among the lambs, along with the speckled and patched [animals] among the goats—[such as] would be my wage. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:32 I will pass through all your flocks today, removing every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb among the lambs, along with the speckled and patched [animals] among the goats—[such as] would be my wage.

Jacob removes some of the sheep and goats (Various Commentators)

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *Eastern sheep being generally white, the goats black, and spotted or speckled ones comparatively few and rare, Jacob proposed to remove all existing ones of that description from the flock, and to be content with what might appear at the next lambing time.*⁴¹⁶

Schmidt: *[W]hen any complaint should come before Laban concerning his hire, or about any speckled and spotted cattle that were Jacob's hire, as if he had wronged him of it, the action now done, by making such a separation, would be a sufficient vindication of him, and justify him from such an aspersion.*⁴¹⁷

Poole: *The sense is: Then, when the speckled, and spotted, and brown are separated, and none but white remaining, my hire shall be out of those white ones, and that in such manner as is expressed in Genesis 30:33, all the white young ones shall be thine, and the speckled, and spotted, and brown which shall be brought forth by those white ones shall be mine.*⁴¹⁸

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The removal of these spotted and speckled lambs and goats and dark colored sheep would "not" later be considered Jacob's property since he has already stipulated in Genesis 30:31 that he wants nothing that is Laban's! Therefore, Jacob is not changing his mind but is referring to all "future" speckled or spotted lambs and goats and dark colored sheep, which would be his property and so he is actually proposing to start with nothing from the outset. The removal of these spotted and speckled colored animals was to ensure that Jacob received nothing that was Laban's.*⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 479); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴¹⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 480); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴¹⁶ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:32.

⁴¹⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:33.

⁴¹⁸ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:32.

⁴¹⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 479); accessed September 9, 2017.

Jacob removes some of the sheep and goats (Various Commentators)

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob proposes to go through all the flocks in person and separate that very day every one of the abnormally coloured sheep or goats, i. e. the naqôdh, covered with smaller spots, or "speckled," and the talû', marked by larger spots, or "spotted." Though he says, "that shall be my pay," yet this remark must be held against his initial statement: "Thou shalt not give me anything" (v. 31). Jacob is not now changing his mind. He merely means all future speckled or spotted lambs and goats shall be my pay. He actually asks for nothing at the outset.*⁴²⁰

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:33a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, וְ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ânâh (אָנָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-NAWH</i>]	<i>to answer, to respond; to speak loudly, to speak up [in a public forum]; to testify; to sing, to chant, to sing responsively</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #6030 BDB #772
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ts ^e dâqâh (צְדָקָה) [pronounced <i>ts^edaw-KAW</i>]	<i>rectitude, right; justice; righteousness, executed righteousness and justice, righteous vindication</i>	feminine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6666 BDB #842
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today or this day (with a definite article); possibly immediately</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
mâchâr (מָחָר) [pronounced <i>maw-KHAWR</i>]	<i>literally, tomorrow; but figuratively it can mean afterwards, in time to come, in the future, in a future time; later on, down the road (chronologically speaking)</i>	adverb of time	Strong's #4279 BDB #563

Translation: My righteousness will answer for me on another day...

Jacob has been honest in his dealings with Laban, and it appears that he is saying, he will be vindicated in the future. He will be vindicated by those he will eventually be able to keep from Laban's herds.

⁴²⁰ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Some people have trouble understanding that there are figures of speech in the Bible. The concept of inspiration is that the writers of Scripture record God's Words using their own vocabulary, own feelings and thoughts and their own figures of speech. We all use figures of speech, even the most literal of us. Here it is obvious. A human action is ascribed to the noun *integrity*. Integrity does not actually speak or have a conversation with anyone or anything. This figure of speech is called a somatiopoeia [pronounced *SO-mat-o-PAE-ia*]. *Soma* comes from a Greek word meaning body, and this figure of speech is when a human action or attribute or feeling has a human function like speaking attributed to it. That is, this human action, attribute or feeling has a body ascribed to it along with the functions of the body, such as speaking.

Genesis 30:33a [My righteousness will answer for me on another day...](#)

Whedon: *Hebrew, in the day of to-morrow; meaning, any and every tomorrow. From that day forward there would be no dispute over rights in the cattle, for the colour would decide.*⁴²¹

Furthermore, Jacob says that he will be shown to be the righteous one from that day forward.

Genesis 30:33a [My righteousness will answer for me on another day...](#)

“My righteousness will answer for me...” (Various Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *The righteous position in the eyes of the tribe will be that in future any speckled goats and black sheep found in the part of the flocks over which he has care will be his and his righteousness before them will be demonstrated by his only retaining these separately as his own.*⁴²²

The Cambridge Bible: *[Jacob looks to be justified by] my righteousness] i.e. my uprightness, honesty, and straightness of dealing. answer for me] i.e. “testify with regard to me”; or, better, as in 1Samuel 12:3 (Samuel: “Here I am; testify against me before the LORD and before his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Or whose donkey have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or from whose hand have I taken a bribe to blind my eyes with it? Testify against me and I will restore it to you.”, 2Samuel 1:16, “witness against me.”*⁴²³

The Geneva Bible: *God shall attest to my righteous dealing by rewarding my labours.*⁴²⁴

Gill: *So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come,.... Either by the success I shall have, and the blessing of God upon me, making it prosperous; it will appear in time to come, and to all posterity, that I have most righteously and faithfully served thee: or rather, such a separation being made in Laban's flock, all the spotted ones being removed, and only white ones left with Jacob to keep; it would be a clear case hereafter, if any such should be found with Jacob, they were not taken from Laban's flock, but were what in Providence he was blessed with, and came by honestly and righteously.*⁴²⁵

Poole: *[Jacob is saying] When you will accuse me of doing you injury, I will have this manifest and undeniable evidence of my righteousness or innocency, that I have no cattle but of that colour which is by agreement appropriated to me.*⁴²⁶

⁴²¹ Whedon's *Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:33 (slightly edited).

⁴²² Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:31–33.

⁴²³ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:33.

⁴²⁴ Geneva Bible Translation Notes; 1599, courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:33.

⁴²⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:33.

⁴²⁶ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:33 (slightly edited).

“My righteousness will answer for me...” (Various Commentators)

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob expects that from time to time suspicious Laban will come, bent on investigating. Jacob expects to have a very clear case in such an event; for either flocks consist of such as are normally coloured, or they do not. One glance will always suffice to tell whether Jacob is dealing fairly or not; in other words, "my righteousness shall answer for me on any future day."*⁴²⁷

I see this as Jacob vouching for his own self-righteousness and not for God's imputed righteousness.

Jacob is concerned that his righteousness be recognized; Laban is looked for the greatest personal increase of sheep and goats.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:33b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>for, that, because; when, at that time, which, what time</i>	explanatory or temporal conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
bôw' (אוּב) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
'al (לְעַ) [pronounced <i>gah</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
sâkâr (שָׂכָר) [pronounced <i>saw-KAWR</i>]	<i>remuneration, hire, wages</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #7939 BDB #969
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural noun (plural acts like English singular); with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Together, they literally translate to, *to your faces*. However, they properly mean *before you, before your face, in your presence, in your sight, in front of you*. When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning *in Your judgment*.

Translation: ...when you come to my wage [that is] before you.

⁴²⁷ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Jacob's righteousness will be made clear when it comes to the point of Jacob recovering his wage for working for Laban. Jacob's wage are those oddly colored sheep and goats. It will be obvious; it will be right before Laban's eyes.

The NET Bible: *Jacob would have to be considered completely honest here, for he would have no control over the kind of animals born; and there could be no disagreement over which animals were his wages.*⁴²⁸

The idea is, Laban may come to check on Jacob and the sheep, to make certain that everything is above board, and it will be obvious, in his face, as it were, which sheep are Laban's and which belong to Jacob.

Genesis 30:33c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl ʾăsher mean <i>all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, whatever else, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
ʾēyn (אֵין) [pronounced <i>ān</i>]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; [there is] no [none, not one, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #369 BDB #34
nâqôd (נֶאֱדָ) [pronounced <i>naw-KODE</i>]	<i>spotted, speckled; marked with a brand</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #5348 BDB #666
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʾâlâʾ (אֵלֶּא) [pronounced <i>taw-LAW</i>]	<i>patched, variegated; spotted</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #2921 BDB #378
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
ʾêz (עֵז) [pronounced <i>gayz</i>]	<i>she-goat; in the plural, it can mean goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ, or וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
chûwm (חֹמ) [pronounced <i>khoun</i>]	<i>darkened, dark color, dark brown, black</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #2345 BDB #299

⁴²⁸ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 28, 2016.

Genesis 30:33c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	Strong's# none BDB #88
keseb (כֶּסֶב) [pronounced KEH-sehb]	<i>a lamb, a young ram, a sheep</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3775 BDB #461
gânab (גָּנַב) [pronounced gaw-NAH ^{BV}]	<i>stolen [from], taken [by theft or deceit]</i>	Qal passive participle	Strong's #1589 BDB #170
hûw' (אוּהוּ) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that; this; same</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun with a definite article	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced ayth]	<i>with, at, near, by, among, directly from</i>	preposition (which is identical to the sign of the direct object) with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #854 BDB #85

This preposition can also refer to being in one's possession or in one's keeping. This can also mean *to proceed from someone*. The key to this word is *close association with, close proximity to* beyond simple geographical proximity.

Translation: All the goats which are not speckled or patched or black lambs [that are] with me [after this time will be considered] stolen."

If Jacob takes with him any animals which are pure white, that will considered stealing. What appears to be the case is, Jacob is going to continue working for Laban until some unspecified date. At that time, Jacob will take all of the lambs and goats which are not solid. Jacob will begin watching over a herd with lambs and goats which have no markings like that.

Genesis 30:33 And will my righteousness answer for me in time to come, and it will come for my hire before your face. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, will be counted stolen with me."

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Jacob also proposes that if anything appears in his flocks, which is not speckled or spotted among the goats or black among the lambs was to be considered as stolen by him and Laban could promptly remove it and claim it as his own. So the issue will be clear-cut and deceit will be out of the question.*⁴²⁹

H. C. Leupold: *If anything appears in Jacob's flocks "not speckled or spotted," that is to be dealt with as "a thing stolen," that is to say, Laban may promptly remove it and claim it for his own. The issue will be very clear-cut. Deceit will be out of the question. With good reason, at least from this point of view, Jacob chose such a basis of division.*⁴³⁰

⁴²⁹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 480); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴³⁰ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Whatever the final result, Jacob is proposing a system that is almost foolproof. That is, anyone could later look at Jacob's flocks and pick out the animals which were his (Laban will later apparently sabotage that by continually changing Jacob's salary).

H. C. Leupold suggests that Jacob is demonstrating great faith here: *The bargain relative to Jacob's wages, as it was originally made, was actually an act of faith on Jacob's part.*

Then Leupold says that this is what caused Jacob to use his goofy breeding scheme: *But when Laban's several acts of mistrust came to light, it seems Jacob was somewhat shaken from his resolution to make an issue of faith of the whole matter; and so on his part he resorted to tricky devices in order to be assured of success. Mistrust lies behind Jacob's devices.*⁴³¹

I believe the Jacob's faith was in his scheme, which we will read about in Genesis 30:37–39. Personally, I believe that this was his plan all along. Now, later, when we come to the next chapter, Jacob will recognize that he prospered directly from God. He attributes nothing to his personal scheme. I think that suggests some spiritual advance.

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge suggests⁴³² inserting *if found* before *with me*, which would give us:

Genesis 30:33 And will my righteousness answer for me in time to come, and it will come for my hire before your face. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the sheep, will be counted stolen [if found] with me."

Genesis 30:33 My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you come to my wage [that is] before you. All the goats which are not speckled or patched or black lambs [that are] with me [after this time will be considered] stolen." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

When Jacob refers to *my righteousness*, this further suggests that he is telling Laban, we will see which one of us God chooses to bless.

These sheep and goats with various markings will be Jacob's; and those that are pure white in his herd will be considered Laban's. However, Jacob will begin with an all white herd of sheep and white or black goats.

Genesis 30:31–33 Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] said, "What should I give you?" And Jacob answered, "You will not give me anything, if you do this thing for me: let me return [and] I will shepherd and guard your flock. I will pass through all your flocks today, removing every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb among the lambs, along with the speckled and patched [animals] among the goats—[such as] would be my wage. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you come to my wage [that is] before you. All the goats which are not speckled or patched or black lambs [that are] with me [after this time will be considered] stolen." (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:31–33 Laban therefore asked, "What exactly should I give to you?" Jacob answered, "You will not give me anything if you can do this one thing for me: let me return and I will shepherd and guard your flock. Furthermore, I will pass through all of your flocks today and remove every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb from among your lambs; and the speckled and patched goats as well—those animals which could be mistaken for my wages. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you consider my wage. Furthermore, the goats and lambs with me that are not speckled, patched or black will be considered stolen." (Kukis paraphrase)

⁴³¹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

⁴³² *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:33.

Genesis 30:31–33 Laban therefore asked, “What exactly should I give to you?” Jacob answered, “You will not give me anything if you can do this one thing for me: let me return and I will shepherd and guard your flock. Furthermore, I will pass through all of your flocks today and remove every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb from among your lambs; and the speckled and patched goats as well—those animals which could be mistaken for my wages. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you consider my wage. Furthermore, the goats and lambs with me that are not speckled, patched or black will be considered stolen.”

The ESV will be used below.

The Deal Struck Between Jacob and Laban—a Summary

1. What the agreement is that Jacob is proposing, and which Laban will accept (Genesis 30:34) is slightly confusing, so let’s try to lay it out:
2. There are common and uncommon markings among sheep and goats. Jacob is saying that he will take the sheep born to Laban’s sheep which have the uncommon markings. Genesis 30:32
3. Jacob will isolate those kinds of sheep and goats from his flock. Genesis 30:32
4. Because these coloration of goats and sheep have been removed, Laban will not be able to impugn Jacob’s integrity in this deal. Genesis 30:33
5. To make certain that these oddly marked sheep and goats that belong to him are not used in this breeding or placed in with Jacob’s flock, Laban will remove them and place them with his sons. Genesis 30:35
6. Laban agrees to this deal. Genesis 30:34
7. There are two points of view when it comes to, *why did Jacob make this particular deal with Laban?*
 - 1) Jacob knew that he could trust God to oversee the breeding of the sheep and goats and make certain that Jacob was blessed.
 - 2) Jacob had a scheme in mind, unrelated to God.
 - 3) Commentators tend to be pretty split on this issue. Seems like about 50-50 to me, but I have not gone through and counted them up.
8. Let’s take the 1st approach first:
 - 1) Jacob knew that he could trust God to bless him—and, no matter what Laban did.
 - 2) Such approaches often cite a dream that Jacob has: *In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.* (Genesis 31:10)
 - 3) The problem is, this dream occurs a few years later; and in that dream, God will tell Jacob to leave Haran and return to Canaan. Genesis 31:11–13
 - 4) There is nothing in this context which separates this into two dreams—one where God tells Jacob everything is going to work out when it comes to breeding the flocks and the second where God tells Jacob, *It is time to leave and return to Canaan.*
 - 5) If there are two dreams, then Jacob has the dream about the breeding prior to talking with Laban about this new deal; and then, 4 or 5 years later, God give Jacob another dream, wherein, God tells Jacob to leave Haran.
 - 6) Here is how it is laid out: Gen 31:10–13 [Jacob is speaking to his wives:] *“In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am!’ And he said, ‘Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.”*
 - 7) It makes no sense for God to say, *“Now, arise, and go out from this land...”* and, at the same time, give Jacob assurances about breeding Laban’s sheep (which would imply that Jacob remain and breed sheep).
9. The 2nd approach is that Jacob has a scheme in mind, completely unrelated to anything that God has said or will say.
 - 1) Several verses in this chapter are given over to a scheme that Jacob has.

The Deal Struck Between Jacob and Laban—a Summary

- 2) Gen 30:37–42 Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks. He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the sticks and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks, but for the feebler of the flock he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.
- 3) Do you see? This is a full-blown breeding scheme. God did not tell Jacob to do any of this; nor is any of this scientifically sound.
- 4) God will act on Jacob's behalf, despite this goofy scheme that Jacob has cooked up.
10. What we read in Scripture very much supports the second approach. Jacob came up with this plan, and gave Laban an agreement that Laban could not turn down. Jacob figured that his scheme would overcome normal breeding practices and yield him a great many sheep and goats.
11. We will see that Jacob was wrong out his breeding scheme; but God would still honor Jacob and His agreement with Abraham, and see that breeding works in Jacob's favor.
12. There is a part of Jacob's plan which may have inadvertently worked. The more diverse the background of a sheep is, the strong it is. The more inbred a sheep is, the weaker that they are. Jacob will primarily breed the strong healthy sheep; so they will come ready-made with the genetic pool necessary to throw off oddly colored sheep. Genesis 30:41–42

Jacob's Flocks Increase

"What shall I give you?" Laban asked.

"Don't give me anything," Jacob replied. "But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them: Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages. And my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered stolen."



Genesis 30:31–33 Jacob’s Flocks Increase (a graphic); from [Warren Camp Design](#); accessed September 15, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so says Laban, “Behold, would that he is according to your word.” And so he removes the day the that the he-goats the striped [ones] and the spotted [ones] and all she-goats, the speckled and the spotted [ones], all that [had some] white in him and every black [one] in the lambs. And so he puts [them all] in a hand of his sons. And so he places [them] a journey of three of days between himself and between Jacob. And Jacob is feeding the flock of Laban the ones remaining.

Genesis
30:34–36

Laban responded with, “Listen, would that [this] be done according to your word.” Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] removed the striped and spotted he-goats that [very] day, along with the speckled and spotted she-goats—all [of those] with [some] white in him and every black lamb. He put [these] in the care of his sons, and the placed a three day journey between them [lit., *himself*] and Jacob. Jacob continued feeding the remaining flock of Laban.

Laban responded with, “That sounds good; would that this be done just as your have said.” That very day, Laban culled out the striped and spotted he-goats and the speckled and spotted she-goats, and every lamb that was partially white or completely black. He put them in the care of his sons and put them a three day’s journey from Jacob. Jacob continued to feed those that remained of Laban’s flock.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so says Laban, “Behold, would that he is according to your word.” And so he removes the day the that the he-goats the striped [ones] and the spotted [ones] and all she-goats, the speckled and the spotted [ones], all that [had some] white in him and every black [one] in the lambs. And so he puts [them all] in a hand of his sons. And so he places [them] a journey of three of days between himself and between Jacob. And Jacob is feeding the flock of Laban the ones remaining.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Laban said, Let it be according to thy word. And he set apart that day the he goats of various colour, and all the goats which were speckled or spotted, every one which had (some) white in him, and all that were black among the lambs: and he gave them into the hand of his sons. And he set a walk of three days between them and Jakob; and Jakob pastured the flock of Laban which remained.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Laban said to him, Well, let it be according to thy word. And he separated that day the goats which were marked <u>in their feet</u> , and the spotted, and all the goats streaked or spotted, every one which had a white place in him, and every black one among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. And he set a journey of three days between his flocks and (those of) Jakob. And Jakob tended the flock of Laban, the old and the feeble which were left.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Laban said: I <u>like well what you demand</u> . And he separated the name day the she goats, and the sheep, and the he goats, and the rams of divers colours, and spotted: and all the flock of one colour, that is, of white and black fleece, he delivered into the hands of his sons. And he set the space of three days' journey betwixt himself and his son in law, who fed the rest of his flock.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Laban said, "Behold, let it be according to your word." That day, he removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black ones among

the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons. He set three days' journey between himself and Ya'aqub, and Ya'aqub fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Peshitta (Syriac) Laban said to him, Yes, let it be according to your word. And he removed that day the he goats that were speckled and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white on it, and all the brown among the white sheep, and entrusted them to his sons. And he set three days journey between himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Septuagint (Greek) And Laban said to him, Let it be according to your word. And he separated in that day the spotted and speckled he-goats, and all the spotted and speckled she-goats, and all that was grey among the rams, and every one that was white among them, and he gave them into the hand of his sons. And he set a distance of a three days' journey between them and Jacob. And Jacob tended the cattle of Laban that were left behind.

Significant differences: What Laban says in the Latin is probably obscured by that particular translation from the Latin. In the future, I may want to place that with the *Catholic* translations and return to a more traditional Douay-Rheims translation.

The Pseudo-Jonathan targum adds in some additional text. The Latin text does not match exactly the Hebrew when it comes to the description of the goats, but, again, I think the problem is with the English translation. Some of the descriptions vary a little in the various languages. It is not clear how much of that is the English translation from those languages, or how much is a difference in the languages themselves.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English And Laban said, Let it be as you say. So that day he took all the he-goats which were banded or coloured, and all the she-goats which were marked or coloured or had white marks, and all the black sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons; And sent them three days' journey away: and Jacob took care of the rest of Laban's flock.

Easy English Laban said 'I agree to this. It will be as you have said.' On that same day, Laban went to his animals. He quickly removed any animal that had more than one colour on its skin. And he gave them to his sons to care for. Then Laban went away. It would take Jacob 3 days to reach Laban. While this was happening, Jacob cared for the rest of Laban's animals. Laban has deceived Jacob. He has taken all the animals that should be Jacob's. And he has given them to his own sons to care for. Then he has gone away before Jacob knows what he has done.

Easy-to-Read Version–2006 Laban answered, "I agree to that. We will do what you ask." But that day Laban hid all the male goats that had spots. And he hid all the female goats that had spots on them. He also hid all the black sheep. Laban told his sons to watch these sheep. So the sons took all the spotted animals and led them to another place. They traveled for three days. Jacob stayed and took care of all the animals that were left.

The Message "Fair enough," said Laban. "It's a deal."
But that very day Laban removed all the mottled and spotted billy goats and all the speckled and spotted nanny goats, every animal that had even a touch of white on it plus all the black sheep and placed them under the care of his sons. Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob. Meanwhile Jacob went on tending what was left of Laban's flock.

NIRV "I agree," said Laban. "Let's do what you have said." That same day Laban removed all the male goats that had stripes or spots. He removed all the female goats that had speckles or spots. They were the ones that had white on them. He also removed all the dark-colored lambs. He had his sons take care of them. Then he

put a journey of three days between himself and Jacob. But Jacob continued to take care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

New Simplified Bible Laban answered: »I agree; we will do as you have said.« Laban took out the striped and spotted male goats, all the speckled and spotted female goats (every one with white on it), and every black lamb. He had his sons take charge of them that same day. They moved away from Jacob with this flock as far as he could travel in three days. Jacob took care of the rest of Laban's flocks.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible Laban said, "All right; let's do it." However, on that very day Laban took out the striped and spotted male goats and all of the speckled and spotted female goats—any with some white in it—and all of the black male lambs, and gave them to his sons. He put a three-day trip between himself and Jacob, while Jacob was watching the rest of Laban's flock.

Contemporary English V. "I agree to that," was Laban's response. Before the end of the day, Laban had separated his spotted and speckled animals and the black lambs from the others and had put his sons in charge of them. Then Laban made Jacob keep the rest of the sheep and goats at a distance of three days' journey.

The Living Bible "All right!" Laban replied. "It shall be as you have said!" So that very day Laban went out and formed a flock for Jacob of all the male goats that were ringed and spotted, and the females that were speckled and spotted with any white patches, and all of the black sheep. He gave them to Jacob's sons to take them three days' distance, and Jacob stayed and cared for Laban's flock.

New Berkeley Version Laban said, "Very well, I am agreeable to your proposition." So he set apart them and there the striped and spotted he-goats and all the speckled and spotted she-goats, every one that had a touch of white; also every black lamb, and put them in his sons' charge [This seems to refer to Laban's sons.]. He then put a three-days' distance between himself and Jacob; while Jacob continued tending the rest of Laban's flocks.

New Life Version And Laban said, "Good! Let it be done as you say." That day Laban took out all the male goats with spots and all the female goats with spots, every one with white on it, and every black sheep. And he put them into the care of his sons. Then he traveled three days away from Jacob. And Jacob was left to care for the rest of Laban's flocks.

New Living Translation "All right," Laban replied. "It will be as you say." But that very day Laban went out and removed the male goats that were streaked and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted or had white patches, and all the black sheep. He placed them in the care of his own sons, who took them a three-days' journey from where Jacob was. Meanwhile, Jacob stayed and cared for the rest of Laban's flock.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible And Laban agreed, saying: 'May it be as you've said.' However, that same day, [Laban craftily] separated the spotted and speckled billy goats and nanny goats, and all the dark sheep from those that were white, and he gave them to his sons. Then he sent [them away] on a three-day journey from Jacob, while he was tending the animals that were left behind.

Beck's American Translation Laban answered, "Yes, let it be just as you say." But that day Laban took away the striped and spotted he-goats and all the speckled and spotted she-goats, every animal with white on it, and every black lamb, and had his sons take care of them. He put a distance of three-days' walk between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to be a shepherd of the rest of Laban's flock.

International Standard V	“Okay,” Laban replied. “We’ll do it the way you’ve asked.” That very day, Laban removed the male goats that were striped or spotted, all the female goats that were speckled or spotted—that is, every one that had white on them—and all the black lambs and placed them into the care of his sons. He sent them as far away from Jacob as a three days’ journey could take them.
Revised Knox Bible	Your request, said Laban, is granted; and, that same day, he set aside she-goats and ewes, he-goats and rams, that were speckled and spotted; all those, too, that were of one colour, white (among the goats) or black (among the sheep); and these he gave in charge of his own sons. And he put a distance of three days journey between himself and his son-in-law.
Translation for Translators	Laban agreed and said, “Okay, we will do as you have said.” But that same day Laban removed all the male goats that had black and white stripes on them or were spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled or spotted, all the goats that were partly white, and all the dark-colored lambs. He separated them and told his sons to take care of them. Then he took these flocks and walked a distance of three days, in order that he could be that far from Jacob. Jacob continued to take care of the rest of Laban’s flocks.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Laban was to say: Would that it be as you speak. He was to turn aside on that day, the he-goats that are striped and are being spotted, and the she-goats speckled and being spotted; and the white and black of the lambs, he even was to give them into the hands of his sons. He was to put a three days journey between himself and Jacob. Jacob is to tend, that remaining of Laban's small cattle.
Conservapedia	Laban said, "All right, I'll take your word on that." So on that day he removed the billy-goats that were striped and flecked, and all the nanny-goats that were speckled and flecked, and every specimen having any white in it, and all the brown specimens among the sheep, and entrusted these to his sons. Then he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob. Jacob then set the rest of Laban's flocks and herds out to graze.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	And Laban replied; "It shall be exactly as you say." He therefore separated on that day the marked and spotted rams, and all the marked and speckled of the goats from all that were white, and all the black sheep, and gave them to the hands of his sons, and put a three days' journey between them and between Jacob's ; but Jacob shepherded ; the other sheep for Laban his father-in-law.
God’s Truth (Tyndale)	Then said Laban: Lo, I am content, that it be according as you have said. And he took out that same day the he goats that were party and of diverse colors, and all the goats that were spotted and party colored, and all that had white in them, and all the black among the lambs: and put them in the keeping of his sons, and set three days journey between himself and Jacob. And so Jacob kept the rest of Labans sheep.
H. C. Leupold	And Laban said: Right; let it be as you say. And on that day he removed the striped and spotted he-goats and all speckled and spotted she-goats and all that had white on them, and all the black among the sheep and put them in the care of his sons. And he put a distance of a three days’ journey between himself and Jacob; but Jacob tended the rest of Laban’s flock.
Lexham English Bible	Laban said, "Look! Very well. It shall be according to your word." But that day he removed the streaked and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, all that [had] white on it, and every dark-colored ram, and {put them in the charge of his sons}. And he put a journey of three days between him and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the remainder of Laban's flock.
Tree of Life Version	So Laban said, “All right! May it be according to your word.” On that day he removed the colorfully striped and colorful billy goats as well as all the colorfully spotted

goats—everyone with white on it—and every dark-colored one among the lambs, and he put them in the hand of his sons. Then he put a three-day's journey between them and Jacob, while Jacob was shepherding Laban's remaining flocks.

Urim-Thummim Version Then Laban answered, let it be as you have said. So he removed that day the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, also everyone that had some white on it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them to the hand of his sons. Then he set three days' worth of travel between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flocks.

Wikipedia Bible Project And Laban said, "So it will be, as you said." And he removed that day the male goats that were spotted and streaked, and all the female goats that were dotted and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and he put them in the hand of his sons. And he put a three days journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob is the shephard of Laban's sheep, those that remain.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988) Laban said, "Agreed, it will be as you say." That same day Laban put aside the he-goats that were streaked, every one that had white on it, and all the black sheep. These he handed over to his sons and he put a distance of a three days' journey between himself and Jacob. So Jacob looked after the rest of Laban's flock.

The Heritage Bible And Laban said, Behold, let it be according to your word. And he turned away that day the he goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and everyone that *had* white in it, and all the black among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. And he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob shepherded the rest of Laban's flock.

New American Bible (2002) "Very well," agreed Laban. "Let it be as you say." That same day Laban removed the streaked and spotted he-goats and all the speckled and spotted she-goats, all those with some white on them, as well as the fully dark-colored sheep; these he left. . . in charge of his sons. [By giving the abnormally colored animals to his sons, Laban not only deprived Jacob of his first small wages, but he also designed to prevent in this way the future breeding of such animals in the part of his flock entrusted to Jacob.] Then he put a three days' journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to pasture the rest of Laban's flock.

New American Bible (2011) Laban said, "Very well. Let it be as you say." That same day Laban removed the streaked and spotted he-goats and all the speckled and spotted she-goats, all those with some white on them, as well as every dark lamb, and he put them in the care of his sons. [By giving the abnormally colored animals to his sons, Laban not only deprived Jacob of his first small wages, but he also schemed to prevent the future breeding of such animals in the flock entrusted to Jacob.] Then he put a three days' journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob was pasturing the rest of Laban's flock.

New Jerusalem Bible Laban replied, 'Good, just as you say.' That same day he removed the striped and speckled he-goats and all the spotted and speckled she-goats, every one that had white on it, and all the black sheep, and entrusted these to his sons. Then he put a three days' journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob grazed the rest of Laban's flock.

Revised English Bible Laban agreed: "Let it be as you say." But that same day Laban removed the he-goats that were striped and brindled and all the spotted and brindled she-goats, all that had any white on them, and every ram that was black, and he handed them over to his sons. Then he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob was tending the rest of Laban's flocks.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible

Lavan replied, "As you have said, so be it."

That day Lavan removed the male goats that were streaked or spotted and all the female goats that were speckled or spotted, every one with white on it, and all the brown sheep; turned them over to his sons; and put three days' distance between himself and Ya'akov. Ya'akov fed the rest of Lavan's flocks.

The Complete Tanach

And Lavan said, "Very well! If only it would be as you say!"

Very well!: Heb. הן, an expression denoting the acceptance of terms.

If only it would be as you say: If only you would want this!

And he removed on that day the ringed and the spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, whichever had white on it, and all the brown [from] among the sheep, and he gave [them] into the hands of his sons.

And he removed: [i.e.,] Lavan [removed] on that day, etc.

the male goats: Heb. מִישְׁיָתָה, male goats.

whichever had white on it: whichever had white patches on it.

and he gave [them]: [i.e.] Lavan [gave them] into the hands of his sons.

And he set three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob tended Lavan's remaining animals.

Laban's remaining animals: The weakest among them, the sick and the barren, which are only leftovers, he gave over to him.

exeGeses companion Bible

And Lavan says, Behold,
O that it be according to your word.
And that day he turns aside the he goats
the ringstraked and the spotted
and all the she goats that are branded and spotted
and every one with white in it
and all the brown among the lambs
and gives them into the hand of his sons.
And he sets a journey of three days
between himself and between Yaaqov:
and Yaaqov tends the flocks of Lavan that remain.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

And Lavan said, "Very well, let it be as you say."

But that same day he removed the streaked and spotted he-goats and all the speckled and spotted she-goats—every one that had white on it—and all the dark-colored sheep, and left them in the charge of his sons. And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob was pasturing the rest of Lavan's flock.

Kaplan Translation

'Agreed!' replied Lavan. 'May your words only come true!' That day, [Lavan] removed the ringed and streaked he-goats, and all the spotted and streaked she-goats - every one with a trace of white [In the ancient middle east, goats usually were completely black.]. [He also removed] every sheep with dark markings. These he gave to his sons. He then separated himself from Jacob by the distance of a three day journey [According to the Talmud (Pesachim 93b), a day's journey is 10 parsangs or approximately 34 miles. (The Talmud thus defines the distance between Jerusalem and Mod'in, a distance of 17 miles, as being 15 mil or 5 parsangs). A three day journey was therefore 102 miles.]. Jacob was left tending Lavan's remaining sheep.

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Lavan said, Agreed, I would it might be according to thy davar.

And he removed that day the male goats that were streaked and spotted, and all the izzim that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some lavan in it, and all the dark among the kesavim, and gave them into the yad of his banim.

And he set a *derech shloshet yamim* between himself and Ya'akov; and Ya'akov tended the rest of the *tzon Lavan*.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

- The Expanded Bible Laban answered, "Agreed! We will do what you ask [^lsay]." But that day Laban took away [removed] all the male goats that had streaks or spots, all the speckled and spotted female goats (all those that had white on them), and all the black sheep. He told his sons to watch over [take charge of] them. Then he took these animals to a place that was three days' journey away from Jacob. Jacob took care of [pastured] all the flocks that were left.
- Kretzmann's Commentary And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. He was fully satisfied with a plan which promised to be all in his favor. And he removed that day the he-goats that were ring-straked (banded) 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. Laban took every precaution that he could think of, personally supervising the elimination of all the dark and spotted among the sheep and the light and spotted among the goats. And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. By putting his own sons in charge of his flocks and by placing such a great distance between the two sets of flocks, Laban thought he had effectually curbed Jacob's ambition. His entire conduct was that of a selfish, covetous man, who made use of every possible means to reduce Jacob's wages. "Agreed!" said Laban, "It will be as you say." [*Heb* "and Laban said, 'Good, let it be according to your word.'"]
- NET Bible® So that day Laban [*Heb* "he"; the referent (Laban) has been specified in the translation for clarity.] removed the male goats that were streaked or spotted, all the female goats that were speckled or spotted (all that had any white on them), and all the dark-colored lambs, and put them in the care [*Heb* "and he gave [them] into the hand."] of his sons. Then he separated them from Jacob by a three-day journey [*Heb* "and he put a journey of three days between himself and Jacob."], while Jacob was taking care of the rest of Laban's flocks.
- The Pulpit Commentary And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. Jacob's chances of obtaining speckled animals by this arrangement were so small that Laban, with his customary selfishness, had no difficulty in closing with the offered bargain. As originally proposed by Jacob it seems to have been an honest desire on his part to commit the question of wages to the decision rather of God's providence than of his kiss-man's greed. That at this time Jacob's mind "had already formed the whole fraudulent procedure by which he acquired his wealth" (Kalisch) does not accord with the statement subsequently made. And he—Laban (Rosenmüller, Keil, Delitzsch, Kalisch, Murphy, et alii); Jacob (Lange)—removed that day (that the smallest possible chance of success might remain to his nephew) the he-goats that were ringstraked (striped or banded) 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,—four sorts of animals were to be removed: (1) the dotted, (2) the patched, (3) the ring-marked or striped, and (4) the black or brown—and gave them into the hand of his (Laban's or Jacob's, ut supra) sons. And (as if to insure the impossibility of the two flocks mingling and breeding) he set three days journey betwixt himself (with his sons and the parti-colored animals) and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks—out of which he was to pay himself as best he could in accordance with the contract.
- The Voice **Laban:** Agreed. Do this exactly as you have said. But that day, Laban *secretly* removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted—every one with any white on

it at all—and every lamb that was black. He put them under the watch of his sons. Then he set off *with his sons and those mottled animals* a three-day distance away from Jacob *to make sure the flocks would stay separated*. Meanwhile Jacob was pasturing the rest of Laban’s flock.

Jacob soon figures out what Laban has done. The deceiver has once again been deceived.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- Benner’s Mechanical Trans. ...and Lavan ^[White] said, though that would exist like your word, and he removed in that day the stripped and spotted he-goats and all the speckled and spotted she-goats, all which was white in him and all the black in the sheep and he gave in the hand of his sons, and he sat in place a road of three days between him and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] was feeding the flocks of Lavan ^[White], the ones being reserved,...
- Darby Translation And Laban said, Well, let it be according to thy word. And he removed that day the he-goats that were ringstraked and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the brown among the lambs, and gave [them] into the hand of his sons. And he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob.
- Modern English Version Laban said, “Agreed. Let it be according to your word.” He removed that day the male goats that were striped and spotted and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. He put three days’ journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks.
- New King James Version And Laban said, “Oh, that it were according to your word!” So he removed that day the male goats that were speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons. Then he put three days’ journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks.
- Third Millennium Bible And Laban said, "Behold, I would it might be according to thy word." And he removed that day the hegoats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the shegoats 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 between himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.
- Young’s Updated LT And Laban says, “Lo, O that it were according to your word.” And he turns aside during that day the ring-streaked and the spotted he-goats, and all the speckled and the spotted she-goats, every one that has white in it, and every brown one among the lambs, and he gives into the hand of his sons, and sets a journey of three days between himself and Jacob; and Jacob is feeding the rest of the flock of Laban.

The gist of this passage: The animals that Jacob spoke of as keeping for himself, Laban went to his flocks and herds and culled them out.

34-36

Genesis 30:34			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (i) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253

Genesis 30:34

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MAHR]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think; to command; to promise; to explain; to intend; to decide; to answer</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, note, take note; pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
This seems to attempt to take others and put them in the place of the person saying this (so that they see the same thing); or to grab the attention of the reader. From the many times I have seen this word used in a narrative, I believe that we may update the translation to, <i>he observed [that]</i> . This goes along with the idea that this word is to cause us to see things from the viewpoint of someone in the narrative.			
lû (וּל) [also writteen lû' (אוּל)] [pronounced lue]	<i>O that, would that, if only, if</i>	conjunction	Strong's #3863 (and #3808?) BDB #530
The NET Bible: <i>On the asseverative use of the particle לוּ (lu) here, see HALOT 521 s.v. לוּ.</i> ⁴³³			
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect; apocopated form	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
Apocopated means that the verb has been shortened. Generally, this means that the final hê (?) and the vowel which precedes it are dropped. Apocopation is used when the verb functions as a jussive or when the verb is affixed to a wâw consecutive (here, it is affixed to a wâw conjunction).			
kaph or k ^e (כּ) [pronounced k ^e]	<i>like, as, just as; according to, after; about, approximately</i>	preposition of comparison, resemblance or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Translation: Laban responded with, “Listen, would that [this] be done according to your word.”

Laban said that this is agreeable. He is going to go along with exactly Jacob's proposition. Like many of their agreements, Laban is going to understand this in one way; Jacob in another.

Laban is able to make a quick decision. The wages which are requested seem reasonable and they are easily verifiable. In fact, based upon Laban's breeding experience, Jacob is asking for very little. This appears to be an agreement which is in Laban's favor.

⁴³³ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 29, 2016.

Genesis 30:34 Laban responded with, "Listen, would that [this] be done according to your word."

Laban Agrees to the Deal (Various Commentators)

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *Undoubtedly, Laban expected Jacob to ask for a certain number of animals to begin his own flocks and herds but Jacob does the unexpected since he did not ask to take any property that was Laban's. Instead, Jacob proposes that he work for Laban to again supervise and shepherd his flocks and herds as he had been doing for the previous fourteen years. His pay would consist of only those animals yet unborn that would be less desirable to Laban because of their markings. Therefore, it would be entirely up to the Lord as to how many animals would become Jacob's.*⁴³⁴

Wenstrom continues: *Laban agrees to Jacob's proposal without hesitation because he cannot see how he could possibly lose out and not profit from it. In fact, he would lose nothing of his flocks and it appeared from his human perspective that it was very unlikely that Jacob would acquire any future animals by this process either. Jacob would have no breeding stock of his own and none of the animals from which his pay was to come would be likely to produce spotted and speckled progeny of their own without a spotted and speckled population with which to interbreed. The only way that Jacob could possibly succeed and prosper was if the Lord intervened for Jacob.*⁴³⁵

Matthew Henry: *Canaan are called Nekohim (Amos 1:1), the word here used for speckled; and Laban was willing to consent to this bargain because he thought if the few he has that were now speckled and spotted were separated from the rest, which by agreement was to be done immediately, the body of the flock which Jacob was to tend, being of one colour, either all black or all white, would produce few or none of mixed colours, and so he should have Jacob's service for nothing, or next to nothing.*⁴³⁶

Benson: *Laban was willing to consent to this bargain, because he thought, that if those few he had that were now speckled and spotted were separated from the rest, the body of the flock, which Jacob was to tend, being of one colour, either all black or all white, would produce few or none of mixed colours, and so he should have Jacob's service for nothing, or next to nothing.*⁴³⁷

Gill: *Being well pleased with the proposal Jacob made, as knowing that, generally speaking, cattle of a colour produced those that were of the same; and whereas Jacob proposed to have a flock of sheep of only white in colour, committed to his care, and to have such for his own that should be produced of them, that were speckled, spotted, and brown, Laban concluded from the general nature of things that he could have but very few, if any, and therefore was for striking the bargain at once.*⁴³⁸

There is certainly a disagreement about God telling this to Jacob in a dream. I don't see that as something which Jacob has dreamt and is now acting on.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Jacob mentions integrity and there is some possibility that he has grown spiritually over the past two decades. He has been under pressure from his two wives and two mistresses and that can sometimes send a man either to the bar or to God's Word. We do not know the form that the Bible was in at that time, whether both he and Isaac had a copy or what. As I have stated on numerous occasions, I believe that the patriarchs had a copy of the Bible in their brains. I believe that Jacob could recite the book of Genesis (up to his time) from memory. However, how much of that book he believes and thinks about is certainly another story. It is certainly possible to memorize something, and yet not fully appreciate its meaning.

⁴³⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 480); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴³⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 480); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴³⁶ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

⁴³⁷ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:34.

⁴³⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:34.

So far we have seen little by way of appearances by God in their lives. He has been there, but God did not continually manifest Himself to specific people. God rarely manifested Himself even to Abraham, who was spiritually mature for much of his later life and a VIP in the plan of God. Assuming that every appearance of God to Jacob is found in Scripture (a reasonable assumption), God appeared to Jacob as he was leaving the Land of Promise; and God will appear to Jacob in the next chapter to tell him to leave Mesopotamia and return to Canaan.

Genesis 30:34 And Laban said, “Yes, truly let it be according to your word.”

And Laban agrees to this. Laban and Jacob both have plans on how to deal with this. They have their agreement; but, besides that, each man has figured out a way to make this agreement work in their own favor.

Genesis 30:34 Laban responded with, “Listen, would that [this] be done according to your word.” (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Reviewing Genesis 30:25–34: What we will cover in these two lessons is a very controversial passage. It has been attacked as anti-scientific; and it has been supported historically with less-than-scientific arguments. Therefore, we will try to cover this passage as a whole.

We have come to the point where Jacob has worked at least 14 years for Laban, which was the amount of time that they had agreed upon for Laban to give his daughters in marriage to Jacob (which two daughters, Jacob had already married in the 7th year).

Gen 30:25–26 As soon as Rachel had borne Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own home and country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, that I may go, for you know the service that I have given you."

In the previous lesson, I spent a great deal of time working through the years and the children born; however, this may be at 14 years or 14 years and a few months. That is when this discussion would have logically taken place. This does allow for enough time for all of the children to have been born. Even though we have a period of time that Leah had not given birth, this may just have been for a period of 6 months or a year. Dinah may have been born after Joseph.

Gen 30:27–28 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it."

We have two interesting words in this passage—to *find favor* means *to discover grace*. And the verb which follows that is *nâchash* (נָחַשׁ) [pronounced *naw-KHAHSH*], which means, *to practice divination, to divine; to observe signs or omens; to communicate with demons; to whisper*. Strong's #5172 BDB #638. You may recall that, in Genesis 24, this family showed great respect to the servant and to his pronouncements based upon his prayers to the Living God (this is the servant sent by Abraham to secure a bride for Isaac). His proclamations concerning that appeared to be taken at face value. “We cannot argue with that—not if it comes from the Lord.”

However, in this verse, Laban appears to have used some sort of divination; and we will later find out that Laban has small, household idols, which his daughter Rachel will steal from him. This suggests that, although the faith of Y^ehowah was preserved in Abraham’s direct line, these relatives in Paddan-aram were falling from the faith. At this point, they seem to be involved in syncretism, which is *the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought*.

We have two very common examples of syncretism today: (1) many people attempt to reconcile the book of Genesis and the Christian faith with evolution; and so they take the *days* of Genesis to mean *ages*. The problem with this is actually very fundamental: death and deterioration are introduced into evolution from the very beginning; death and deterioration do not become a part of the lives of Adam and Eve until they sin (we don’t know

how long that took). (2) Communists introduced the concept of *Liberation Theology* to South America so that they could take over countries in South America which were heavily Catholic. What this is, is communist propaganda is sold as being Christian; it is sold as being what Jesus taught. Catholics strongly opposed communism and communism could not get a political foothold against Catholicism. However, when communism was presented as a form of Christianity, they made great inroads into South America. Whereas, communism used to take over a country through revolution; now communism/socialism uses democratic elections in order to push their agenda of state control of the economy. This could not happen anywhere unless a significant number of Christians and Catholics believed that the goals of socialism were the goals of Christianity. That is what Liberation Theology has done. It has taken two different schools of thought (Christianity and socialism) and has combined them in order to influence Christians and Catholics.

This is what appears to have happened in the Laban household. Although he is not entertaining the merits of communism, he was (and still is) involved in the worship of Y^ehowah; but he has supplemented this faith with the false beliefs of the heathen of his area.

Gen 30:27–28 But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your sight, I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you. Name your wages, and I will give it."

When that which is false is combined with that which is true, this leads a person astray (in this case, an entire family). This does not mean that every conclusion that the wandering person comes to is false. Laban has come to the true conclusion that God has blessed him because of Jacob.

Therefore, Laban appears to be almost subservient to Jacob here, telling him, "Look, you tell me what you want to be paid and I will pay you that amount." But, remember, Laban is a con and Jacob is his mark. Laban is still going to try to work everything towards his own personal advantage.

Gen 30:29–30 Jacob said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you, and how your livestock has fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased abundantly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when shall I provide for my own household also?"

Before naming a price, Jacob reminds Laban of what he clearly knows—that Jacob has been a good man and a good employee. Furthermore, God has blessed Laban greatly at the hand of Jacob. Both men agree to this.

When you are looking to take advantage of someone (as Laban is of Jacob), it is a good idea to acknowledge the obvious. That is what Laban does.

Gen 30:31a He said, "What shall I give you?"

Gen 30:31b–33 Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." (ESV)

Gen 30:31b–33 Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it: let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." (ESV)

Gen 30:34 Laban said, "Good! Let it be as you have said." (ESV)

Laban immediately agrees to this. Laban is a very smart man—possibly smarter than Jacob—and he is already developing a counter-plan. Bear in mind that, when two people are looking to con each other, they are not friends.

All of the oddly marked sheep and goats from Jacob's herd will be removed. Any new ones which are born will belong to Jacob—they will be his wages. Laban knows that, by removing all of the oddly colored animals from the herd, that will lessen the number which are born with stripes and splotches. Laban has been a shepherd for a very long time, and he will certainly know about breeding, to a limited extent, through personal experience.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:31–34 So he said, "What shall I give you?"

And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats.

"So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come [check] concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen."

Laban said, "Good, let it be according to your word.

Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:31–34: Jacob's Proposal For Wages Accepted

1. Laban simply ignores Jacob's request to leave with his family without any material assets to show for his fourteen years of service.
2. Laban instead asks Jacob to set his salary for another period of caring for Laban's flocks.
3. Jacob turns down a salary tied to currency as noted in his reply, "You shall not give me anything."
4. Instead Jacob asks his uncle to "do this one thing for me."
5. If his request is granted Jacob agrees to "pasture and keep [Laban's] flocks" (v. 31).
6. As a wage Jacob asks Laban to give him the variegated sheep and goats from Laban's flocks.
7. Sheep are typically solid white in color while goats are typically black in color.
8. He request of Laban all "speckled" and "spotted" and "black" sheep along with every "spotted" and "speckled" among the goats.
9. Typically no more than 20 percent of a flock fell into the above category.
10. Jacob asks that all the variegated sheep and goats be his and all the solid color sheep and goats be Laban's
11. To insure that Jacob is keeping his end of the bargain Laban is told that he can periodically "come/check" to see if Jacob is in compliance with the arrangement (v. 33).
12. Jacob tells Laban that if any white sheep or black goats are found at any time within Jacobs flocks then that means that the animals are to be considered stolen.
13. Jacob promises that all newborn lambs that are not variegated in colorations are Laban's and all the rest his.
14. He invites Laban to check up on him and see if he is acting in accord with his words.
15. Jacob promises to act in a righteous/honest fashion during the time of his new employment.
16. Laban is further invited to remove all the multicolored sheep to start with leaving Jacob with only white sheep and black goats.
17. What are the chances that the white and black animals will produce multicolored specimens?
18. Based on the laws of genetics the results in Jacob's favor will be slim.
19. Laban readily accepts this most favorable arrangement (v. 34).
20. Newborn lambs or kids that were multicolored were given as wages to shepherds in those days.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:29–34 But he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. Because you had little before I arrived, and it has increased to a multitude; and the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. But now when indeed will I provide for my household as well?" So he said, "what will I give you?" And Jacob said, "you shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and guard your flock: I will pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and this will become my wages. so my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages before you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, I will consider it stolen!" And Laban said, "great, if it becomes according to your word."

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:29–34

1. Jacob is shrewd, just as Laban is, and so puts his best foot forward in the negotiations.
2. He points out that Laban is keenly aware of the state of his flocks since Jacob had taken them over some 14 years earlier.
3. It is obvious that Laban's flocks have multiplied and expanded under the care of Jacob.
4. Laban, who was a religious reversionist, was not under the full blessing of God before Jacob's arrival.
5. With all his problems and faults, Jacob points out that YHWH has blessed Laban merely by association with Jacob.
6. Jacob is positive, Laban is not, and God blesses positive volition, shortcomings aside.
7. It is therefore obvious that Laban would only want to continue this association, since he has prospered due to Jacob.
8. Jacob has demonstrated that he is loyal, honest, dependable and quite capable with Laban's property.
9. Jacob now points out that it is only right that he be allowed to provide for himself, and his rather large family for the future.
10. Laban offers to give Jacob what he requests, but Jacob refuses.
11. Laban is a stingy believer who would hold anything he did for Jacob over his head.
12. There are certain people, and sad to say many believers, from whom you should not accept anything.
13. They have a lack of grace orientation and do not do things and make applications as unto the Lord, they do it for ulterior motives.
14. There are people it is just not wise to be indebted to.
15. When anyone offers something, you should evaluate that person and consider their motives, lest you end up regretting taking any favor.
16. The adjusted believer does what he does due to his understanding and application of BD, not to hold it over another's head.
17. This type of person is not a problem, self righteous Laban's are.
18. The Laban type believer says, or at the least, thinks, "Look at all I have done for you", or "You owe me", or "where would you be without me?"
19. This sort of attitude and action demonstrates a Laban type, who you would be wise to not accept anything from.
20. Jacob does have a plan for his wages, and he relates it to Laban.
21. To understand his plan, one must understand that in the Mideast, goats are black or dark brown, and rarely white or spotted.
22. Likewise sheep are normally white, very seldom black or speckled.
23. Jacob is not asking for all those sheep and goats which were already in the flock, but for those which come in the future.
24. So he offers to remove all unusual specimens from the flocks, and begin tending only solid white sheep and solid dark goats.
25. Any offspring which striped, spotted, or black among the sheep, Jacob is to receive.
26. He points out that Laban can easily check him at any time and determine if he is pilfering Laban's

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:29–34

- possessions.
27. Jacob goes so far as to say that if any solid sheep or goats are found with him, he will consider it an obvious act of theft, as can Laban.
 28. Laban manifests that he does not fully trust Jacob, and it is evident that Jacob did not trust Laban, by his refusal of any gift.
 29. Nevertheless he agrees and they enter into this new agreement.
 30. There is no time limit set for this, but we will observe that this occurs over the next six years. 31:38

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Laban tips the scales in his favor (vv. 35–36)

Genesis 30:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
çûwr (וּר) [pronounced <i>soor</i>]	<i>to turn aside, to depart, to go away</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5493 (and #5494) BDB #693

Now, this same word can be used to mean *depart, go away*; so there must be something in the inflection of the voice which identifies which meaning is properly applied. Or, the meaning of this verb may depend upon the object, and whether they are there remaining or in the process of going past something. However, more likely, the key is the preposition which follows, whether *unto* or *from* is used.

This is also spelled sûr (וּר) [pronounced *soor*].

b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (וּי) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today</i> (with a definite article)	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (וּה) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that, this</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with the definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

The bêt^h preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day*. Literally, this reads *in the day the that*.

'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tayish (יֵשׁ) [pronounced <i>TAH-yeesh</i>]	<i>he-goat</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #8495 BDB #1066

Genesis 30:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿâqôd (עֲקֹד) [pronounced <i>gaw-CODE</i>]	<i>striped, banded; streaked</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #6124 BDB #785
H. C. Leupold: A number of new terms appears here, apparently the ones that were used at this point by the contracting parties to define more closely the terms previously used. So "striped" (' <i>aquddîn</i>) appears for the first time, for, indeed, the "striped" are neither "speckled" nor exactly "spotted," and yet Jacob must have had them in mind originally. ⁴³⁹			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ṭâlâ' (טָלַא) [pronounced <i>taw-LAW</i>]	<i>patched, variegated; spotted</i>	masculine plural, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #2921 BDB #378
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿêth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʿêz (עֵז) [pronounced <i>gayz</i>]	<i>she-goat; in the plural, it can mean goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
nâqôd (נֶאֱקֹד) [pronounced <i>naw-KODE</i>]	<i>spotted, speckled; marked with a brand</i>	feminine plural adjective with the definite article	Strong's #5348 BDB #666
ʿêz (עֵז) [pronounced <i>gayz</i>]	<i>she-goat; in the plural, it can mean goats' hair</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #5795 BDB #777
ṭâlâ' (טָלַא) [pronounced <i>taw-LAW</i>]	<i>patched, variegated; spotted</i>	masculine plural, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #2921 BDB #378
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>the whole, all, the entirety, every</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
Together, kôl ʾăsher mean <i>all which, all whom, all that [which]; whomever, whatever, whatever else, all whose, all where, wherever.</i>			
lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white</i>	adjective	Strong's #3836 BDB #526

⁴³⁹ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Genesis 30:35a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (ל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
chûwm (חום) [pronounced khoum]	<i>darkened, dark color, dark brown, black</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #2345 BDB #299
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
keseb (כֶּסֶב) [pronounced KEH-sehb]	<i>a lamb, a young ram, a sheep</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3775 BDB #461

Translation: Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] removed the striped and spotted he-goats that [very] day, along with the speckled and spotted she-goats—all [of those] with [some] white in him and every black lamb.

So, Laban culls out of his flock all the types of animals that Jacob says that he would want. This means that Jacob will start from scratch to build up a flock large enough to leave with.

Jacob first separated out those sheep and goats that had the odd markings (v. 32), and Laban takes those animals and places them far from Jacob.

We find that Laban, despite what he said, is not to be trusted. He immediately culls out the very sheep, goats and lambs which have the same markings as those who would be Jacob's wages and places them with his own sons for safekeeping. He knows enough about genetics to know that if Jacob is taking care of a group of sheep and goats which are all white then those born to this flock are likely to be all white, and therefore will remain with Laban. So that Jacob could not easily retrieve this sheep and goats, Laban made certain that it would take three days for Jacob to get to Laban's flocks attended to by his sons.

Laban is still an underhanded, conniving son-of-a-bitch. Yet his wealth is somewhat dependant upon Jacob. God has blessed Laban and his family because of Jacob (and because of Abraham), but Laban wants to insure that he will have the lion's share of blessing. Goats do not easily change their spots.

This suggests that Laban had some expertise when it came to breeding sheep and goats. You are more likely to have lambs that resemble their parents than not.

When I was quite young, my cousins had a Siamese cat who became a mother and gave birth to (if memory serves) 5 Siamese kittens and 1 black and grey tabby cat. Of course, I wanted the odd tabby cat. I don't know if the mother ever revealed who the father was; but this illustrates both the reasoning and also the possible flaw in Laban's thinking. However, Laban's approach will be much smarter than Jacob's.

Genesis 30:35b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נתן) [pronounced naw-THAHN]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâd (יד) [pronounced yawd]	generally translated <i>hand</i>	feminine singular construct	Strong's #3027 BDB #388
This combination of the bêyth preposition and <i>hand</i> literally means <i>in a hand of, in [the] hand of</i> ; and can be rendered <i>into the hand [s] of; by the hand of; in [under] the power [control] of; by the power of; with; through, by, by means of; before, in the sight of</i> .			
bânîym (בנים) [pronounced baw-NEEM]	<i>sons, descendants; children; people; sometimes rendered men</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: He put [these] in the care of his sons,...

Laban has sons and he gives these spotted, blotched and striped animals to them. This is the first time that we hear of these sons, and it is quite likely that they have been recently born to him (over the past 14 years). Or they may have been around when Jacob was marrying their sisters, but they would have been too young at this time to care for the flocks. If they had already been born, they would have been 10 years old at the oldest (still too young to take the sheep out alone); so, at this time, these boys are, at the most 24 years old (10 years + 14 years that Jacob served Laban). This would be the *oldest* that they could be. They could be any age down to 11 or 12 at this time, being born after Jacob's first agreement with Laban. Let me suggest that, at this point, Laban does not see them as being good substitutes for Jacob. Otherwise, when Jacob said, "I might move back to Canaan" Laban would have said, "Have a good trip."

Genesis 30:35 And that day he [Laban] took out the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black from among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Even though Jacob said that he would do this chore, Laban apparently chose to do this himself. He wanted to make certain that he left Jacob with no blotched or spotted or black sheep. Then Laban gives these sheep to his sons.

This is the first time that we find out that Laban has sons. As discussed previously, these are all probably younger than Leah and Rachel, and were not yet born or they were very young when Jacob came first on the scene. But, by this time, Laban's sons are old enough to take care of a herd of sheep or goats. These sons are, therefore, quite young, and very loyal to their father, and not really friendly toward Jacob. Furthermore, they are Laban's heirs, so they are looking to inherit all that is Laban's at some point in time (and Laban is fairly old at this point in time). Whatever Jacob keeps is wealth that they will not get.

Laban removes all of the blotched and oddly-colored animals and he gives them to his sons. The idea is, these animals already belong to Laban. They should not be included in Jacob's wages. Therefore, Laban removes them and takes them far away from Jacob. However, Laban's intention is to decrease the breeding of such colors within Jacob's herd.

Now there is the possibility that this passage is being very specific. I have taken it to simply mean that, whatever animals that would be considered Jacob's were removed from the herd—so all blotched, spotted and black animals were removed. There is the possibility that the words used above were meant to be very specific: of the male goats, only the striped and spotted were removed; of the female goats, only the speckled and spotted and those with some white were removed; etc. Even if this is the case (and I don't think it is), everything else in this narrative remains the same. That is, even if you put a very restrictive understanding of the text, by inserting the word *only*, nothing else is really changed throughout the rest of this chapter. Most commentators understand this passage as I have presented it; the imperfect sheep would belong to Jacob; and all the imperfect sheep are first removed by Laban.

Spotted Sheep (a photo) from [Ask Dr. Brown](#); accessed June 9, 2015. Daniel Kolenda writes: *Jacob had a get-rich-quick strategy. He made a deal with Laban, his father-in-law that rather than being paid in cash for his shepherding services he would receive as payment all of the imperfect members of the flock; all the striped, speckled and spotted cattle, sheep and goats. Laban preferred the beautiful ones anyways. He was glad to be rid of the imperfect members of the flock and agreed to Jacob's pathetic idea of remuneration. But soon Jacob's motley flock had exceeded Laban's and the lowly farmhand had grown more rich and powerful than his master.*⁴⁴⁰ Kolenda may be exaggerating the result here. I think that it is clear that the rate of increase will strongly favor Jacob; that Jacob ends up with a greater herd than Laban is not necessarily the case.



Genesis 30:35 And that day he [Laban] took out the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black from among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

The whole idea is, Jacob will not get any of these oddly colored sheep and goats right off the bat. They will have to be born to Laban's flock which he watches over. Let me suggest that Laban knows something about breeding. Remember, he is 100 years older than he was when we last saw him in Genesis 24; and he has been keeping flocks of sheep and goats for all of that time; so, my guess is, he knows a few things about breeding.

Now, on the other hand, remember that Jacob has been called a man of the tents, whereas Esau was called a man of the fields (Genesis 25:27). I have no idea if Jacob had any expertise in this area at all. Who handled Isaac's flocks? At one time, we know that he was quite wealthy (I don't think that changed)—but did Jacob or Esau take care of them? Based upon what we read here, Laban knew a little something about breeding; and based upon what we read later in the chapter, Jacob knew nothing about breeding (but he had some goofy ideas).

This passage tells us that Laban obviously had more than one flock being watched over.

⁴⁴⁰ From <http://www.voiceofrevolution.com/2010/02/02/reaching-out-to-the-striped-speckled-and-spotted/> accessed June 9, 2015.

Genesis 30:35 Therefore, Laban [lit., he] removed the striped and spotted he-goats that [very] day, along with the speckled and spotted she-goats—all [of those] with [some] white in him and every black lamb. He put [these] in the care of his sons,... (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:35 And that day he [Laban] took out the he-goats that were striped and spotted, and all the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white in it, and all the black from among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Laban Removes Certain Sheep and Goats (Various Commentators)

J. Vernon McGee: *They would not be able to breed with the others. Jacob would take the off-breeds so that only the full breeds would mate and bear offspring, and those would belong to Uncle Laban. The others would be his. Jacob is making a very interesting deal.*⁴⁴¹

Barnes: *The color will determine at once whose the animal is. Laban willingly consents to so favorable a proposal, removes the party-colored animals from the flock, gives them into the hands of his sons, and puts an interval of three days' journey between them and the pure stock which remains in Jacob's hands. Jacob is now to begin with nothing, and have for his hire any party-colored lambs or kids that appear in those flocks, from which every specimen of this rare class has been carefully removed.*⁴⁴²

Carroll: *Jacob...[made this] proposition: "You shall not pay me any salary, but I propose that we leave it for divine providence to designate how much I ought to get. Most of the sheep are white, brown, or black, an unmixed colour. I propose that my part shall be the speckled, striped or ringstreaked." Laban looked over his flocks and found only a little sprinkle in all the multitudes not having a solid color. So he accepted the proposition. He was a very shrewd old man. Before the contract goes into effect he moves every one that is already ring-streaked, striped, or speckled, three days' journey from Jacob, and puts them in the hands of his sons and says to Jacob, "We will start even."*⁴⁴³

Guzik: *Jacob now will care for the large flock of his father-in-law Laban, made up of solid-colored animals, and Jacob will receive any speckled or spotted offspring of this flock. Obviously, if there was a way Jacob could encourage these solid-colored sheep to bring forth spotted and speckled offspring, it would greatly increase his personal wealth.*⁴⁴⁴

Dr. Peter Pett: *There is no suggestion in the narrative that Laban has played false with Jacob, although he does the separating himself to make sure that it is done properly. Indeed it assumes that Laban is simply following out the terms of the contract, which must thus be read in this light (any deficiency in our understanding of it tells us more of our lack of knowledge of ancient Hebrew than of the failure of Jacob to express himself properly). The 'three-days journey' means a comparatively short distance while ensuring adequate distance between the flocks.*⁴⁴⁵

The Cambridge Bible: *Laban in accepting Jacob's offer determines to make the very best of the new arrangement. Any parti-coloured goats, and any black sheep in his flock, "he removed that day," and put into the keeping of his own sons, so that they might not afterwards be claimed by Jacob. Jacob will begin the new term of service with nothing in his favour. All the sheep that he will tend will be white, and all the goats black.*⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴¹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

⁴⁴² Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:25–36.

⁴⁴³ B. H. Carroll, *An interpretation of the English Bible*; from e-Sword, Gen. 28:10-31:55.

⁴⁴⁴ *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:35–36.

⁴⁴⁵ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:35–36.

⁴⁴⁶ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:35.

Laban Removes Certain Sheep and Goats (Various Commentators)

Clarke: As he was now only beginning to act upon this agreement, consequently none of the cattle as yet belonged to him; therefore Laban separated from the flock, Genesis 30:35, all such cattle as Jacob might afterwards claim in consequence of his bargain, (for as yet he had no right); therefore Jacob commenced his service to Laban with a flock that did not contain a single animal of the description of those to which he might be entitled; and the others were sent away under the care of Laban's sons, three days' journey from those of which Jacob had the care. The bargain, therefore, seemed to be wholly in favor of Laban; and to turn it to his own advantage, Jacob made use of the stratagems afterwards mentioned. This mode of interpretation removes all the apparent contradiction between Genesis 30:32 and Genesis 30:35, with which commentators in general have been grievously perplexed. From the whole account we learn that Laban acted with great prudence and caution.⁴⁴⁷

Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: From this it appears, that, as Jacob had agreed to take all the parti-coloured for his wages, and was now only beginning to act upon this agreement, and consequently had as yet no right to any of the cattle, therefore Laban separated from the flock all such cattle as Jacob might afterwards claim in consequence of his bargain, leaving only the black and white with Jacob.⁴⁴⁸

Whedon: Here note the overreaching and imperious disposition of Laban. He does not leave Jacob to divide the flocks, but does it himself, and then removes Jacob's part three days distant.⁴⁴⁹

Gill: [T]hose that remained after the spotted, speckled, and brown were taken out; and Jacob having none but white sheep, there was no great likelihood, according to the course of nature, of his having much for his hire; since he was only to have the spotted, speckled, and brown ones that came from them.⁴⁵⁰

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: Notice that Laban removes the "striped," animals, which were not mentioned by Jacob but obviously were considered by Jacob to be included with the "speckled" and "spotted" animals. Also, Laban removed all the animals "with white" on them, which were considered by Jacob to be included with the "speckled" and "spotted" animals. Notice that Laban removes the striped and spotted animals from his flocks and the dark colored ones from among his sheep when Jacob is recorded in Genesis 30:32 as saying that he would do this himself. The fact that Laban removes these animals and does not allow Jacob to do so demonstrates his mistrust of Jacob.

Wenstrom continues: Jacob's proposal was so unbelievably fantastic from Laban's point of view that he felt that there must be some catch to it. Laban's mistrust of Jacob is further manifested in that he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob because he wants to prevent Jacob from tampering with the animals that were removed from his flock. Now, this mistrust of Jacob was not warranted since Jacob had never dealt falsely or deceitfully with Laban but rather this was a mistrust of a man who is himself not to be trusted. Therefore, Laban is projecting onto Jacob his deceitfulness and is insulting Jacob by demonstrating such a mistrust in him.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁷ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:35.

⁴⁴⁸ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:35.

⁴⁴⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:35.

⁴⁵⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:36.

⁴⁵¹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 480); accessed September 9, 2017.

Laban Removes Certain Sheep and Goats (Various Commentators)

H. C. Leupold: *Laban's interference indicates his mistrust of Jacob, not a warranted mistrust but the mistrust of a man who is himself not to be trusted. Whatever promptings of generosity Laban may have felt at the time when he stood in danger of losing the valuable services of Jacob, these promptings are all dissipated as soon as he sees that the son-in-law will continue in his service. Two other indications of mistrust on Laban's part are that he puts the abnormally coloured under the care of his sons, lest Jacob tamper with them and perhaps use them for breeding purposes, where, of course, the chance of abnormal offspring would be proportionately greater. The original agreement had no such proviso in it: Jacob had always been treated as perfectly competent and dependable for the care of any part of the flock. But Laban's conduct and attitude become downright insulting when he gives a third indication of mistrust in putting "a distance (Hebrew "way") of a three days' journey between himself and Jacob."*⁴⁵²

Keil and Delitzsch: *Laban cheerfully accepted the proposal, but did not leave Jacob to make the selection. He undertook that himself, probably to make more sure, and then gave those which were set apart as Jacob's wages to his own sons to tend, since it was Jacob's duty to take care of Laban's flock, and "set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob," i.e., between the flock to be tended by himself through his sons, and that to be tended by Jacob, for the purpose of preventing any copulation between the animals of the two flocks.*⁴⁵³

There are two basic opinions on this: (1) Jacob separated the oddly-colored animals out, knowing that Laban would come and take them; or (2) Jacob separated out the oddly-colored animals so that what they produced would not be counted. But Laban came along and took them away from Jacob anyway.

Again, I think that Keil and Delitzsch nailed the interpretation here.

Laban knows a great deal about breeding; and Jacob does not appear to. Laban knows that, if you breed two white sheep, then most of their offspring will be white. So, he does not simply remove this group of odd sheep in order to keep Jacob from claiming them; but this prevents Jacob from specifically breeding them.

One must recognize Laban's absolute logic and right in this passage. All the sheep and goats in Jacob's possession belong to Laban. Therefore, Laban can take as many of the animals as he wants to take and for any reason. They all belong to Laban. Obviously, these men understood something about breeding, and this is why Laban took all of the animals who looked like those who would belong to Jacob. Furthermore, Laban's logic is this: "This way, we cannot mix up your animals with my animals."

It appears that Jacob first culls out the oddly-colored sheep and goats (v. 32); and that Laban then took those and placed them with his sons (vv. 35–36).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:36a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
sîym (שׂיַם) [pronounced seem]; also spelled sûwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced soom]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962

⁴⁵² From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

⁴⁵³ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:34–40.

Genesis 30:36a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
derek ^e (דֶּרֶךְ) [pronounced DEH-rek ^e]	way, distance, road, path; journey, course; direction, towards; manner, habit, way [of life]; of moral character	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1870 BDB #202
sh ^e lôwshâh (שְׁלוֹשָׁה) [pronounced shiloh- SHAW]	a three, a trio, a triad, a threesome	feminine numeral construct	Strong's #7969 BDB #1025
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw- MEEM]	days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year	masculine plural noun	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
bêyn (בֵּינָם) [pronounced bane]	in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between	preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #996 BDB #107
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
bêyn (בֵּינָם) [pronounced bane]	in the midst of, between, among; when found twice, it means between	preposition	Strong's #996 BDB #107
Ya'ăqôb (בְּקָעֵי) [pronounced yah-ăuh- KOH ^{BV}]	supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: ...and the placed a three day journey between them [lit., himself] and Jacob.

Laban then instructs his sons to take these animals a long distance from Jacob. They will be 3 days away from Jacob.

The NET Bible: E. A. Speiser observes, "Laban is delighted with the terms, and promptly proceeds to violate the spirit of the bargain by removing to a safe distance all the grown animals that would be likely to produce the specified spots" (Genesis [AB], 238). Laban apparently thought that by separating out the spotted, striped, and dark colored animals he could minimize the production of spotted, striped, or dark offspring that would then belong to Jacob.⁴⁵⁴

Laban can certainly justify his actions here. They have just then and there negotiated a deal. The deal for payment ought to be for the future—they have come to an agreement, so the agreement is logically in effect from that point on. Removing the types of sheep and goats to which Jacob had claim is simply removing Laban's possessions. Therefore, we are not going to see Jacob make any sort of objection to what Laban has done.

⁴⁵⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 29, 2016.

It should be easy to see why Laban agreed so quickly to what Jacob proposed. He knew enough about breeding that, if he removed all the oddly-colored beasts, Jacob would end up having very few new lambs or kids with that sort of coloration. Even though the Bible is criticized about what Jacob does and his breeding schemes, what Laban is doing here is very sound, genetically and scientifically speaking.

Throughout their relationship, there will be Jacob's point of view and Laban's point of view; and rarely do these views intersect exactly. Off in the future, Jacob will finally leave Laban, but he will do it secretly; and Laban will pursue him. Again, the men will state their views on what has happened, and one is forced to admit that both Jacob and Laban make very good arguments for their respective points of view. Both men want the most for their own families (Laban does not consider Jacob to be completely his family; in business, they are at odds with one another).

Genesis 30:36b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
The NET Bible: <i>The disjunctive clause (introduced by the vav with subject) is circumstantial/temporal; Laban removed the animals while Jacob was taking care of the rest.</i> ⁴⁵⁵			
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ăuh-KOH^bV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
râ'âh (רָעָה) [pronounced <i>raw-ĠAWH</i>]	<i>is shepherding, pasturing, is grazing, feeding</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7462 BDB #944
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; construct form	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
yâthar (רְתִי) [pronounced <i>yaw-THAHR</i>]	<i>those remaining, the ones left over, those left behind</i>	feminine plural, Niphal participle with the definite article	Strong's #3498 BDB #451

Translation: Jacob continued feeding the remaining flock of Laban.

Jacob then continued to care for the animals that remained.

Although one may justify Laban's actions in this passage, that is not necessarily the case with his actions in the future, when he will change Jacob's wages 10 times. They have come to an agreement here. Laban is the boss and allowed to do such a thing, but he was acting purely out of greed. However, what Laban is doing is legitimate.

⁴⁵⁵ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 29, 2016.

Genesis 30:36 And he set three days' journey between himself and Jacob. And Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Laban tells his sons to separate the mixed-colored sheep from Jacob's flocks (those that he was taking care of for Laban). Laban's plan was to take all of the sheep and goats out of Jacob's flock who would produce striped, spotted and blotched-colored sheep and goats. Laban and Jacob had been breeding lambs and goats for a long time; and they certainly understood that, much of the time, baby lambs will look like their parents.

Laban's plan and Jacob's plan both indicate that these men knew a little about genetics, because they were in the sheep business and could have observed what would happen. Jacob's approach will clearly be more goofy and less prone to success (from a human and scientific point-of-view).

This *three day's journey* is significant. Laban does it to keep Jacob away from the oddly-colored sheep. However, it is this distance placed between Jacob and Laban's sons which will eventually give Jacob enough time to leave Laban, without being immediately noticed. In the past, there would be no worries about the various herds evening intermingling. However, once Laban removes all of the spotted and blotched sheep, he wants to make certain that they are so far away, that Jacob cannot easily sneak into these other herds and steal some of them for breeding purposes. So, even though Laban recognizes that Jacob has done well by him, he has little or no trust in Jacob. People who are dishonest generally do not trust others.

Genesis 30:36 He put [these] in the care of his sons, and the placed a three day journey between them [lit., *himself*] and Jacob. Jacob continued feeding the remaining flock of Laban. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:36 And he set three days' journey between himself and Jacob. And Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

The Three-Day Journey (Several Commentators)

Guzik: *So there would be no mixing of the flocks, Laban's sons took care of all the existing speckled and spotted sheep and goats, keeping them a three-day journey from the main flock. Jacob himself would take care of the solid-colored flock of Laban, as well as their speckled and spotted offspring, which belonged to him.*⁴⁵⁶

The Cambridge Bible: *three days' journey] In order to prevent the least possibility of confusion or of intermingling, Laban separates his sons' flocks by a great distance from those which Jacob is to tend.*⁴⁵⁷

Gill: *Not three days' journey for a man, but for cattle; this distance there was between the place where Laban and his sons kept the spotted, speckled, and brown cattle, and that in which Jacob kept the flock only consisting of white sheep; and this was done, that the flocks might not be mixed, and that there might be no opportunity to take any of the spotted ones, and that they might not stray into Jacob's flock.*⁴⁵⁸

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob does not complain; he does not say, "Uncle Laban, that is not fair." It is not because Jacob now trusts God, whereas, before he did not. Jacob has confidence in the future, without have the right sheep to breed, because he has a plan. Jacob plan should have been, "God will sort this out." But that was not his plan.

Benson: *Between this and the 37th verse, the Samaritan copy inserts a paragraph about the angel's appearing to Jacob in a dream, which is not found in any other version; but is related by Jacob himself*

⁴⁵⁶ David Guzik's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:35–36.

⁴⁵⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:36.

⁴⁵⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:36.

*in the following chapter, Genesis 30:11, as a thing which had happened to him, and which justifies the policy which the subsequent verses represent him as using.*⁴⁵⁹

I disagree with Benson that this dream might be appropriately placed here (if not as Scripture, as part of reasonable commentary). This dream-vision that Jacob will have fits properly in Genesis 31. In that dream, God tells Jacob to get up and go. God tells Jacob *why and how* he *had* been prospered. Based upon the text of that dream (Gen. 31:10–13 [Jacob is speaking to his wives, telling them why it is time to leave] “In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.' ”), these do not appear to be two dreams. Furthermore, it would make little sense for God to be saying, “I want you to get up and go right now, Jacob; now here is how I will help you out overcome Laban’s unfairness.” Once it is time for Jacob and company to go, then everything about this breeding stuff is in the rear view mirror. God also speaks about what Laban *had done* to Jacob. These things, Jacob complained about to his wives (Genesis 31:5–8).

Genesis 30:35–36 Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] removed the striped and spotted he-goats that [very] day, along with the speckled and spotted she-goats—all [of those] with [some] white in him and every black lamb. He put [these] in the care of his sons, and the placed a three day journey between them [lit., *himself*] and Jacob. Jacob continued feeding the remaining flock of Laban. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Ron Snider’s translation of Genesis 30:35–36 So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. And he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:35–36

1. Laban and Jacob do not trust each other, and for good reason.
2. Laban has deceived Jacob several times, not the least of which was the dirty trick with Leah.
3. Jacob had apparently demonstrated to Laban that he was deceitful himself, since Laban acts as though he smells a rat.
4. Jacob had stated that he would go through the flocks and separate any animal which was not the normal color.
5. Laban must not have had too many unusual colored animals in his flock over the period of time that Jacob has watched them, or he never would have agreed to such a plan.
6. He does want to make sure that Jacob does not attempt to pilfer any of the flock which is already his, so he does the culling.
7. Beyond that, he would not want any of the striped or spotted animals breeding with his flock, producing animals which would be Jacob's.
8. He graphically demonstrates his mistrust of Jacob by moving the striped and spotted flock a journey of three days from Jacob.
9. He puts his sons in charge of the animals, no doubt with strict orders to keep them out of Jacob's
10. Jacob is left in charge of the flock which contains only animals which were of solid accepted color.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

⁴⁵⁹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:35–36.

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:35–36 So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:35–36: Laban Stacks the Deck!

1. Jacob's words back in v. 32, "these will be my payment/wages" could be taken to mean that the current crop of off-colored animals should be his immediately.
2. And, that all newborn sheep and goats that met the criterion set forth by Jacob for his wages would be his over the seven years of employment.
3. Jacob had volunteered to separate the flocks himself but Laban preempts Jacob doing this, separating the off-colored animals from Laban's flocks.
4. These animals were separated from the others and given to Laban's sons to care for (v. 35).
5. Instead of having some multicolored animals, Jacob is left to care for Laban's solid colored sheep and goats.
6. Laban, ever the manipulator, takes the initial group of off-colored animals and moves them far away from his solid colored animals.
7. Thus leaving Jacob to care for Laban's solid colored sheep and goats.
8. So Jacob starts off at an additional disadvantage.
9. He has no off-colored animals to breed with the solid colored animals.
10. Laban then takes the off-colored sheep and goats and moves them a three days journey from his flocks left in Jacob's care ("Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks").
11. That way there is no chance that the white sheep and black goats can breed with the off-colored specimens.
12. Laban stacks the deck against Jacob.
13. But Laban's greed will be his undoing as he does not appreciate what he is dealing with.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:34–36 Laban responded with, "Listen, would that [this] be done according to your word." Therefore, Laban [lit., *he*] removed the striped and spotted he-goats that [very] day, along with the speckled and spotted she-goats—all [of those] with [some] white in him and every black lamb. He put [these] in the care of his sons, and the placed a three day journey between them [lit., *himself*] and Jacob. Jacob continued feeding the remaining flock of Laban. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:34–36 Laban responded with, "That sounds good; would that this be done just as your have said." That very day, Laban culled out the striped and spotted he-goats and the speckled and spotted she-goats, and every lamb that was partially white or completely black. He put them in the care of his sons and put them a three day's journey from Jacob. Jacob continued to feed those that remained of Laban's flock. (Kukis paraphrase)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob tips the scales in his favor (vv. 37–43)

Before we begin this section, we must remember that Jacob always has a scheme; he always has an angle to play. He used his brother's hunger in order to take from him his birthright; he schemed along with his mother to deceive his father, to receive a blessing meant for his older brother. This is how Jacob functions. Despite having spoken to God, there is no indication of any kind that Jacob has been a great man of faith. If Jacob was demonstrating faith in God, then he would have no reason to do what he does in these next few verses.

Many a believer reads this and becomes confused or walks away from the Bible with an entirely new and incorrect perspective.

Jacob's unscientific scheme: A very big deal is made about what Jacob does in this next section, by critics of the Bible. However, it is worth noting that what Laban does is not at all effective either.

Jacob has probably this whole thing worked out in his head. He has figured out how to outmaneuver Laban, and he has already worked all of the details out in his head. He tells Laban that he will keep any newly born spotted, speckled or black sheep and goats; and everything else will be Laban's. Jacob would begin by removing all of those of the herd who are spotted, speckled or black.

This section of Genesis 30, is one of the most controversial passages in Scripture. Unbelievers often quote from this chapter in order to ridicule the Bible.

One critic of Scripture lists this as the weirdest of all the weird Bible stories, adding this personal observation: *Now, we'd all expect this idiotic plan to fail and Jacob to learn a lesson about something or other, but no it actually works. The cattle give birth to striped young, and Jacob is happy. What on earth is going on here? Anyone with the most basic understanding of genetics knows that this is bunk. The odd thing is that this story seems to have no purpose and moral - it's just there.*⁴⁶⁰ These are reasonable objections, even though they come from a person who is probably anti-Bible to begin with.

And, of course, there are innumerable memes which have been posted, denigrating this passage. The most common theme is, trying to put the Bible at odds with science, such as **How did animals get their stripes?** From [Gospel Doctrine for the Godless](#); accessed June 9, 2015. These anti-Bible graphics all carry the same message: the science of genetics says one thing; the Bible says something else. Therefore, the Bible is wrong here (and, as a result, the Bible is probably wrong everywhere else).

These attacks on the Bible tend to be fairly short and without nuance or careful examination. Essentially they say, "Here is what the Bible says; and modern science tells us today that is all a lot of bunk. So the Bible is stupid."

Those who are against the Bible have the primary purpose of turning others against the Bible. A meme is much more effective than a complete treatise on any Biblical topic—particularly in today's world.

How did animals get their stripes?

SCIENCE!

Over a long period, any one animal has small changes in their coloring. Some color changes allowed animals to survive better than others of their species. These small changes piled up over time resulting in a coloring scheme that helped the animal survive and reproduce. This is how animals got their stripes and other color schemes.

Bible

Jacob carved stripes and spots into a tree and put his herd in front of them when they mated. When they gave birth, their babies had stripes and spots!

Genesis 30:37-39

Now, which would you choose?



Here is what Jacob actually does and we will examine this carefully:

⁴⁶⁰ From [ListVerse](#), accessed June 9, 2015. There is a lot of discussion which followed, which soon went off-topic.

And so takes Jacob a rod of poplar fresh and almond wood and a branch of stripped bark and so he peels in them streaks, white exposing the white that [is] upon the rods. And so he sets the rods which he had peeled in the troughs in troughs of the waters where came the flock to drink—to a front of the flock. And so they breed in their coming to drink. And so they breed the flock unto the rods; and so give birth the flock [to] striped, speckled and spotted [young].

Genesis
30:37–39

[After all of this,] Jacob took the fresh rod from a poplar tree and an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark and he peeled them in white streaks, exposing the white [flesh] which [is] on the rods. He placed the rods which he had peeled in the troughs, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink—[so these branches are] in front of the flocks. [The flocks] would breed when coming to drink. Therefore, they bred the flocks before the rods; and the flocks gave birth to [young that were] striped, speckled and spotted.

After all this, Jacob took a fresh branch from a poplar tree, along with an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark, and he peeled back to bark to expose the flesh of the tree under the bark. Then he placed these branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that the branches were in front of the flocks, as well as being in the water. When the flocks came to drink, they also would breed. Jacob's crew would breed their flocks and they produced young who were striped, speckled and spotted.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so takes Jacob a rod of poplar fresh and almond wood and a branch of stripped bark and so he peels in them streaks, white exposing the white that [is] upon the rods. And so he sets the rods which he had peeled in the troughs in troughs of the waters where came the flock to drink—to a front of the flock. And so they breed in their coming to drink. And so they breed the flock unto the rods; and so give birth the flock [to] striped, speckled and spotted [young].
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob took to him rods of white poplars, and of almond, (or hazel,) and of <u>plane</u> tree, and peeled in them white peelings, (so that, where) peeled, the white which was in the rods appeared. And he fixed the rods that he had peeled in the canals, in the place of the watering of waters, the place to which they brought the flocks to drink, to be over against the flocks, that they might be incited when they came to drink. And the sheep were incited before the rods, and the sheep brought forth with chequered feet and streaked.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And Jakob took to him a rod of flowering poplar, and of almond, and of the <u>plane</u> tree, and peeled in them white peelings to disclose the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he fixed in the canals, in the troughs of water; at the place to which they brought the flocks to water, there placed he them over against the flock that they might conceive when they came to drink. [JERUSALEM. In the canals.] And the sheep conceived over against the rods, and the sheep produced such as were marked in their feet, and spotted and white in their backs.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob took <u>green</u> rods of poplar, and of almond, and of <u>plane</u> trees, and pulled them in part: so when the bark was taken off, in the parts that were pulled, there appeared whiteness: <u>but the parts that were whole remained green: and by this means the colour was divers.</u> And he put them in the troughs, where the water was poured out: that when the flocks should come to drink, they might have the rods before their eyes, and in the sight of them might conceive. And it came to pass that in the very heat of coition, the sheep beheld the rods, and brought forth spotted, and of divers colours, and speckled.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub took to himself rods of fresh poplar, almond, <u>plane</u> tree, peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. He set the rods that he had peeled opposite the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs where

the flocks came to drink. They conceived when they came to drink. The flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Peshitta (Syriac) And Jacob took some fresh white rods of almond and poplar trees; and peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the running water, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink; and they conceived when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth lambs that were speckled and spotted.

Septuagint (Greek) And Jacob took to himself green rods of storax tree and walnut and plane-tree; and Jacob peeled in them white stripes; and as he drew off the green, the white stripe which he had made appeared alternate on the rods. And he laid the rods which he had peeled, in the hollows of the watering-troughs, that whenever the cattle should come to drink, as they should have come to drink before the rods, the cattle might conceive at the rods. So the cattle conceived at the rods, and the cattle brought forth young speckled, and streaked and spotted with ash-coloured spots.

Significant differences: The branch from the third tree is difficult to figure out; and the Syriac leaves it out. The Latin appears to have added some additional text. The troughs are mentioned twice in the Hebrew; and it appears only once in the Greek and Latin. The Aramaic leaves out that these are the troughs *in front of the cattle*.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English Then Jacob took young branches of trees, cutting off the skin so that the white wood was seen in bands. And he put the banded sticks in the drinking-places where the flock came to get water; and they became with young when they came to the water. And because of this, the flock gave birth to young which were marked with bands of colour.

Easy English Jacob took branches cut from trees. He took them from the poplar tree, the almond tree and the plane tree. He made white lines on them. He did this by taking the outside part of the wood from some of the branch. Then he could see the white part of the branch. Then he put the branches in the place where the animals drank. They were in front of the animals when they came to drink. Sometimes it was the right time when the animals came to drink. They would have sex and become pregnant. They did this in front of the branches. And they gave birth to young ones that had more than one colour on their skin.

The Message But Jacob got fresh branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled the bark, leaving white stripes on them. He stuck the peeled branches in front of the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink. When the flocks were in heat, they came to drink and mated in front of the streaked branches. Then they gave birth to young that were streaked or spotted or speckled.

NIRV Jacob took freshly cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees. He made white stripes on the branches by peeling off their bark. Then he placed the peeled branches in all the stone tubs where the animals drank water. He placed them there so they would be right in front of the flocks when they came to drink. The flocks were ready to mate when they came to drink. So they mated in front of the branches. And the flocks gave birth to striped, speckled or spotted little ones.

New Simplified Bible Jacob took green branches of poplar (storax), almond, and plane trees and stripped off some of the bark so that the branches had white stripes on them. He placed these branches in front of the flocks at their drinking troughs. He put them there, because the animals mated when they came to drink. So when the goats bred in front of the branches, they produced young that were streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	Then Jacob took new branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees; and he peeled white stripes on them, exposing the branches' white color. He set the branches that he had peeled near the watering troughs so that they were in front of the flock when they drank, because they often mated when they came to drink. When the flock mated in front of the branches, they gave birth to striped, speckled, and spotted young.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob cut branches from some poplar trees and from some almond and evergreen trees. He peeled off part of the bark and made the branches look spotted and speckled. Then he put the branches where the sheep and goats would see them while they were drinking from the water trough. The goats mated there in front of the branches, and their young were spotted and speckled.
The Living Bible	Then Jacob took fresh shoots from poplar, almond, and sycamore trees, and peeled white streaks in them, and placed these rods beside the watering troughs so that Laban's flocks would see them when they came to drink; for that is when they mated. So the flocks mated before the white-streaked rods, and their offspring were streaked and spotted, and Jacob added them to his flock.
New Berkeley Version	But Jacob secured rods of the green poplar, almond and plane trees, into which he peeled white stripes, that laid bare the white on the rods. These peeled rods he placed by the troughs, the water-troughs in front of the flocks, to which the flocks came to drink. They bred, facing the rods as they came to drink, and the flocks lambled striped, speckled and spotted young [The Bethel experience had not converted Jacob; he had remained selfish and tricky. His scheme to increase the number of animals due him was not stealing but it was taking unfair advantage.].
New Life Version	Then Jacob took green sticks of three kinds of trees. And he cut white marks in them, showing the white which was in the sticks. He took these sticks which he had cut and set them in front of the flocks, in the place where the flocks came to drink. And the animals mated when they came to drink. So the flocks mated in front of the sticks. And the young that were born had spots.
New Living Translation	Then Jacob took some fresh branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled off strips of bark, making white streaks on them. Then he placed these peeled branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, for that was where they mated. And when they mated in front of the white-streaked branches, they gave birth to young that were streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Well thereafter, Jacob gathered some green rods from storax, walnut, and sycamore trees, and alternately peeled them [to create the look of] white and green stripes, which gave a [spotted] appearance to the rods. Then he laid the rods he had peeled at the bottom of the watering troughs, so that when the cattle came to drink, they would see the rods and mate there in front of the rods. And [that's what happened]... the cattle did get pregnant at the rods and gave birth to [young with] speckles, streaks, and ash-colored spots.
Beck's American Translation	Jacob took fresh rods of poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled white stripes in them, laying bare the white in the rods. He laid the rods he peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs at the watering places where they came to drink, since they mated when they came to drink. The flocks mated facing the rods and had young that were striped, spotted, and speckled.
International Standard V	Meanwhile, Jacob kept tending the rest of Laban's flock. Jacob took branches [The Heb. has <i>rod</i>] from white poplar trees, freshly cut almond trees, and some other trees [Or <i>and plane trees</i> ; i.e. a species of trees that could readily be stripped of their bark], stripped off their bark to make white streaks, and uncovered the white

part inside the branches. Then he placed the branches that he had stripped bare in all the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink. He placed the branches in front of the flock, and they went into heat as they came to drink. When the flocks mated in front of the branches, they would bear offspring that were striped, speckled, or spotted. A portion of v. 36 is included for context.

New Advent (Knox) Bible

Jacob, then, left in charge of the rest of the flocks, did this. He took green branches of poplar, and almond, and plane, and partly peeled them; so that (now the bark had gone) the white shewed through where they had been stripped, whereas the parts he had left untouched remained green; everywhere the colour was varied. These branches he fitted into the troughs where his flocks were watered, so that when they came to drink, they should have these speckled branches before their eyes, and the dams would conceive in full view of them. Looking at the branches at the very heat of their coupling, the dams bore spotted and speckled and piebald young.

Translation for Translators

Then Jacob cut some branches of «poplar, almond, and plane trees/three kinds of trees that had white wood». He peeled strips of bark from the branches, so that where the bark had been peeled off, the branches were light in color. Then he placed the peeled branches in the troughs where they put the water for the animals to drink, so that the branches would be in front of the flocks when they came to drink. The animals also mated in front of the branches, and eventually they gave birth to animals that were speckled, or to animals that were spotted, or to animals that had black and white stripes on them.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible

Jacob was to take fresh rods, of the poplar and almond tree, and was to peel the barks off, with white stripes in them, as white striped rods. He was to place the rods, he is to have peeled, before the small cattle's troughs, their watering trough. As the small cattle was to come to drink, they were to conceive, when they are to come to drink. The small cattle were to conceive at the rods, and were to bear forth striped, speckled, and they being spotted.

Chuck Smith translation

So Jacob took rods of green poplar, and of hazel and the chestnut tree; and he pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in 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. The flocks conceived before the rods, and they brought forth cattle ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted.

Conservapedia

Then Jacob took for himself some smooth green sticks of white poplar, and hazel and chestnut. He peeled away the bark to make the white resin appear in the sticks. He set these peeled sticks before the flocks, in the basins of the watering troughs, when the flocks came to drink, so that they might fall pregnant when they came to drink. The ewes, nannies, and cows fell pregnant among the sticks, and gave birth to lambs, kids, and cattle that were striped, spotted, and flecked.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible

Jacob then selected young wands ! of willow, and almond, and sycamore, and peeled them ; peeling to the white so as to show the whiteness of the wands, and he stuck the wands which he had peeled near the watering troughs where the sheep came to drink, in the sight of the sheep, when they were hot for breeding after drinking. So the sheep were hot amongst the wands, and bore, and the sheep bore marked, and spotted, and speckled.

God's Truth (Tyndale)

Jacob took rods (thin branch) of green poplar, hazel,(lt/yellow brown) and of chestnut (reddish brown) trees, and pilled (peeled) white streaks in them and made the white appear in the staves: And he put the staves which he had pilled, even before the sheep, in the gutters and watering troughs, when the sheep came to

Lexham English Bible	drink: that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the sheep conceived before the staves, and brought forth streaked, spotted and party.
NIV, ©2011	Then Jacob took fresh branches of poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled white strips on them, exposing the white which [was] on the branches. And he set the branches that he had peeled in front of the flocks, in the troughs [and] in the water containers. And they were in heat when they came to drink. And the flocks mated by the branches, so the flocks bore streaked, speckled, and spotted.
Tree of Life Version	Jacob, however, took 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. 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, they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted.
Urim-Thummim Version	But Jacob took fresh white poplar, almond, and plane tree branches, peeled away white stripped sections on them, exposing the white of the branches. Then he set the branches he had peeled in front of the flocks in the drinking troughs and watering channels where the flocks come to drink. Since they were in heat when they came to drink, the flocks mated near the branches, and the flocks gave birth to striped, spotted and colorful ones.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And Jacob took branches from fresh white poplar trees, and also the almond and plane- tree, and peeled the bark back to expose the peeled white, and made the white exposed on the branches. Then he put the branches that he had peeled before the flocks in their watering trough when the flocks came for water. That made them come into heat when they came to drink. And the flocks came into heat before the branches and gendered streaked, speckled, and spotted flocks.
	And Jacob took still fresh poplar branches with the moisture in them, and almond, and plane-tree, and he split into them streaks of white, from exposing the white pulp within the branches. And he displayed the branches which he had split in the dens and watering holes where the flocks came to drink, in the presence of the sheep, and they conceived when they came to drink. And the sheep conceived against the sticks, and they gave birth to striped and dotted and spotted.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Jacob then gathered fresh branches of poplar, almond and plane. He peeled white streaks in them, letting the white of the stems be seen. Then he placed the branches he had peeled in front of the channels of the watering troughs where the animals came to drink and where they could be clearly seen by the animals. And as they mated there in front of the branches when they came to drink, the animals produced streaked, spotted and speckled young.
The Heritage Bible	And Jacob took to himself poles of green poplar, and of the almond, and plane tree, and peeled white stripes in them, and lay bare the white which was on the poles. And he placed the poles which he had peeled by the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink in front of the flocks, and they were in heat when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived near the poles, and bore flock animals, striped, speckled, and spotted.
	God does not tell us here what the purpose of placing the peeled poles close by the watering place was. Here is my opinion: There is no evidence that I know of that supports the idea that what a pregnant human or a pregnant animal sees while carrying the unborn will in any way affect the physical appearance of the offspring when born. The only comment made about the livestock having spotted and striped offspring is by Jacob to Leah and Rachel in Gen 31:10-13. He declares that he received a dream showing him the rams that impregnated the females were "striped, spotted, and speckled." Apparently in the same dream the Messenger of

Jehovah spoke to him as God that He had seen the attempted deceptions and cheating of Laban, and had caused the offspring to be striped, spotted, and speckled, thus multiplying Jacob's livestock. Now as to the purpose of the peeled poles: my opinion is that Jacob placed the peeled poles there to keep the vision God gave him before his own eyes, so that his faith did not waver. God commanded Abraham to look at the innumerable stars to keep before his mind that God would multiply his seed. God has always given people visions to keep before their mind what God planned to do for them in the future so that their faith would remain firm.

New American Bible (2002)	Jacob, however, got some fresh shoots of poplar, almond and plane trees, and he made white stripes in them by peeling off the bark down to the white core of the shoots. The rods that he had thus peeled he then set upright in the watering troughs, so that they would be in front of the animals that drank from the troughs. When the animals were in heat as they came to drink, the goats mated by the rods, and so they brought forth streaked, speckled and spotted kids. Jacob's stratagem was based on the widespread notion among simple people that visual stimuli can have prenatal effects on the offspring of breeding animals. Thus, the rods on which Jacob had whittled stripes or bands or chevron marks were thought to cause the female goats that looked at them to bear kids with lighter-colored marks on their dark hair, while the gray ewes were thought to bear lambs with dark marks on them simply by visual cross-breeding with the dark goats.
New American Bible (2011)	Jacob, however, got some fresh shoots of poplar, almond and plane [Plane: also called the Oriental Plane, a deciduous tree found in riverine forests and marshes.] trees, and he peeled white stripes in them by laying bare the white core of the shoots. The shoots that he had peeled he then set upright in the watering troughs where the animals came to drink, so that they would be in front of them. When the animals were in heat as they came to drink, the goats mated by the shoots, and so they gave birth to streaked, speckled and spotted young.
New Jerusalem Bible	Jacob then got fresh shoots from poplar, almond and plane trees, and peeled them in white strips, laying bare the white part of the shoots. He set up the shoots he had peeled in front of the animals, in the troughs, in the water-holes where the animals came to drink. Since they mated when they came to drink, the goats thus mated in front of the shoots and so the goats produced striped, spotted and speckled young.
Revised English Bible	So Jacob took fresh rods of poplar, almond, and plane trees, and peeled off strips of bark, exposing the white of the rods. He fixed the peeled rods upright in the troughs at the watering-places where the flocks came to drink, so that they were facing the she-goats that were in heat when they came to drink. They mated beside the rods and gave birth to young that were striped and spotted and brindled.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white streaks on them by peeling off the bark. Then he set the rods he had peeled upright in the watering troughs, so that the animals would see them when they came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the animals mated in sight of the rods and gave birth to streaked, speckled and spotted young.
The Complete Tanach	And Jacob took himself moist rod[s] of trembling poplar and hazelnut, and chestnut, and he peeled white streaks upon them, baring the white that was on the rods.

rod[s] of trembling poplar: This is a tree named הַנְּבֵל, as it is said (Hosea 4:13): "under oaks and trembling poplars (הַנְּבֵלִי)" and I believe that הַנְּבֵל is the one called trenble in Old French, trembling poplar and aspen, which is white (לָבֵן).

moist: When it was moist.

and hazelnut: And he took also a rod of לִזְר, a tree upon which small nuts grow, coldre in Old French, hazelnut.

and chestnut: c(h)astanyer in Old French, chestnut.

streaks: Many peelings, for it made it spotted.

baring the white: When he peeled it, its white appeared and was bared in the place where it was peeled.

And he thrust the rods that he had peeled, into the gutters in the watering troughs where the animals would come to drink opposite the [other] animals, and they would come into heat when they came to drink.

And he thrust: Heb. יָצַח. The Targum renders יָצַח, an Aramaic term denoting thrusting and sticking in, of which there are many [examples] in the Talmud, [e.g.] (Shab. 50b):“he inserted it (יָצַח) and pulled it out” ; and (Chul. 93b):“If he thrust (יָצַח) something into it.” [The word] יָצַח is like יָצַח; but it is a contracted form.

into the gutters: Where the water was running, in pools made in the ground in which to water the flocks. — [from Mishnath Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 7]

where...would come, etc.: In the gutters where the animals would come to drink, he thrust the rods opposite the animals. — [from Targumim]

and they would come into heat, etc.: (Gen. Rabbah 73:10) The animal would see the rods, and she would be startled backwards. Then the male would mount her and she would give birth to offspring similar to him. Rabbi Hoshaya says: The water would become sperm in their innards, and they did not require a male, and that is the meaning of יָצַח וְיָצַח. (I.e, in this word, there is a combination of masculine and feminine forms, as mentioned by Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra.)

And the flocks came into heat by the rods, and the animals bore ringed, spotted, and striped [young].

by the rods: At the sight of the rods.

ringed: Unusual in the place where they are bound. Those are the joints of their forelegs and hind legs.

exeGesés companion Bible

And Yaaqov takes sprouts of fresh poplar and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and peels white peels in them and peels the white in the sprouts: and he sets the sprouts he peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs - in the watering troughs when the flocks come to drink, so that they conceive when they come to drink. And the flocks conceive in front of the sprouts and birth flocks - ringstraked, branded and spotted.

JPS (Tanakh—1985)

Jacob then got fresh shoots of poplar, and of almond and plane, and peeled white stripes in them, laying bare the white of the shoots. The rods that he had peeled he set up in front of the goats in the troughs, the water receptacles, that the goats came to drink from. Their mating occurred when they came to drink, and since the goats mated by the rods, the goats brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted young.

Kaplan Translation

Jacob took wands of fresh storax [(Ibn Janach; Radak, Sherashim; Septuagint). Livneh in Hebrew, a 'white tree.' It was believed to have occult powers, and was

sacred to idolators (Hosea 4:13). The storax (styrax) has white blossoms (cf. Targum Yonathan), and its bark yields a brown, vanilla-scented resin when it is peeled. Others, however, identify the livneh as the white poplar (*populus alba*), a tree having white bark (Rashi on Hosea 4:13; cf. Septuagint there). Here Rashi translates it as tremble, French for aspen, a species of poplar. Others translate it as elm (Radak on Hosea 4:13). A possible allusion to Laban.], **almond** [(Saadia Gaon, quoted in Radak, Sherashim; cf. Targum on 17:23). Luz in Hebrew; see Genesis 28:19. In Arabic, an almond is loz. Others, however, translate luz as hazel. Rashi thus translates it as coudre (coudrier), French for hazel, and Radak (Sherashim) translates it as avelanier (alveane), Spanish for hazel. (See Tosafoth, Bekhoroth 8a, s.v. Tarnegoleth).] **and plane** [Armon in Hebrew. The Septuagint translates it as platanos, the plane tree. It is called armon because its bark peels off the trunk, leaving it naked (arum). There might also be an allusion to Laban's trickery (armah; Lekach Tov). The reference is to the oriental plane (*planatus orientalis*). This is a tall tree, with a trunk as great as 18 feet in diameter, having a lofty crest (cf. Ezekiel 31:8). It is like the sycamore, and was very common in the Middle East. Later sources, however, identify the armon as the chestnut tree (Rashi; Radak, Sherashim). This is difficult to understand, since the chestnut did not grow in Mesopotamia where Jacob was (also see Tosafoth, Rosh HaShanah 23a, s.v. Armonim, Sukkah 32b, s.v. Dulba, Bava Bathra 81a, s.v. Armonim).]. **He peeled white stripes in them by uncovering the white layer under the wands' [bark]. He set up the wands that he peeled near the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, facing the animals** [It appears that by deep meditation on the wands, Jacob was able to direct spiritual energy and actually to change the genetic structure of the sheep (Bereshith Rabbah 73; Midrash Tehillim 8:6; Tanchuma B 24; Midrash HaGadol). Kabbalistic sources note that at this time, Jacob was manipulating some of the highest spiritual forces that exist (Zohar 161a, 163a; Etz Chaim, Shaar HaAkudim). See Genesis 31:12.]. **It was when they came to drink that they usually mated. The animals mated in the presence of the wands, and the young they bore were ringed, spotted and streaked.**

Orthodox Jewish Bible

And Ya'akov took him fresh cut makal (rod, branch) of poplar and of almond and plane tree; and peeled strips of bark in them, and made the lavan (white) appear which was in the maklot (rods, branches).

And he set the maklot which he had peeled before the flocks in the small channels of the shikatot mayim (watering troughs) when the tzon came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink,

And the flocks bred before the maklot, and brought forth tzon streaked, speckled, and spotted.

The Scriptures 1998

And Ya'aqob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, and they conceived when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Expanded Bible

So Jacob cut ·green [fresh] ·branches [rods] from poplar, almond, and plane trees and peeled off some of the bark so that the ·branches [rods] had white stripes on them. He put the ·branches [rods] in front of the flocks at the watering ·places [troughs]. When the animals came to drink, they ·also mated there [·were in heat], so the flocks mated in front of the branches [rods]. Then the young that were born were streaked, speckled, or spotted [·since nothing in Jacob's strategy would have produced this result, God must have done it].

Kretzmann's Commentary

Verses 37-43

Jacob's Great Wealth

And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel-and chestnut-tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. Since the bark of the Oriental gum, the almond or walnut, and the maple is dark, while all of them have a white, dazzling wood, they lent themselves very well for this purpose. 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. The impression which the animals at the time of conception were thus to receive was to be so sudden, deep, and lasting that it would affect the color of their offspring. And the flocks conceived before the rods, while they had their picture before them, and brought forth cattle ring-straked (banded), speckled, and spotted. Jacob's scheme worked beautifully, causing his flocks to increase very rapidly.

NET Bible®

But Jacob took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond, and plane trees. He made white streaks by peeling them, making the white inner wood in the branches visible. Then he set up the peeled branches in all the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink. He set up the branches in front of the flocks when they were in heat and came to drink. When the sheep mated in front of the branches, they⁸⁶ gave birth to young that were streaked or speckled or spotted.

The Pulpit Commentary

And Jacob took him rods of green poplar—literally, a rod (the singular being used collectively for rods) of הַגְּבֵל, (from וָבֵל, to be white, meaning either the) poplar (LXX; in Hos. 4:13; Vulgate, Kalisch) or the storax fresh green—and of the hazel—זֹל, the hazel tree (Raschi, Kimchi, Arabic, Luther, Furst, Kalisch) or the almond tree (Vulgate, Saadiah, Calvin, Gesenius, 'Speaker's Commentary')—and chestnut tree;—וְנוֹמֵרֶעֶ, the plane tree (LXX; Vulgate, et alii), so called from its height—and pilled white strakes in them (literally, peeled off in them peeled places white), and made the white appear (literally, making naked the white) which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flecks in the gutters (מִיִּטְחָר; literally, the canals or channels through which the water ran, from a root signifying to run) in the watering troughs (שֵׁט, תוֹתֵקֶשׁ, i.e. the troughs which contained the water, to which the animals approached) when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive (literally, and they became warm, in the sense expressed in the A.V.) when they came to drink—this was Jacob's first artifice to overreach Laban. And the flocks conceived (ut supra) before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted. The fact is said to have been frequently observed that, particularly in the case of sheep, whatever fixes their attention in copulation is marked upon the young. That Jacob believed in the efficacy of the artifice he adopted is apparent; but the multiplication of Parti-colored animals it will be safer to ascribe to Divine blessing than to human craft.

The Voice

But Jacob cut some fresh branches of poplar, almond, and plane trees; and he striped off the bark in streaks exposing the white wood beneath. He set the striped branches in front of the flocks in the troughs—the water troughs, that is—where they came to drink. Since they would mate when they came to drink, the flocks mated in front of the branches and produced *young that were* striped, speckled, and spotted.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] took to him a rod of a moist poplar and hazel and chestnut and he peeled white strips in them exposing the white which was upon the rods, and he set the rods which he peeled in troughs, in the watering troughs of water where the flocks come to gulp, to the front of the flocks, and they will heat in their coming

to gulp, and the flocks will heat to the rods and the flocks brought forth striped ones, speckled ones and spotted ones,...

Darby Translation And Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flock. And Jacob took fresh rods of white poplar, almond-tree, and maple; and peeled off white stripes in them, uncovering the white which was on the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flock, in the troughs at the watering-places where the flock came to drink, and they were ardent when they came to drink. And the flock was ardent before the rods; and the flock brought forth ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.

New King James Version Now Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods. And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.

Third Millennium Bible And Jacob took rods of green poplar and of the hazel and chestnut tree, and peeled white strips in them and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled 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. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth animals ringstreaked, speckled and spotted.

Young's Updated LT And Jacob takes to himself a rod of fresh poplar, and of the hazel and chesnut, and does peel in them white peelings, making bare the white that is on the rods, and sets up the rods which he has peeled in the gutters in the watering troughs (when the flock comes in to drink), over-against the flock, that they may conceive in their coming in to drink; and the flocks conceive at the rods, and the flock beares ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted ones.

The gist of this passage: Jacob takes the branches from various trees and peels them back, so that the branches a striped, spotted and blotched; and he put them in front of the watering troughs. The flock would drink the water and breed and they produced young which were striped, spotted and blotched.

37-39

Genesis 30:37a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
lâqach (לָקַח) [pronounced <i>law-KAHKH</i>]	<i>to take, to take away, to take in marriage; to seize</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3947 BDB #542
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH^{BV}</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
maqêl (מַקְלָה) [pronounced <i>mah-KAYL</i>]	<i>rod, staff</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4731 BDB #596
Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "Rods" is the noun <i>maqel</i> (מַקְלָה) (<i>mak-kale</i>), which is used of cut branches. ⁴⁶¹			

⁴⁶¹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 481); accessed September 9, 2017.

Genesis 30:37a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lib ^e neh (הַנְּבֵל) [pronounced lihb-NEH]	poplar	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3839 BDB #527
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: [G]reen poplar: Livneh is the white poplar, so called from the whiteness of its leaves, bark, and wood, from lavan to be white. ⁴⁶²			
Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "Poplar" is the noun livneh (הַנְּבֵל) (liv-neh), which refers to the storax tree and is a play upon Laban's name, which is lavan, "white." ⁴⁶³			
lach (חַל) [pronounced lakh]	fresh, moist, new	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #3892 BDB #535
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lûwz (זול) [pronounced looze]	almond-tree, almond wood, almond	masculine singular noun	Strong's #3870 BDB #531
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: Jerome, Hiller, Celsius, Dr. Shaw, Bochart, and other learned men, say, that luz is not the "hazel" but the almond-tree, as the word denotes both in Arabic and Syriac. ⁴⁶⁴			
Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "Almond" is the noun luz (זול) (looz), which was valued for the nut it bears, which is used not only for food but also to produce flavoring oil. ⁴⁶⁵			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ar ^e môwn (אוֹמְרֵע) [pronounced gahr-MOAN]	stripped of bark; a tree or branch; stripped of bark; a planed tree	masculine singular noun	Strong's #6196 BDB #790
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge: [C]hestnut tree: The Heb. word a [^] rmon, signifies "the plane-tree," so called from the bark naturally peeling off, and leaving the trunk naked, as its root a [^] ram, signifies. Ezekiel 31:8. ⁴⁶⁶			
Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: "Plane trees" is the noun `ermon (אוֹמְרֵע) (ar-mone), which flourishes in wet areas and can grow to massive size, reaching sixty feet and the circumference of its trunk can become forty feet. ⁴⁶⁷			
Whedon: <i>Poplar... hazel... chestnut</i> — Some render storax, almond, and plane-tree; others render maple instead of hazel, and walnut instead of chestnut. The wood was doubtless such as had a white wood under a dark bark. ⁴⁶⁸			

⁴⁶² Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:37.

⁴⁶³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 481); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴⁶⁴ Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:37.

⁴⁶⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 481); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴⁶⁶ Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:37.

⁴⁶⁷ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 481); accessed September 9, 2017.

⁴⁶⁸ Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:37.

Translation: [After all of this,] Jacob took the fresh rod from a poplar tree and an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark...

We must bear in mind that the Bible in its narrative is descriptive; it is not necessarily prescriptive. That is, by what Jacob does here, we find out several things about him; but that in no way suggests that what he does here is right or effective. Nor does it suggest that we do this as well.

Now, he takes 3 kinds of branches here, and he peels them back to give several artistic effects: one branch is striped, another is spotted and the third is splotched.

Genesis 30:37b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâtsal (פָּצַל) [pronounced <i>paw-TSAHL</i>]	<i>to strip off bark; to peel</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #6478 BDB #822
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person feminine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
p ^e tsâlôwth (פְּצוּלֹת) [pronounced <i>pets-aw-LOHTH</i>]	<i>peeled spots, peels, strips, stripes</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #6479 BDB #822
lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; pale; pale color</i>	feminine plural adjective	Strong's #3836 BDB #526
mach ^e sôph (מַחֲשׂוֹף) [pronounced <i>mahkh-SOHF</i>]	<i>exposing, revealing; a laying bare, a stripping or peeling off [of bark]</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #4286 BDB #362
lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; pale; pale color</i>	feminine singular adjective with the definite article	Strong's #3836 BDB #526
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gah</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
maqêl (מַקְלֵי) [pronounced <i>mah-KAYL</i>]	<i>rod, staff</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4731 BDB #596

Translation: ...and he peeled them in white streaks, exposing the white [flesh] which [is] on the rods.

He has to peel back the bark of these trees branches in order to get the effect that he wants. He is exposing the flesh of the tree which is whitish underneath the bark.

Dr. Peter Pett suggests: *“Made the white (laban) appear.” There is probably a subtle play on the word for white and the name Laban. Laban had been out-Labaned.*⁴⁶⁹

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob’s trick turns upon the whiteness of the rods; and this supplies a play upon the name “Laban” (= “white”), who is outwitted by Jacob.*⁴⁷⁰

The conclusions that many people draw from this narrative are as absurd as the idea that, when you strip back the bark of a branch, what is revealed is the color *white*. Most of you have seen, in one way or the other, the flesh of a tree. The outside is usually darker color; but when you peel back a layer, that reveals the flesh of the tree, which is usually much lighter than the bark.

Again, what Jacob wants is branches that are spotted, blotched and striped.

The College Press Bible Study spent way too much time identifying the trees that were used: *Jacob, of course, must select rods from trees whose dark external bark produced the greatest contrast with the white one below it. The text suggests the fresh poplar (or styrax-tree), the almond-tree (or perhaps the hazelnut tree), and the plane tree (which resembled somewhat the maple tree). For the purpose Jacob had in mind, “the gum-tree,” we are told, “might be betted adapted than white poplars, almond-tree or walnut better than hazelnut, and maple better than plane-tree”.*⁴⁷¹

We do not know the actual trees involved here, and that is likely unimportant. Clarke suggests that the first branch is from the white poplar; the second from some kind of a nut tree (hazel, filbert, almond); and the third, from the plane tree (where the bark falls off on its own each year).⁴⁷²

Genesis 30:37 And Jacob took rods of green poplar, and of a fresh tree, and the almond and plane tree. And he peeled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

Now, at this point, Jacob thinks that he will outsmart Laban. This is the old Jacob that we remember. Jacob has a plan. He probably knew that he would do this from the very beginning.

I want you to notice that God is not involved in this plan. God did not tell Jacob to do any of this stuff. What the Bible records is often simply history. This history, even when participated in by God’s people, does not mean that they are doing God’s bidding. Jacob is going back to his old ways in order to get the better of Laban. Jacob has wanted to get his revenge upon Laban for cheating him (giving him two daughters for 14 years work, which included 1 daughter that Jacob did not want); and now he has his chance.

Remember how Jacob put one over on his own father, pretending to be his brother Esau? This is Jacob is pulling off another scheme. This approach will be how he thinks that he will get the better of Laban.

⁴⁶⁹ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:37–39.

⁴⁷⁰ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:37.

⁴⁷¹ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

⁴⁷² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37.

Genesis 30:38a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsag (יָצַג) [pronounced <i>yaw-TSAHG</i>]	<i>to make to stand, to set, to station, to place, to leave, to establish, to let stay</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3322 BDB #426
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
maqêl (מַקְלָל) [pronounced <i>mah-KAYL</i>]	<i>rod, staff</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4731 BDB #596
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
pâtsal (פָּצַל) [pronounced <i>paw-TSAHL</i>]	<i>to strip off bark; to peel</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #6478 BDB #822
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
r ^e hâṭîym (רִהְטִימ) [pronounced <i>reh-haw-TEEM</i>]	<i>watering troughs, ringlets, curls (because they are flowing down?)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #7298 BDB #923
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
shiqăthôwth (שִׁקְתוֹת) [pronounced <i>shi-kuh-THOHTH</i>]	<i>watering [drinking] troughs</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #8268 BDB #1052
mayim (מַיִם) [pronounced <i>mah-YIHM</i>]	<i>water (s)</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article; pausal form	Strong's #4325 BDB #565
'âsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who, whom; where</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
bôw' (בָּו) [pronounced <i>boh</i>]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

Genesis 30:38a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shâthâh (שָׁתָּה) [pronounced shaw-THAW]	<i>to drink [actually or metaphorically]; to drink together [at a banquet]; to feast; to sit</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #8354 BDB #1059
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nôkach (נֹכַח) [pronounced NOH-kahkh]	<i>front, in front of, opposite to, towards the front of, on behalf of</i>	substantive (preposition/adverb)	Strong's #5227 BDB #647
With the lâmed preposition, this acts as an adverb and means <i>towards what is opposite; straight before oneself; before; for; on behalf of.</i>			
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838

Translation: He placed the rods which he had peeled in the troughs, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink—[so these branches are] in front of the flocks.

Jacob then takes these rods and places them into the watering troughs of the flocks. The animals would see these branches and they would be drinking water in which these branches sat.

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown: *[W]atering troughs [were] usually a long stone block hollowed out, from which several sheep could drink at once, but sometimes so small as to admit of only one drinking at a time.*⁴⁷³

Jacob's idea is, the animals would see these branches and this would somehow mystically affect their breeding so that they would produce striped, spotted and blotched animals.

This was a little mumbo jumbo, hocus pocus on his part. What Jacob did would not influence the breeding of these sheep. He obviously thought that it did. However, God, seeing that Jacob had been swindled once again by Laban, honored this and saw to it that the flocks all put out spotted and speckled sheep and goats, according to the laws of heredity. This will be recognized by Jacob in his own testimony in Genesis 31:9: "In this way, God has taken away the cattle of your father."

Nearly all of us have seen various kinds of animals born (cats, dogs, guinea pigs, hamsters, cattle, sheep, goats); and when an animal has not been bred to retain certain characteristics (a bull dog, a pit bull, a beagle); we do not ever know what might pop out. I recall the first litter of cats I had ever seen from a Siamese cat. She gave birth to 4 or 5 Siamese cats and one gray tabby cat. At that young age, I found this to be cool and amazing.

When arranging for two dogs of a particular breed to mate, one of the considerations is how far back a dog's lineage goes. The idea is, specific traits are bred in and bred out; and that, ideally speaking, we do not have other types of characteristics as occurring for that amount of time (I seem to also recall in my vague knowledge of such things of breeders surreptitiously killing pups born who do not have all the right sorts of characteristics).

⁴⁷³ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown; *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*; 1871; from e-sword, Genesis 30:38.

In this chapter, we have two false concepts. Laban figured that if he removed all of the spotted, blotched and striped animals from his flocks, there would be none of that kind born. He was wrong about this. Jacob thought that, if he put branches that were striped, spotted or blotched in front of these purer flocks, that this would result in young that were striped, spotted or blotched. Both men were wrong in terms of cause and effect.

This does not make the Bible wrong or superstitious. The Bible records what these men did; and we can determine what their reasoning is, even though their reasoning is false. These men are wrong and superstitious. They raised sheep and goats and various other kinds of animals, and yet really did not understand breeding.

Genesis 30:38b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâcham (יָחַם) [pronounced yaw-KHAHM]	<i>to be [become] warm (or, hot); to be angry; to be warm with sexual desire; to mate [of animals]; to breed</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3179 BDB #404
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
bôw' (בָּוֹ) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter, to advance; to attain</i>	Qal infinitive construct with the 3 rd person feminine plural suffix	Strong's #935 BDB #97
The infinitive construct, when combined with the bêyth preposition, can often take on a temporal meaning and may be rendered <i>when [such and such happens]</i> . It can serve as a temporal marker that denotes an event which occurs simultaneously with the action of the main verb.			
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
shâthâh (שָׁתָּה) [pronounced shaw-THAW]	<i>to drink [actually or metaphorically]; to drink together [at a banquet]; to feast; to sit</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #8354 BDB #1059

Translation: [The flocks] would breed when coming to drink.

These animals get together and they drink and they breed. Most humans can understand this statement without further elaboration.

The NET Bible: *It was generally believed that placing such "visual aids" before the animals as they were mating, it was possible to influence the appearance of their offspring. E. A. Speiser notes that "Jacob finds a way to outwit his father-in-law, through prenatal conditioning of the flock by visual aids – in conformance with universal folk beliefs" (Genesis [AB], 238). Nevertheless, in spite of Jacob's efforts at animal husbandry, he still attributes the resulting success to God (see 31:5).*⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁴ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 30, 2016.

Genesis 30:38 And he set the rods which he had peeled by the troughs, by the water troughs, where the flocks came to drink, across from the flocks, and the flocks were in heat when they came to drink.

Genesis 30:38 He placed the rods which he had peeled in the troughs, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink—[so these branches are] in front of the flocks. [The flocks] would breed when coming to drink. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

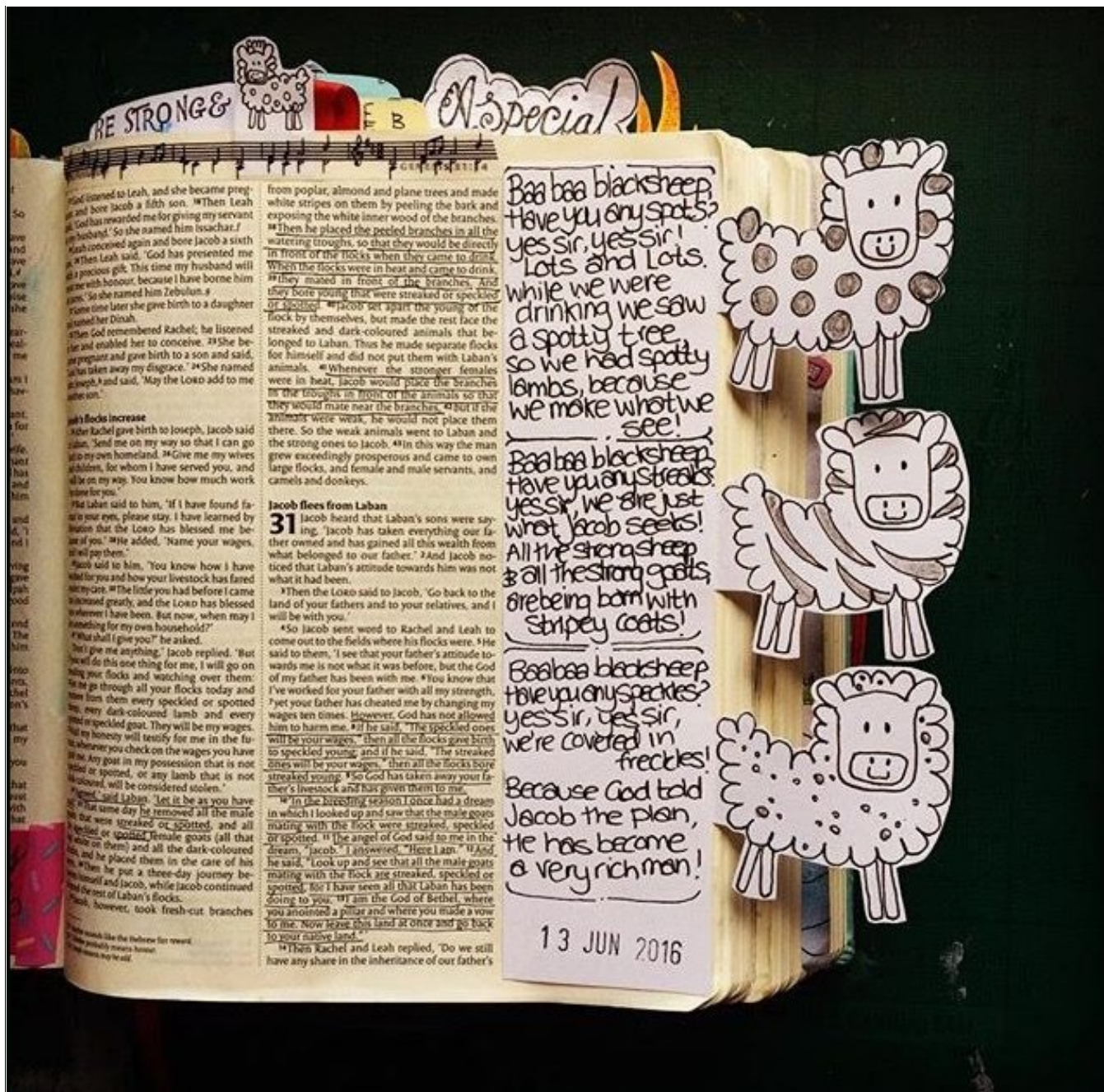
Jacob thinks that if he puts up various tree branches which have been peeled to be striped and the like, that he will be able to influence the result breeding of the animals. Jacob is not acting under the direction of God. This is his own plan.

Bear in mind that believers and unbelievers do a lot of stupid things. Also bear in mind that God often overrules our own stupidity.

Jacob deceived his own father in order to receive a blessing meant for Esau, Jacob's twin brother. He will still receive that blessing, despite using deception to get that blessing. Jacob's herd will increase, despite his goofy plan that he uses.

Genesis 30:37–38 [After all of this,] Jacob took the fresh rod from a poplar tree and an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark and he peeled them in white streaks, exposing the white [flesh] which [is] on the rods. He placed the rods which he had peeled in the troughs, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink—[so these branches are] in front of the flocks. [The flocks] would breed when coming to drink. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Jacob's Sheep—Bible Journaling (a graphic); from [Pinimg](#); accessed September 16, 2017.



Genesis 30:37–38 After all this, Jacob took a fresh branch from a poplar tree, along with an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark, and he peeled back to bark to expose the flesh of the tree under the bark. Then he placed these branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that the branches were in front of the flocks, as well as being in the water. When the flocks came to drink, they also would breed.

The Mechanics of Jacob’s Scheme (Various Commentators)

Jacobus presents the way I see this: “He peeled off the bark of different trees which were very white under the bark, so that they [the sheep and goats] would be speckled and ring-streaked.”⁴⁷⁵

⁴⁷⁵ The Preacher’s Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:37.

The Mechanics of Jacob's Scheme (Various Commentators)

Don't misunderstand; I believe that this was Jacob's thinking; that does not mean that I believe him to be right.

H. C. Leupold: *Jacob's device, then, as here described is to lay peeled rods of trees that peel more readily than others and show a particularly white surface after peeling—the white "poplar" as the name libhneh ("white") indicates, the lûz, or "almond" and the 'ermôn, or "plane tree," whose bark naturally peels off in large slabs—to lay these in the troughs where the sheep drink during the breeding season. Breeding took place with these speckled or spotted objects before the eyes of the she-goats and the lambs. Now, especially the lamb is said to be susceptible to the things seen at the time of copulation or during the period of gestation by way of having the effects of such sight passed on to the offspring. And yet, certainly, another influence must be allowed at this point. Surely, man cannot so definitely control nature. Biologists admit the possibility of prenatal influences that they have not yet fully discerned.*⁴⁷⁶

The Cambridge Bible: *Jacob places the white peeled rods in front of the flocks, when they come to drink at the breeding season. It was the popular belief that such objects, being presented to the eye at such a season, would be likely to affect the colouring of the progeny.*⁴⁷⁷

Matthew Henry: *To set peeled sticks before the cattle where they were watered, that, looking much at those unusual party-coloured sticks, by the power of imagination they might bring forth young ones in like manner party-coloured, Genesis 30:37–39. Probably this custom was commonly used by the shepherds of Canaan, who coveted to have their cattle of this motley colour.*⁴⁷⁸

For all we know, this could have been the most recent *scientific discoveries* in the land of Canaan. What I mean by that is, Jacob may have believed this to be true science.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:37–38 After all this, Jacob took a fresh branch from a poplar tree, along with an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark, and he peeled back to bark to expose the flesh of the tree under the bark. Then he placed these branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that the branches were in front of the flocks, as well as being in the water. When the flocks came to drink, they also would breed.

Various Commentators Discuss Jacob's Breeding Scheme

The Bible Query:

Q: In Gen 30:37-43, doesn't Jacob "causing" sheep and goats to become spotted sound like superstition?

A: There is no hint of superstition, only faulty ideas about animal genetics. God blessed Jacob without regard for this, as Jacob himself knew in Genesis 31:7-13.⁴⁷⁹

Ralph Gower: *Jacob...believed that the environment at the time of conception was responsible for the colouring of the sheep (Genesis 30:42). Fortunately for Jacob, God overruled his ignorance by ensuring that justice was done and that Jacob got the best sheep out of a bad bargain (Genesis 31:5b–9).*⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁶ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

⁴⁷⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:38.

⁴⁷⁸ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37–43.

⁴⁷⁹ *Bible Query*; March 2006 version. Copyright (c) Christian Debater(tm) 1997-2006.; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37–39.

⁴⁸⁰ *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*; Ralph Gower; ©1987 by Moody International; © by Moody Press; p. 141.

Various Commentators Discuss Jacob's Breeding Scheme

J. Vernon McGee: *There have been various explanations of this. There are those who say this is nothing in the world but pure superstition. Others say it is an old wives' tale and is certainly something which ought not to be in the Bible record. It is my judgment that it is important that this record appears in the Word of God. Of course, there were genetic factors involved, but I don't feel that we should rule out this as being a superstition. The point is that both Laban and Jacob believed that the white streaks in the rods caused the offspring to be ringstraked. That is the important part of the story. Maybe you are too smart to believe it, but these two boys believed it. Regardless of whether or not there was value in it, Jacob is using trickery. He had been quite a trickster, but he has met an uncle who is a better trickster than he is, and now Jacob is trying to make a comeback.*⁴⁸¹

Chuck Smith: *Now there are those who believe that he was actually trying to give sort of a prenatal thing, you know, by making the streaked the striped boughs and so forth and so there would be sort of a pre-natal impression that would create. The Hebrew word "conceive" is actually to be made hot. And we do know that they, the animals, are by placing stripes in front of them causes them to desire to conceive.*

Smith continues: *And so it was probably that which he was doing rather than trying to prenatally mark them. That he was just knowing the genetic structures and the recessive genes and so forth, that the recessives combine with the dominant, you know, can come forth spotted and so forth. And he was sharp, even when he was doing no doubt and the stronger ones he had set these things and caused them to conceive, the weaker ones went on to Laban. And anyhow, he was getting the better of the deal.*⁴⁸²

Dr. Peter Pett: *How far he thought that this was a method of actually producing speckled offspring (it would not explain the black sheep), and how far it was a red herring to disguise the fact that he was achieving his results by inter-breeding, we do not know. We know of no method of achieving this today. But there remains the possibility that something from the trees used entered the water and assisted the required effect.*

Pett continues: *It is quite clear that Jacob had developed into an expert shepherd and it may be that had observed certain things which he knew he could utilise to produce the kind of animals he wanted. We need not doubt that breeding was one of them. He may never have known what actually achieved the results but he used a successful combination. His contemporaries noted the most striking method.*

Dr. Peter Pett concludes: *Alternately this may all be a device for deceiving Laban. Having assiduously made sure that the sheep had been properly impregnated perhaps he wants to be able to provide some other explanation of what would follow than his own subtlety. However, what follows suggests that he did have some faith in his white straked rods.*⁴⁸³

Pett might be giving Jacob too much credit here; and I think that there is an over-arching theme which suggests that Jacob himself believed in the methods which he used.

Pett then adds: *Jacob was using every method at his command to produce speckled and black beasts.*⁴⁸⁴

Matthew Poole: *When by their refreshment and meeting together, they were most likely to generate and conceive.*⁴⁸⁵

Dr. Bob Utley: *This again looks like the patriarchal family trying to help YHWH fulfill His promises! Whether this method worked (i.e., some chemical in the plant) or not is not the theological issue! Jacob, the trickster, is still at work. Are YHWH's promises dependant on Jacob's actions?*⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸¹ From https://archive.org/stream/01_Genesis/01-GENESIS_djvu.txt (Genesis 30) accessed September 15, 2017.

⁴⁸² Chuck Smith, *Through the Bible Commentary C2000 Series*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37–43.

⁴⁸³ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:37–39.

⁴⁸⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:40.

⁴⁸⁵ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:38.

⁴⁸⁶ Dr. Bob Utley, Copyright © 2014 Bible Lessons International; www.freebiblecommentary.org; from e-sword; Genesis 30:37–43.

Various Commentators Discuss Jacob's Breeding Scheme

Wesley: *[Jacob] set pilled sticks before the cattle where they were watered, that looking much at those unusual party - coloured sticks, by the power of imagination, they might bring forth young ones in like manner party - coloured. Probably this custom was commonly used by the shepherds of Canaan, who coveted to have their cattle of this motly colour. When he began to have a flock of ring - straked and brown, he contrived to set them first, and to put the faces of the rest towards them, with the same design as he did the former. Whether this was honest policy, or no, may admit of a question.*⁴⁸⁷

Whedon: *At sight of such imperious attempt at overreaching him, Jacob is not slow to devise means to counteract the wrong. The artifice he adopted was in well-known accord with the fact that any impressive colours fixed in the attention of a female at the time of conception are almost sure to mark the offspring [this is based upon the thinking of that day].*⁴⁸⁸ If we understand Whedon to approach this based upon how Jacob was thinking, then this is an accurate observations.

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Jacob has this superstitious scheme. He is going to take these rods of various kinds of wood and peel off the bark, so that there is a white strip and a dark strip, and a white strip and a dark strip, and he is going to plant these posts in front of the sheep and the goats. The superstition is that whatever the animal saw that would influence the color of whatever was in the womb. It is all superstition and it just doesn't work. It was just their idea at the time. This is just Jacob's scheme.*⁴⁸⁹

James Burton Coffman: *More nonsense has been written about this than about nearly anything else. This device of Jacob was one of two things: (1) It was either a semi-pagan superstition, just like the mandrakes, or (2) it was an order from God Himself delivered to Jacob as a test of his faith, nor can that possibility be discounted. Certainly, it was a supreme act of faith in God that Jacob agreed to continue working for Laban for that class of cattle. Why did Jacob propose this? The answer comes out in the next chapter, where Jacob explained what he was doing to his wives. God appeared to him in a dream, revealing that the livestock thus marked would proliferate in Laban's herds. How did this come about? God caused it to be that way. Although nothing is said in the text about God's telling Jacob to peel the rods, it might very well have been done. As noted in (1), it could have been merely a superstitious action by Jacob, just like Rachel and Leah's use of the mandrakes.*

Coffman continues: *Another factor often overlooked by commentators on this passage is that Jacob "controlled the breeding" of the herds (Genesis 30:41,42). The conclusion is absolutely imperative that the peeled rods either (1) did nothing at all, or (2) were a fulfillment of what God had commanded Jacob to do. The two great factors that produced the transfer of Laban's flocks and herds, in large measure, to Jacob were: (1) God foretold Jacob of this and providentially brought it to pass; and (2) Jacob aided in every possible way by (a) controlling the breeding, and (b) manifesting his faith in God by the placement of the peeled rods. We cannot rule out the possibility that Jacob might have initiated the latter action himself, following some ancient superstition, supposing that such a thing might also help his purpose. One thing which we emphatically deny is that those peeled rods in any manner produced the black sheep and the ring-streaked, speckled, and spotted cattle.*⁴⁹⁰

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *[Jacob has a] dream [which] indicates that the "striped, speckled and mottled" animals were heterozygous carrying the particular genes for streaks, spots and speckles even though their coats were all solid color. In the dream, God related that He could see into the gene structure, though Jacob could not and knew the true nature of the animals. Therefore, by means of God's divine omnipotence the homozygous animals, which could produce offspring colored like themselves were restrained from mating and the heterozygous animals were compelled to mate .*⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁷ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, Genesis 30:37.

⁴⁸⁸ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:37.

⁴⁸⁹ From [Dean Bible Ministries](http://www.deanbibleministries.org); accessed September 11, 2017.

⁴⁹⁰ From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

⁴⁹¹ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 489); accessed October 16, 2017.

Various Commentators Discuss Jacob's Breeding Scheme

Morris seems to ignore Jacob's entire breeding scheme, and suggests something entirely different: *Jacob knew a great deal about sheep and goats and cattle, however—much more than Laban. He had kept his father's flocks for decades, and now had been in charge of Laban's for over fourteen years. As a very observant and intelligent man he had apparently learned something of what we now call Mendelian genetics, simply by long-continued observations of generation after generation of these animals. He knew that, even though a species of animal may have certain "dominant" traits (such as the white color in this type of sheep), there are, in each generation, certain individual animals that manifest one or more "recessive" traits (such as the brown color among the sheep). Furthermore, actual physical vigor and usefulness for man's needs are quite independent of this matter of coloration. He believed that he could simply trust God to increase the statistical proportion of animals in future generations of Laban's flocks that would appear with these recessive traits. He knew, furthermore, that if he would then use these for future breeding in the flock, this would increase their numbers still more...[and] by selective breeding he could eventually develop a flock of predominantly spotted and speckled animals.*⁴⁹²

Morris mixes in a lot of truth along with some things which are not necessarily true. First of all, Laban is the master here and Jacob is the novice (recall that Jacob was described as being a man of the tents). Laban has engaged in this kind of shepherding and breeding all of his life. Secondly, Jacob is not proceeding like a man who understands the Mendelian genetic principles, because he is engaging in a scheme which is designed to bring out the desired characteristics. The scheme does not work, but God allows the breeding to result in such animals being born.

Was there something leached from these branches by the water which acted as a stimulant or an aphrodisiac to the flocks? This would set up an interesting parallel to the mandrakes, previously discussed.

In any case, the apparent success of Jacob's scheme (Genesis 31:12) does not mean that anything that Jacob did was (1) directed by God or (2) related in any way to his success (as noted in Genesis 30:43). There is no indication that God told Jacob to do any of this. In fact, God does not appear to speak to Jacob until it is time for him to leave Haran.

There is the opinion of some that Jacob's scheme was representative of the genetics taking place. I could buy into this proposition, *if* God had told Jacob to do what he did, and explained, in some way, that this is representative of what God was doing. However, even though Jacob has this dream, and the results of Jacob's breeding are discussed, at no point is there a tie-in to this sticks in the water troughs.

Jacob stated the principle to his wives in Genesis 31:6–9 "You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me." (ESV)

Jacob did have a dream, and he relays this dream to his wives in Genesis 31:10–13 "In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled. Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'" (ESV) Do you see any mention of Jacob's scheme? No. That was energy of the flesh and energy of the flesh accomplishes exactly nothing.

That the energy of the flesh accomplishes nothing is the theme of this chapter; Rachel's mandrakes and Jacob's breeding schemes did not accomplish one iota in the plan of God. God's sovereignty does. We can be a part of that sovereignty.

⁴⁹² Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*; Baker Book House; ©1980; pp. 474–475.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

It is important to note that, Laban changed Jacob's salary on 10 occasions, so during one period of time, it would be advantageous to Jacob to be producing spotted sheep; and on another, striped sheep. This only allows for God's hand to be involved in the breeding process, despite Jacob's schemes.

Clarke: *The finger of God works in nature myriads of ways unknown to us; we see effects without end, of which no rational cause can be assigned; it has pleased God to work thus and thus, and this is all that we know; and God mercifully hides the operations of his power from man in a variety of eases, that he may hide pride from him. Even with the little we know, how apt are we to be puffed up! We must adore God in a reverential silence on such subjects as these, confess our ignorance, and acknowledge that nature is the instrument by which he chooses to work, and that he performs all things according to the counsel of his own will, which is always infinitely wise and infinitely good.*⁴⁹³

The current religion versus God movement is a good example of this. There are many atheists and agnostics who claim that they have no faith in anything; and that they only believe what science tells them. They tend to believe that science and religion are at odds with one another, and they cite evolution or global warming (as well as portions of the Bible) to *prove* this. All true scientific laws are actually God's laws which He designed for this universe (which came into being simultaneous with time, space and matter—Genesis 1:1). Calling them *scientific laws* is a misnomer because science did not originate these laws nor does science enforce them.

Now, do not misunderstand me—I am not attempting to give any credence to Jacob's scheme, but when two sheep mate, there could be a variety of outcomes. Therefore, even though genetics plays a dominant role, there are certainly other factors. As proof of this, when your parents have children, you and your siblings are not clones of one another.

There were some commentators who believed that Jacob outsmarted Laban with this scheme. In fact, I was surprised at how many people believed this; but many came out of the College Press Bible Study.

Commentators Confused about Jacob's Breeding Scheme

Bishop Hall suggests that this scheme worked, in part, because it was to Jacob's benefit: *In the very shapes and colours of brute creatures there is a Divine hand, which disposeth them to His own ends. Small and unlikely means shall prevail where God intends an effect. Little peeled sticks of hazel or poplar laid in the troughs, shall enrich Jacob with an increase of his spotted flocks, Laban's sons might have tried the same means and failed. God would have Laban know that He put a difference between Jacob and him; that as for fourteen years He had multiplied Jacob's charge of cattle to Laban, so now, for the last six years, He would multiply Laban's flock to Jacob, and if Laban had the more, yet the better were Jacob's.*⁴⁹⁴

Murphy also believes that this scheme worked: *first device is to place partly-colored rods before the eyes of the animals at the rutting season, that they might drop lambs and kids varied with speckles, patches, or streaks of white. He had learned from experience that there is a congruence between the colors of the objects contemplated by the dams at that season and those of their young. At all events they bare many straked, speckled, and spotted lambs and kids. He now separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flock toward the young of the rare colors, doubtless to affect them in the same way as the peeled rods.*⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:38.

⁴⁹⁴ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:37–43 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses) (slightly edited).

⁴⁹⁵ *The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series*; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

Commentators Confused about Jacob's Breeding Scheme

Dr. Cuthbert A. Simpson: *Laban, unwilling to lose his services, offered to allow him to fix his own wages. Jacob replied that he wanted nothing at the moment, but proposed that Laban should remove from his flocks all the speckled and spotted animals. These were to be set apart by themselves (cf. Genesis 30:36). Jacob would then care for the rest of the flock and would receive as his wages any speckled and spotted that might be born to these normally colored animals in the future. To this Laban promptly agreed (Genesis 30:34–36)—indeed, why should he not accept a proposal so favorable to himself? If Jacob was such a fool to suggest it, let him take the consequences! But Jacob, though he may have been a knave, was no fool. He placed rods upon which he had peeled white streaks before the eyes of the stronger animals in the flocks at rutting time, with the result that the young born to them were striped, speckled, and spotted, and so belonged to him (Genesis 30:37–39; Genesis 30:42 a). Thus his substance increased rapidly (Genesis 30:43), and Laban was left with the feebler animals (Genesis 30:42 b). This story of one knave outwitting another—doubtless another piece of shepherd lore—is of a piece with that in Genesis 25:27–34 (cf. also Genesis 26:1–11, Genesis 27:1–40), and it was told by J–1 with unfeigned delight; clever Jacob had outwitted the dull nomad Aramaean.*⁴⁹⁶

The College Press Bible Study gave Jacob's scheme some credence: *Was this an old wives' superstition? Or had it some validity? "The physiological law involved is said to be well established (Driver), and was acted on by ancient cattle breeders (see the list of authorities in Bochart, Hierozoicon, etc. II, c. 49, also Jeremias, Das Alte Testamwnt im Lichte des alten Orients, 2nd ed. 1906). The full representation seems to be that the ewes saw the reflection of the rams in the water, blended with the image of the parti-colored rods, and were deceived into thinking they were coupled with parti-colored males (Jer., We [Ilhausen], Die Composition des Hexateuchs, 41)" (Skinner, ICCG, 393).*⁴⁹⁷

The NEV Commentary: *The flocks conceiving in front of the rods / poles surely has reference to the concept of the pagan asherah poles, before which worshippers had sex. Jacob was clearly influenced by this wrong idea- and yet God patiently worked with him through it. Jacob appears to have had the idea that what a female thinks about or has before her eyes at the time of labour or conception, will affect the child. And so he peeled stripes off the rods so they appeared 'ringstraked', or striped- in the belief that if the female cattle gave birth or conceived looking at them, then the offspring would be striped too, like the striped rods. However, the connection with the asherah poles suggests that Jacob's beliefs were associated with pagan fertility myths, rather than faith in Yahweh the God of his fathers.*

The NEV Commentary continues: *Jacob's superstitious ideas about the cattle mating were used by God to teach Jacob that He would bless him physically, as a prelude to the more important spiritual blessings which Jacob was later to value. There is no biological truth at all in what he did. Jacob wasn't specifically corrected for his paganism; later he must have realized the depth of God's grace in still working through him at this time, still giving him blessing. God blessed the whole thing so that it worked, apparently confirming Jacob in it by a vision (Gen. 31:10-12). God will go along with things which are poorly motivated and even incorrect- but in order to finally teach that it was all nonsense, and His gift of grace shines through it all.*⁴⁹⁸

I don't know whether Jacob was actually demonstrating paganism here or whether he was simply using these "advanced breeding techniques" to out-manuever Laban. I would lean more towards Jacob thinking he had found a way to beat Laban in the breeding of these sheep and goats rather than thinking that he was involved in paganism of some sort.

⁴⁹⁶ The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

⁴⁹⁷ The College Press Bible Study Textbook Series; (a compilation of many commentaries); from e-sword; Genesis 30:25–43.

⁴⁹⁸ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

Commentators Confused about Jacob's Breeding Scheme

Several commentators⁴⁹⁹ reference Micah 1:5 *All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria? And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?* These words of Micah are not referencing Jacob of old (Micah is speaking these words maybe 1500 years later); this is not a treatise on Jacob's life. Jacob is sometimes a name given to the people of Israel who have strayed from God. We call them sons of Israel, often not realizing that *Israel* is Jacob's God-given name. They are also known as sons of Jacob; and when God calls them that (speaking through Micah), they are in trouble.

So there is no misunderstanding, mating animals which look at branches which have blotches in them will not give birth to offspring with similar blotches.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Genesis 30:37–38 *After all this, Jacob took a fresh branch from a poplar tree, along with an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark, and he peeled back to bark to expose the flesh of the tree under the bark. Then he placed these branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that the branches were in front of the flocks, as well as being in the water. When the flocks came to drink, they also would breed.*

Commentators who think God directed or was involved in Jacob's scheme

From the Heritage Bible: *[M]y opinion is that Jacob placed the peeled poles there to keep the vision God gave him before his own eyes, so that his faith did not waver. God commanded Abraham to look at the innumerable stars to keep before his mind that God would multiply his seed. God has always given people visions to keep before their mind what God planned to do for them in the future so that their faith would remain firm.*⁵⁰⁰

Benson: *As it appears from Genesis 31:10, that God, to reward Jacob's fidelity, and punish Laban's injustice, determined that the cattle should generally be speckled and spotted; so it is probable he directed him to take this method to attain that end; not as though it were sufficient of itself to produce such an effect, which any person that will make the trial will find it is not; but as a means which God would bless in order to it, and which Jacob was required to use in testimony of his dependance on God...[or] Jacob used the rods in obedience to a special divine direction, without knowing any thing of their natural virtue.*⁵⁰¹

No doubt, the results of the breeding were in God's hands. But there is no indication that Jacob's method was related in any way to God's plan.

Gill: *Jacob was directed of God to take this method, this is sufficient to justify him, and upon his blessing and providence the success depended, whatever there may be in nature to bring about such an effect; and as it was to do himself justice, who had been greatly injured by Laban, it was equally as just and righteous a thing to take this course.*⁵⁰²

What we would expect, if this were the case, would be a written record of God speaking to Jacob, saying, "Now, listen, Jacob, this is what I want you to do about breeding these sheep and goats." We do not have that. What we have is this, what the Angel of God said to Jacob: "Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred." (Genesis 31:12b–13, ESV) God tells Jacob *after the fact* what He had done.

⁴⁹⁹ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

⁵⁰⁰ Footnote from the Heritage Bible, Genesis 30:39.

⁵⁰¹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37–38.

⁵⁰² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:39. The editor of Gill's collection adds the note: *This was written over one hundred years before the laws of genetics were discovered. We know that the result was from God not of Jacob's schemes.*

Wm Wenstrom went into great detail about this portion of Scripture.

Wenstrom's Favorable Review of Jacob's Breeding Methods

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *The selective breeding techniques employed by Jacob here in Genesis 30:37-43 are known today as "Mendelian genetics," named after the Austrian botanist, Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) who made his experiments in the latter part of the nineteenth century regarding the laws of heredity. Of course, the Lord created these laws of heredity and revealed them to Jacob in a dream so that he could take advantage of these laws in breeding his flocks as we will note in Genesis 31:10-13.*

Wenstrom continues: *"Under these laws of heredity, even though a species of animal may have certain 'dominant' traits such as the white color of sheep, there are, in each generation, certain individual animals that manifest one or more 'recessive' traits such as the brown color among the sheep. Actual physical vigor and usefulness for man's needs are quite independent of this matter of coloration. The Lord simply increased the statistical proportion of animals in future generations of Laban's flocks that would appear with these recessive traits. He knew that if Jacob would then use these for future breeding in the flock that this would increase their numbers. A certain proportion of the solid-colored animals he knew would be 'homozygous' and if mated with the other homozygous animals, would appear only solid color offspring. The 'heterozygous' animals, which did contain in some proportion the genes for off-colored offspring would be the ones, which would have to supply Jacob's own future flocks. But by selective breeding, under the direction of the Lord, Jacob could eventually develop a flock of predominately spotted and speckled animals".⁵⁰³*

The Wenstrom writes: *Some commentators believe that Jacob is acting deceitfully in Genesis 30:37-43 but this emphatically is not the case if we start from the premise that the Lord gave him these instructions! Furthermore, remember that in his proposal to Laban, which Laban agreed to, Jacob proposed that he start with nothing! Jacob made the proposal in such a way that the only way he could successfully have a flock of multicolored animals was if the Lord intervened and supernaturally guided him and instructed him and prospered him.*

Wenstrom continues: *Also, some criticize Jacob's techniques here as not being accurate scientifically and nothing but an old wives tale. However, scientists have not been able to work out concerning the transmission of hereditary factors. In a certain population there are multitudes of different characteristics, which may appear in different individual animals of that species. The potential for variation in the DNA molecular structure is tremendous. Exactly what it is that determines the actual characteristics a particular individual may have, out of all the potential characteristics that are theoretically available in the gene pool is not yet known in any significant degree.*

⁵⁰³ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 481); accessed September 9, 2017. Wenstrom cites Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record, pages 474-477, Baker Book House.

Wenstrom's Favorable Review of Jacob's Breeding Methods

Wenstrom continues: *Some critics of Jacob breeding techniques state that it is scientifically impossible to achieve the results that he did when these techniques are predicated on the belief that visual impressions at the time of conception affect the outcome at birth. Henry M. Morris, "Though it is very unlikely that an external image can be transmitted through the visual apparatus to the brain and thus in some way as a signal to the DNA structure to specify certain characteristics to be triggered in the embryo. However, it is true that certain chemicals can and do have a significant prenatal influence if they can reach the embryo or prior to conception, the DNA in the germ cells. It is possible that certain chemicals in the wood of these trees, peeled rods of which were actually in the water, which the flocks came to drink, were capable somehow of affecting the animals. The water treated with these peeled rods must have served as an aphrodisiac and promoter of fertility among the flocks. At least one such chemical substance found in these trees has been used for such a purpose in both ancient and modern times. The mere sight of the striped rods may have served as an aphrodisiac to the flocks when they came to drink, much like the effect of pornographic pictures have in stimulating the sexual apparatus"*⁵⁰⁴

Wenstrom concludes: *The selective breeding techniques that Jacob employs that are recorded in Genesis 30:37-43 were given to him by the Lord in a dream which is implied in Genesis 31:10-13 since the Lord states to Jacob that He is responsible for these techniques being successful.*⁵⁰⁵

Henry M. Morris, "So in some way not understood but apparently confirmed by many practical animal raisers since, the sight of white-streaked rods seems to stimulate these animals to sexual activity"⁵⁰⁶

Henry Morris goes into great detail about how this may have all worked out with some influence of the branches which Jacob placed in the water. Although I lean against that as being a legitimate factor, it is not completely an impossibility. However, that is never really the issue, even though Jacob apparently depended upon this scheme for him to outsmart Laban. God blessed Jacob, despite Laban and despite Jacob. Jacob admits to this in the next chapter.

In other words, arguing about these methods and suggesting that maybe there might be something to them—that just is not the point, whether Jacob's methods were completely crackpot or having some small amount of merit. End result is, God blessed Jacob. What he did and what Laban did could not affect this outcome.

Many commentators believed that Jacob's methods somehow worked. H. C. Leupold: *Though, indeed, there may be curious superstitions on the part of people in reference to some of these matters, yet as the Biblical record here runs, its meaning without a doubt is that Jacob's crafty device helped determine the colour of the lambs and the goats. The observations of the ancients, backed by the experience of many moderns, seems to confirm the practicability of the device here described.*

Leupold also upbraids Jacob for doing this stuff: *Quite another question is the one of the ethics of Jacob's act. Here it must be conceded that when Jacob originally made his bargain, he certainly meant that the varicoloured sheep and goats were to be his, but only those that would be born under perfectly normal circumstances. If Laban's acts led him to feel that certain schemes are thereby justified, Jacob is in the wrong in thinking so. True, the text says nothing of the sort, but then the issue is sufficiently clear without a statement of the text.*⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁴ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 482); accessed September 9, 2017. Wenstrom cites Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pages 474-477, Baker Book House.

⁵⁰⁵ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 483); accessed September 9, 2017. Wenstrom cites Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pages 474-477, Baker Book House.

⁵⁰⁶ From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 482); accessed September 9, 2017. Wenstrom cites Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pages 474-477, Baker Book House.

⁵⁰⁷ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

I have probably included far too much discussion of this part of Genesis 30; and what should be noticed is, God is able to oversee the breeding that takes place and give Jacob great blessing, not based upon his actions, but based upon God's power and grace.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Wenstrom claims that God, in a dream, told Jacob how to breed Laban's sheep.

What about Jacob's dream in Genesis 31?

This entire narrative, which includes Jacob's dream, will be covered in great detail, but here it is covered briefly:

Gen 31:4–5 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah into the field where his flock was and said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me.

Jacob is about to make an argument why he and his wives need to pick up and leave Haran and go to Canaan, a place that his wives have never been before.

Gen 31:6–10 You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. In the breeding season of the flock I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the goats that mated with the flock were striped, spotted, and mottled.

Jacob is giving his wives a logical reason/argument to leave their home for Canaan. Obviously, they must be on board for such a move (and their answers in Genesis 31 will indicate that they side with their husband and not with their father).

Gen 31:11–13 Then the Angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am!' And he said, 'Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred.'" (ESV; capitalized)

This is the key passage and Jacob does not appear to be telling his wives of two dreams. So, assuming that this is a single dream, we have 2 logical alternatives: (1) the Angel of God tells Jacob what had already happened; and now it was time to go; or (2) the Angel of God was telling Jacob how to breed the animals without giving him clear directions; and, at the same time, saying, "Time to get up and go back to Canaan." This latter approach makes little sense. Why in one breath tell Jacob how to breed Laban's sheep (without really telling him how); and in the next breath, tell him that it is time to leave Haran?

Furthermore, we are told that it is God who saw that Jacob was blessed, no matter what stunt Laban pulled.

Gen. 31:5–9 Jacob is speaking to his wives, to convince them to move to Canaan with him; ...and [he] said to them, "I see that your father does not regard me with favor as he did before. But the God of my father has been with me. You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me." (ESV; capitalized)

What about Jacob's dream in Genesis 31?

There is no group of people that God is trying to impress (as He did in the exodus). God is theatrical in some circumstances (the miracles to the people of Egypt; the miracles when the sons of Israel left Egypt; the miracle of water being turned into wine). These are miracles which are done so that many people will observe and consider what is happening. However, we do not have any group of people who need to be somehow convinced that God was overseeing the breeding of Laban's sheep. Jacob, by the very outcome, observed what God was doing. Nowhere will Jacob ever credit his breeding schemes to his accumulation of sheep.

The overall point is, God saw that the breeding of Laban's sheep was favorable to Jacob; it did not matter how Laban changed the rules. Nor do we have a series of dreams where God says, "Okay, now this time, I want you to make these kinds of patterns on Oak branches and put them in the water to make the strong of the flock breed." In order to find that, you have to read a *lot* into the text.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

There is also some lack of logic to the idea that God appeared to Jacob, told him that He would see that lots of oddly colored sheep and goats are born to him.

A few commentators, like James Burton Coffman, thought that God told Jacob to do this: *Laban believed such cattle would be greatly outnumbered by the others, thinking no doubt that Jacob had again made a deal very favorable to Laban. What Laban did not know was the fact that God had already revealed to Jacob in a dream that the class of cattle he would receive would be proliferated exceedingly. To this day, in some places, cattle with markings described here are called "Jacob's cattle."*⁵⁰⁸

God Did Not Appear to Jacob in a Dream Prior to this Breeding Incident

1. Because of what Jacob says in the next chapter, some believe that God first told him to suggest to Laban that he work for the oddly colored sheep and goats.
2. At no time, while this was taking place, did Jacob ever credit God with blessing him. Jacob will later look back on what God had done and give Him credit for it.
3. Jacob threatened to leave Laban's ranch and return to Canaan. Did God tell Jacob to do this?
4. What did not happen is, God appeared to Jacob in advance, telling him to work Laban by making this offer, and threaten to leave and return to Canaan as well. When it was time for Jacob to return, God told him to return.
5. God certainly blessed Jacob with oddly-colored sheep and goats being born to him; but God did not tell Jacob in advance that was His plan.
6. If God had told Jacob this, why would Jacob have done this weird breeding scheme in vv. 37–39?
7. What Jacob says and does is very much in line with his own record of scheming and manipulating people. This seems very much a plot that he has hatched, thinking that he could breed the kind of sheep and goats that he needs. That is very much a Jacob-thing to do.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Some commentators believe that Jacob was blessed by engaging in all of these schemes as they were somehow indicative of his deep trust in God.

⁵⁰⁸ From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

Jacob's Schemes and His Subsequent Wealth (a discussion)

Benson: *[Jacob] chose the ring-streaked cattle with a view to prevent disputes, trusting that God would so order it...and that, when he made use of the rods, it was an act of faith, and in obedience to God's command. We have the more reason to think this, because we find nothing but good arose to Jacob from it.*

No doubt, God greatly blessed Jacob; the final verse of this chapter will tell us this. But, what Jacob did in order to increase his own flock is not, somehow, an exercise of great faith on his part.

Then Benson accurately adds this: *We ought likewise to take notice that, though Jacob, from what he says to Laban in the following chapter, appears to have been a most industrious, faithful servant, yet he attributes all the increase of the flock to the blessing of God, and not to his own care.*⁵⁰⁹

Dr. Robert Dean, Jr.: *Jacob is going to come up with this little scheme utilizing what was a sort of superstitious means of animals husbandry at that time. Rather than trusting God to increase his herds and flocks in his possession he is going to try to use this superstitious technique to increase his flocks. But guess what! God blesses him anyway. This flies in the face of our superficial view of God that if we obey Him He is going to increase our material prosperity and if we are disobedient He is going take it away. God is going to bless us for His purposes in our life and it is not necessarily directly related to whether we are obedient or disobedient. You can be disobedient and God may bless you with tremendous material prosperity. On the other hand, you may be obedient and God may take everything away from you, like he did with Job. The issue is what is God's plan for your life and what He is doing in your life.*⁵¹⁰

In this, Dean even supplies us with some application to our own lives.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:39a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâcham (יָחַם) [pronounced yaw-KHAHM]	<i>to be [become] warm (or, hot); to be angry; to be warm with sexual desire; to mate [of animals]; to breed</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3179 BDB #404

The NET Bible: *The Hebrew verb used here can mean "to be in heat" (see v. 38) or "to mate; to conceive; to become pregnant." The latter nuance makes better sense in this verse, for the next clause describes them giving birth.*⁵¹¹

Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.: *"Mated" is the verb chamam (חָמַם) (khaw-mam), which means, "to be hot, to be in heat, to be aroused sexually."*⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:43.

⁵¹⁰ From [Dean Bible Ministries](#); accessed September 11, 2017.

⁵¹¹ From <https://bible.org/netbible/index.htm?gen39.htm> (footnote); accessed November 30, 2016.

⁵¹² From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 481); accessed September 9, 2017.

Genesis 30:39a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Matthew Poole: <i>Heb. were heated, i.e. inflamed or excited, and disposed to conceive, and this in a more than ordinary manner by the Divine disposal.</i> ⁵¹³			
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
'el (עַל) [pronounced eh]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
maqêl (מַקְלָה) [pronounced mah-KAYL]	<i>rod, staff</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4731 BDB #596

Translation: Therefore, they bred the flocks before the rods;...

The masculine plural verb here refers to Jacob's men; to his crew. They probably kept the animals close to the troughs, thinking that somehow, these branches would cause their flocks to breed striped, blotching and spotted animals. Or, if these men did not believe it, Jacob certainly did, and he was the one in charge.

Genesis 30:39b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâlad (יָלַד) [pronounced yaw-LAHD]	<i>to give birth, to bear, to be born, to bear, to bring forth, to beget</i>	3 rd person feminine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3205 BDB #408
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
'âqôd (עָקַד) [pronounced ġaw-CODE]	<i>striped, banded; streaked</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #6124 BDB #785
nâqôd (נָקַד) [pronounced naw-KODE]	<i>spotted, speckled; marked with a brand</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #5348 BDB #666
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ţâlâ' (טָלַא) [pronounced taw-LAW]	<i>patched, variegated; spotted</i>	masculine plural, Qal passive participle	Strong's #2921 BDB #378

Translation: ...and the flocks gave birth to [young that were] striped, speckled and spotted.

⁵¹³ Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:39.

These flocks, which were essentially all white (or all one color), gave birth to young that were striped, speckled or spotted.

Genesis 30:39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth striped cattle, speckled, and spotted.

Genesis 30:39 Therefore, they bred the flocks before the rods; and the flocks gave birth to [young that were] striped, speckled and spotted. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Peeling of Rods (a graphic); from **Slide Player**; accessed September 15, 2017. When it came to this particular topic, some commentators simply threw their hands in the air, saying, “I don’t know.”

Jacob has flocks of all white sheep and goats. However, as they breed, there are striped, speckled and spotted animals that result from his breeding scheme. What is occurring is normal genetics; and God may have a hand in it. None of this is occurring because of the branches that Jacob has cut and peeled. Jacob thinks it is

his scheme which does the trick, but it is not. It is God Who is looking out for Jacob; and Jacob will acknowledge this in Genesis 31:9 (Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.—ESV).

Genesis 30:37–39 [After all of this,] Jacob took the fresh rod from a poplar tree and an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark and he peeled them in white streaks, exposing the white [flesh] which [is] on the rods. He placed the rods which he had peeled in the troughs, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink—[so these branches are] in front of the flocks. [The flocks] would breed when coming to drink. Therefore, they bred the flocks before the rods; and the flocks gave birth to [young that were] striped, speckled and spotted. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:37–39 After all this, Jacob took a fresh branch from a poplar tree, along with an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark, and he peeled back to bark to expose the flesh of the tree under the bark. Then he placed these branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that the branches were in front of the flocks, as well as being in the water. When the flocks came to drink, they also would breed. Jacob’s crew would breed their flocks and they produced young who were striped, speckled and spotted. (Kukis paraphrase)

Gen 30:37–39 Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks. He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, the flocks bred in front of the sticks and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. (ESV)

Jacob’s Breeding Scheme and Science


1. Anti-Christians love this passage, and they quote it or make memes about it in order to prove (in their mind) just how stupid Christians are.
2. Their position is, the Bible teaches that, if you put peeled branches in water, the offspring of the animals who drink the water will have the same markings as the branches.

Peeling of Rods

“Jacob’s peeling of branches and placing them before the animals so that when they conceived they would bear multicolored offspring seems to be a reflection of a common superstition that the conception of offspring is influenced by what the mother experiences or sees at the time of conception.

Nothing is known by modern science to explain any relationship between what Jacob did and what happened in the hereditary patterns of the animals. Perhaps something is missing from the text. Perhaps the Lord was just taking advantage of the virility of crossbred animals. Divine intervention certainly played a part. In any event, Jacob’s herds grew and the Lord blessed him.

Also, Jacob’s separation of the flocks follows principles of good animal husbandry and would have increased the likelihood of having multi-colored animals.”



Genesis 30:37-43 (6)

Jacob's Breeding Scheme and Science

3. Obviously, the science of genetics says that is wrong and stupid.
4. God never gave instructions to Jacob to do this. This is a scheme that Jacob came up with on his own.
5. Jacob did this a lot during his life. He was always trying out a variety of schemes to get his way or to get the outcome that he wanted. What he does here fits in exactly with his personality and hard-headedness.
6. God never praised Jacob for this scheme; God never encouraged him regarding this scheme; but God did prosper Jacob.
7. The Bible nowhere claims that what Jacob did regarding the sticks resulted in the sorts of markings that Jacob wanted.
8. Although elsewhere, God is said to bless Jacob, the Bible gives us the actual genetic reason why this worked. Gen 30:41–43 *Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks, but for the feebler of the flock he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.*
9. They key was, when the stronger sheep bred, they more often produced the outcome that Jacob wanted. Jacob separates the sheep into strong, healthy sheep and feeble sheep. The healthiest strongest sheep are going to have the most diverse genetic background. So, you can have 2 sheep who are all white, but, because of their genetic makeup, they can have offspring which are striped or spotted. The more feeble sheep are more likely to be inbred, which perhaps could result in a singular outcome (all white sheep), but less healthy sheep.

Recessive Traits in Sheep and Goats (a graphic); from [Biblical Foundations](#); accessed September 7, 2017.

10. Now, there are apparently studies which link what a mouse eats and her offspring and one person relates this to [Jacob's breeding scheme](#). Was Jacob aware of any of this? Jacob did not, apparently, spend a lot of time outdoors, as he is called a man of the tents. However, he may have learned from others (from Isaac's servants) that this trick worked (whether or not it actually did, is another thing).
11. God has a plan, and it moves forward, regardless of what we as individuals do. Throughout Jacob's life, he has schemed to get the blessing of the firstborn. From the very beginning, this was his destiny, regardless of his scheming.



Whether there were aspects to Jacob's breeding scheme that were successful, is not really the issue. God observed what Laban had done to Jacob and He was going to overrule Laban's deception. As the Angel of God said to Jacob: "Lift up your eyes and see, all the goats that mate with the flock are striped, spotted, and mottled, for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and made a vow to me. Now arise, go out from this land and return to the land of your kindred." (Genesis 31:12b–13; ESV)

And the lambs separated Jacob and so he gives faces of the flock unto the striped and all black in a flock of Laban. And so he places to him to his separation and he did not place them upon a flock of Laban.

Genesis
30:40

Jacob separated the lambs and he placed the face of the flock toward the striped along with all the black [ones] in Laban's flock. He placed his own [flocks] by themselves; he did not put them near Laban's flock.

Jacob separated out the lambs and had them facing toward the striped and black ones in Laban's flock. He placed his own sheep and lambs by themselves, separate from Laban's flock.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And the lambs separated Jacob and so he gives faces of the flock unto the striped and all black in a flock of Laban. And so he places to him to his separation and he did not place them upon a flock of Laban.
Targum (Onkelos)	And Jakob separated the lambs, and set before the sheep which were various coloured and all that were black among the sheep of Laban; and placed them for himself a flock apart, not mixing them with the sheep of Laban.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the lambs did Jakob set apart, and place in front of the flocks; all the various coloured and the black among Laban's sheep be set for himself a flock apart, and did not mix them with the sheep of Laban.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And Jacob separated the flock, <u>and put the rods in the troughs before the eyes of the rams</u> : and all the white and the black were Laban's: <u>and the rest were Jacob's, when the flocks were separated one from the other</u> .
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	Ya'aqub separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the streaked and all the black in the flock of Laban: and he put his own droves apart, and did not put them into Laban's flock.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the speckled and spotted, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and did not mix them with Laban's flock.
Septuagint (Greek)	And Jacob separated the lambs, and set before the sheep a speckled ram, and every variegated one among the lambs, and he separated flocks for himself alone, and did not mingle them with the sheep of Laban.
Significant differences:	The Latin adds some additional text. This was a very difficult verse to translate, so it is normal to see these ancient translations try to smooth things out.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	These lambs Jacob kept separate; and he put his flock in a place by themselves and not with Laban's flock.
Easy English	Jacob kept the animals separate from Laban's animals. Then he separated Laban's animals. He separated the female animals from the male animals. And he would only let the female animals have sex with his own black male sheep.
Good News Bible (TEV)	Jacob kept the sheep separate from the goats and made them face in the direction of the streaked and black animals of Laban's flock. In this way he built up his own flock and kept it apart from Laban's.
<i>The Message</i>	Jacob placed the ewes before the dark-colored animals of Laban. That way he got distinctive flocks for himself which he didn't mix with Laban's flocks.
NIRV	Jacob put the little ones of the flock to one side by themselves. But he made the older ones face the striped and dark-colored animals that belonged to Laban. In that way, he made separate flocks for himself.

New Simplified Bible Jacob kept the sheep separate from the goats and made them face in the direction of the streaked and black animals of Laban's flock. In this way he built up his own flock and kept it apart from Laban's.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible Jacob sorted out the lambs, turning the flock to face the striped and black ones in Laban's flock but keeping his flock separate, setting them apart from Laban's flock.

Contemporary English V. Some of the sheep that Jacob was keeping for Laban were already spotted. And when the others were ready to mate, he made sure that they faced in the direction of the spotted and black ones. In this way, Jacob built up a flock of sheep for himself and did not put them with the other sheep.

The Living Bible Then he divided out the ewes from Laban's flock and segregated them from the rams, and let them mate only with Jacob's black rams. Thus he built his flocks from Laban's.

New Berkeley Version The lambs Jacob then set apart and had the herds face the striped and all the black in Laban's flocks, keeping his own droves by themselves and not adding them to Laban's herd.

New Century Version Jacob separated the young animals from the others, and he made them face the streaked and dark animals in Laban's flock. Jacob kept his animals separate from Laban's.

New Life Version Then Jacob divided the lambs. He made the flocks look toward Laban's flock of the animals which were black or with spots. And he put his own flocks by themselves. He did not put them with Laban's flock.

New Living Translation Jacob separated those lambs from Laban's flock. And at mating time he turned the flock to face Laban's animals that were streaked or black. This is how he built his own flock instead of increasing Laban's.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible Then Jacob separated the lambs, setting aside the speckled goats and lambs for himself away from Laban's sheep.

Beck's American Translation Jacob separated the animals and let the flock mate only with the striped and the black in Laban's flock. So he bred for himself separate flocks, not putting them with Laban's animals.

International Standard V Jacob kept the lambs separate, facing the striped and entirely black ones that belonged to Laban's flock. He set his own herd by itself and would not let them be with Laban's flock.

New Advent (Knox) Bible There, then, were the two flocks divided, and there were Jacob's branches set up before the very eyes of the rams. All the white (sheep) and all the black (goats) were to be Laban's, the rest Jacob's, when the flocks were sorted afresh.

Translation for Translators Furthermore, Jacob separated the female sheep in his flock from the other sheep and goats in Laban's flock. And when his female sheep mated, he made them look toward the animals that belonged to Laban that had black and white stripes on them, and the dark-colored animals. He did that so that the female sheep would give birth to animals that were striped or dark-colored. By doing that, he made bigger flocks for himself, and he kept them separate from Laban's flocks.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible Jacob is to have separated the lambs, and was to setting them turned before the small cattle, towards the striped and dark, of the small cattle, of Laban, and was to set apart his flock, he is to have set them apart from Laban's small cattle.

Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Then Jacob separated the lambs and placed the faces of the sheep towards the striped, and gave all the black among the sheep of Laban to his own flocks, and did not assign them to the sheep of Laban.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	Then Jacob parted the lambs and turned the faces of the sheep toward spotted things, and toward all manner of black things throughout the flocks of Laban. And he made him flocks of his own by them self, which he put not unto the flocks of Laban.
HCSB	Jacob separated the lambs and made the flocks face the streaked and the completely dark sheep in Laban's flocks. Then he set his own stock apart and didn't put them with Laban's sheep.
H. C. Leupold	And the lambs Jacob set apart and set the faces of the flock toward the striped and all the black in Laban's flock and he made separate herds for himself and did not put them together, with Laban's flock.
Unlocked Literal Bible	Jacob separated out these lambs, but made the rest of them face toward the striped animals and all the black sheep in the flock of Laban. Then he separated out his flocks for himself alone and did not put them together with Laban's flocks.
Urim-Thummim Version	So Jacob divided the lambs, and placed the faces of the flock towards the streaked, also all the brown of Laban's flock and he placed his own herds by themselves, but did not put them near Laban's flock.
Wikipedia Bible Project	Jacob separated the lambs, and he faced the sheep towards the spotted, and every brown among the white sheep. And he herded his own flocks, and didn't water them along with Laban's sheep.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

New American Bible (2011)	The sheep, on the other hand, Jacob kept apart, and he made these animals face the streaked or completely dark animals of Laban. Thus he produced flocks of his own, which he did not put with Laban's flock.
New Jerusalem Bible	The ewes, on the other hand, Jacob kept apart and made these face whatever was striped or black in Laban's flock. Thus he built up droves of his own which he did not put with Laban's flocks.
Revised English Bible	The rams Jacob separated, and let the ewes run only with such of the rams in Laban's flocks as were striped and black; and thus he built up flocks for himself, which he did not add to Laban's sheep.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Ya'akov divided the lambs and had the animals mate with the streaked and the brown in the flock of Lavan. He also kept his own livestock separate and did not have them mix with Lavan's flock.
The Complete Tanach	And Jacob separated the sheep, and he turned the faces of the animals toward the ringed one[s] and every brown one among Laban's animals, and he made himself flocks by himself, and he did not place them with Laban's animals.

And Jacob separated the sheep: Those born ringed or speckled he divided and separated for himself, and he made them [in a formation of] each flock separately, and he led the ringed flock ahead of the [ordinary] animals, and the faces of the animals following them gazed at them. This is what Scripture says [further]: "and he turned the faces of the animals toward the ringed one[s]," that the faces of the animals were directed toward the ringed ones and toward every brown one that he found in Laban's flocks.

and he made himself flocks: As I explained.

exeGesés companion Bible	And Yaaqov separates the lambs and gives the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked
--------------------------	---

	and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he puts his own droves by themselves and puts them not to the flocks of Laban.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	But Jacob dealt separately with the sheep; he made these animals face the streaked or wholly dark-colored animals in Laban's flock. And so he produced special flocks for himself, which he did not put with Laban's flocks.
Kaplan Translation	Jacob segregated the young animals. Still, he made the animals in Laban's flocks look at the ringed ones and all those with dark markings. But he bred his own flocks separately, and did not let them breed with Laban's flocks.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And Ya'akov did separate the kesavim, and set the faces of the tzon toward the streaked, and all the dark in the tzon Lavan; and he put his own adarim (flocks) by themselves, and put them not unto the tzon Lavan.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Jacob separated the lambs, and [as he had done with the peeled branches] he made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the dark or black in the [new] flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart by themselves and did not put them [where they could breed] with Laban's flock.
The Expanded Bible	Jacob separated the young animals from the others, and he made them face the streaked and dark animals in Laban's flock. Jacob kept his animals separate from Laban's.
Kretzmann's Commentary	And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ring-straked 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. By this second device the black goats and the white sheep were always kept by themselves, nothing in their own herd exciting their attention, whereas the herds of spotted and speckled animals in plain view were bound to make an impression upon the animals at the time of breeding.
NET Bible®	Jacob removed these lambs, but he made the rest of the flock face [<i>Heb</i> "and he set the faces of."] the streaked and completely dark-colored animals in Laban's flock. So he made separate flocks for himself and did not mix them with Laban's flocks.
The Pulpit Commentary	And Jacob did separate the lambs (i.e. the speckled lambs procured by the foregoing artifice he removed from the main body of the flock), and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban (this was Jacob's second artifice, to make the speckled lambs serve the same purpose as the pilled rods); and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle—so that they were not exposed to the risk of producing offspring of uniform color.
The Voice	Jacob separated these <i>newly born</i> lambs from Laban's flock, and <i>when they mated again</i> he faced Laban's animals toward the striped and black animals. He kept his own droves separate from Laban's. This is how he increased his own flock.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans.	...and Ya'aqov ^[He restrains] divided apart the sheep and he gave the faces of the flocks to the striped and all the black in the flocks of Lavan ^[White] and he set down to him droves by himself and he did not set them down upon the flocks of Lavan ^[White] ,...
Concordant Literal Version	And the sheep Jacob parts, and he puts the faces of the flocks towards the striped and all the brown among Laban's flock. And he is setting his own droves alone, and does not set them with Laban's flock.

Darby Translation	And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flock toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he made himself separate flocks, and did not put them with Laban's flock.
Emphasized Bible	The rams also, did Jacob separate, and then set the faces of the flocks towards the ring-straked and all the dark-coloured, among the flocks of Laban,—and he put his own droves by themselves, and put them not with the flocks of Laban.
English Standard Version	And Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock.
Modern English Version	Jacob separated the lambs and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the brown in the flock of Laban. He put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's sheep.
New King James Version	Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.
Webster's Bible Translation	And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks towards the ring-streaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban: and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not with Laban's cattle.
Young's Updated LT	And the lambs has Jacob parted, and he puts the face of the flock towards the ring-streaked, also all the brown in the flock of Laban, and he sets his own droves by themselves, and has not set them near Laban's flock.

The gist of this passage: Jacob then segregated the animals that would be his from the animals that belonged to Laban.

Genesis 30:40a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
keseb (כֶּסֶב) [pronounced <i>KEH-sehb</i>]	<i>a lamb, a young ram, a sheep</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3775 BDB #461
pârad (פָּרַד) [pronounced <i>paw-RAHD</i>]	<i>to divide, to separate, to make a division; to disperse</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #6504 BDB #825
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ġuh-KOH^BV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâthan (נָתַן) [pronounced <i>naw-THAHN</i>]	<i>to give, to grant, to place, to put, to set; to make</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #5414 BDB #678
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced <i>paw-NEEM</i>]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence; person; surface</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular)	Strong's #6440 BDB #815

Genesis 30:40a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
The full set of BDB definitions: 1) face; 1a) face, faces; 1b) presence, person; 1c) face (of seraphim or cherubim); 1d) face (of animals); 1e) face, surface (of ground); 1f) as adverb of loc/temp; 1f1) before and behind, toward, in front of, forward, formerly, from beforetime, before.			
When found by itself, pânîym, without a preposition preceding it and with a personal possessive pronoun, can be used for doing or saying something to someone, in front of someone or in their presence.			
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
'el (אֶל) [pronounced eh]	unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
'âqôd (עֲקֹד) [pronounced gaw-CODE]	striped, banded; streaked	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #6124 BDB #785
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	every, each, all of, all; any of, any	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
chûwm (חֹמ) [pronounced khoum]	darkened, dark color, dark brown, black	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #2345 BDB #299
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced tzohn]	small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks	feminine singular collective noun; construct form	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced law ^b -VAWN]	white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated <i>Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526

Translation: Jacob separated the lambs and he placed the face of the flock toward the striped along with all the black [ones] in Laban's flock.

Jacob begins to cull out his own sheep and goats from the flock. It is rather difficult to understand what is being said here. Does he have Laban's flock facing these branches? Does he have his own sheep and lambs facing Laban's flock? This will be discussed in much greater detail after the next portion of this verse.

The Cambridge Bible also struggled with the meaning of this verse: *This is a very obscure sentence in the original. It probably describes a second device practised by Jacob.*⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁴ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:40.

Gill: *towards the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; either to go before those that were all white, that they by looking at them might conceive and bring forth such, which was another artifice of Jacob's to increase his own sheep; or else he set at the water troughs the white sheep on one side of them, and on the opposite side the speckled ones, &c. that the same effect might also be produced the more successfully both by the rods and by the speckled lambs.*⁵¹⁵

Jacob's plan appears to have Laban's flock looking at Jacob's flock, so that they might be encouraged to bear more oddly-colored sheep and goats.

Genesis 30:40b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shîyth (שׂיִת) [pronounced sheeth]	<i>to put, to set, place; to appoint; to arrange, to set in order; to found; to station</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7896 BDB #1011
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êder (עֵדֶר) [pronounced GAY-der]	<i>flock, herd</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #5739 BDB #727
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bad (בַּד) [pronounced bahd]	<i>separation, by itself, alone</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #905 BDB #94
Together, the lâmed preposition and bad (בַּד) mean <i>in a state of separation, by itself, alone, only; apart.</i>			
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (אֵל or אֹל) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
shîyth (שׂיִת) [pronounced sheeth]	<i>to put, to set, place; to appoint; to arrange, to set in order; to found; to station</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	Strong's #7896 BDB #1011

⁵¹⁵ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:40.

Genesis 30:40b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
'al (עַל) [pronounced <i>gahl</i>]	<i>upon, beyond, on, against, above, over; on the ground of, because of, according to, on account of, on behalf of, with, by, besides, in addition to, to, toward, together with, in the matter of, concerning, as regards to</i>	preposition of relative proximity	Strong's #5921 BDB #752
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; construct form	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>law^b-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526

Translation: He placed his own [flocks] by themselves; he did not put them near Laban's flock.

It appears as if Jacob has separated out his own animals (the striped, spotted and blotched ones) from Laban's flock.

Gill: and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle; partly that they might not be mixed together, but kept distinct, that what was his property might be discerned from Laban's; and partly, lest his spotted ones, being mixed with Laban's white sheep, by continual looking at them, should conceive and bring forth such likewise, and so his flocks be lessened.⁵¹⁶

Genesis 30:40 And Jacob separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped, and all the black in the flock of Laban. And he put his own flocks by themselves, and did not put them with the flock of Laban.

Jacob separates out his animals. Those which are all white belonged to Laban; the rest were Jacob's. Jacob began with a flock of all white sheep and goats.

Genesis 30:40 Jacob separated the lambs and he placed the face of the flock toward the striped along with all the black [ones] in Laban's flock. He placed his own [flocks] by themselves; he did not put them near Laban's flock. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:40 Jacob separated out the lambs and had them facing toward the striped and black ones in Laban's flock. He placed his own sheep and lambs by themselves, separate from Laban's flock. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:40 Jacob separated out the lambs and had them facing toward the striped and black ones in Laban's flock. He placed his own sheep and lambs by themselves, separate from Laban's flock.

What about Jacob separating the flocks (Several Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: Once the lambs had been weaned Jacob 'set the faces of the flocks' toward the ringstraked goats and black rams. This is a clear suggestion of a deliberate breeding policy. He did not trust to his gimmicks only, if at all.

⁵¹⁶ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:40.

What about Jacob separating the flocks (Several Commentators)

Pett continues: *He then maintains two flocks side by side, that which was now his and that which was Laban's. The sentence seems a little ambiguous. The idea would seem to be that the lambs which were designated as his were kept apart, although the ringstraked he-goats (Genesis 30:35) and black rams were kept in Laban's section to assist the work of breeding further gain to Jacob from Laban's she-goats and sheep.*⁵¹⁷

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Kalisch translates thus, "And he set the faces of (Laban's) flocks towards (his own) ring-streaked, and all (his) dark (he set) to the flocks of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and did not put them to Laban's cattle."*⁵¹⁸

Trapp certainly sees this as a part of Jacob's master plan: *That by the sight of the speckled cattle they might bring forth lambs like them that were in their eye.*⁵¹⁹

The Cambridge Bible: *At the breeding time he caused the ewes which belonged to Laban to pasture within view of his own parti-coloured and black animals, in order to increase the tendency of Laban's flock to produce spotted and parti-coloured lambs. The difficulty, however, of the language has made some scholars suppose that the words "and set ... of Laban" are a gloss. As they stand, they seem to contradict Genesis 30:33; Genesis 30:36, according to which Laban had already removed to a distance the parti-coloured animals.*⁵²⁰

Bear in mind that Jacob oversaw animals which belong to him and others which belonged to his Uncle Laban. This is apparently how he decided to deal with them, and it appears as though he is expecting Laban's animals to observe his and to have offspring that will belong to Jacob as a result.

Benson believed this to be a clever plan by Jacob: *[Jacob] here employs his own natural sagacity, and turns the faces of Laban's flocks toward the ring-streaked and the brown, that by looking frequently on them, they might be disposed in their conception to bring forth the like. And he put his own flocks apart, lest, by looking at Laban's, their young might fall off from being ring-streaked and brown.*⁵²¹

Like Benson, Clarke also seems to think that this was efficacious and produced sheep and goats for Jacob: *When Jacob undertook the care of Laban's flock, according to the agreement already mentioned, there were no party-colored sheep or goats among them, therefore the ring-streaked, etc., mentioned in this verse, must have been born since the agreement was made; and Jacob makes use of them precisely as he used the pilled rods, that, having these before their eyes during conception, the impression might be made upon their imagination which would lead to the results already mentioned.*⁵²²

Bear in mind that, simply because Jacob had this plan, that does not mean that his approach worked or made any sort of a difference. He should have trusted God instead of getting involved in his own silly schemes.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

⁵¹⁷ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:40.

⁵¹⁸ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:40.

⁵¹⁹ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:40.

⁵²⁰ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:40.

⁵²¹ Rev. Joseph Benson, *Commentary of the Old and New Testaments*; 1857; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:40.

⁵²² Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:40.

And he is in all breeding, the flock, the stronger and placed Jacob the rods to [two] eyes of the flock in the troughs to their breeding in the rods. And in feebler of the flock he did not place and was the feebler ones to Laban and the stronger ones to Jacob.

Genesis
30:41–42

And it was in all the breeding of the stronger ones of the flock, [that] Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the troughs for their breeding among the rods. He did not place the weaker ones [there] but [he put] the feebler ones with [the flock belonging to] Laban and the stronger ones with [the flock belonging to] Jacob.

Jacob concentrated on breeding the strong one of the flock. He continued to breed them using the rods, but he placed the weaker animals with Laban's flock and the stronger ones with his flock.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And he is in all breeding, the flock, the stronger and placed Jacob the rods to [two] eyes of the flock in the troughs to their breeding in the rods. And in feebler of the flock he did not place and was the feebler ones to Laban and the stronger ones to Jacob.
Targum (Onkelos)	And it was that whenever the early (prime) sheep conceived, Jakob placed the rods before the eyes of the sheep in the canals, that they might conceive before the rods: but before the late sheep he did not place them. And (so) the late ones were Laban's, and the prime ones Jacob's.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And it was that whenever the early (prime) sheep conceived, Jakob set the rods in the canals before the eyes of the sheep, that they might conceive before the rods. But with the late sheep he did not set them ; and the late sheep were Laban's and the early ones Jakob's.
Revised Douay-Rheims	So when the ewes went first to ram, Jacob put the rods in the roughs of water before the eyes of the rams, and of the ewes, that they might conceive while they were looking upon them: But when the latter coming was, and the last conceiving, he did not put them. And those that were late ward, become Laban's: and they of the first time, Jacob's.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	It happened, whenever the stronger of the flock conceived, that Ya'aqub laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods; but when the flock were feeble, he did not put them in. So the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Ya'aqub's.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And it came to pass, whenever the stronger of the flock did conceive, Jacob laid the rods in front of the sheep in the troughs, that they might conceive by the means of the rods. But when the sheep were feeble, he did not put the rods in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.
Septuagint (Greek)	And it came to pass in the time when the cattle became pregnant, conceiving in the belly, Jacob put the rods before the cattle in the troughs, that they might conceive by the rods. But he did not put them in indiscriminately whenever the cattle happened to bring forth, but the unmarked ones were Laban's, and the marked ones were Jacob's.
Significant differences:	This passage was also difficult to translate literally. This seems to indicate that Jacob concentrated on the healthier animals in the flock to breed. There was little concentration of breeding the weaker sheep and goats, which were Laban's, for the most part. All the translations appear to convey roughly these ideas.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	And whenever the stronger ones of the flock became with young, Jacob put the sticks in front of them in the drinking-places, so that they might become with young when they saw the sticks. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put the sticks before them; so that the feebler flocks were Laban's and the stronger were Jacob's.
Easy English	Jacob waited until the time was right for the stronger female animals. Then he put the branches in front of them, when they had sex with his own black male animals. But if the female animals were weak, he did not put the branches in front of the animals. So Jacob put the weak animals with Laban's animals. But Jacob kept the strong animals.
Good News Bible (TEV)	When the healthy animals were mating, Jacob put the branches in front of them at the drinking troughs, so that they would breed among the branches. But he did not put the branches in front of the weak animals. Soon Laban had all the weak animals, and Jacob all the healthy ones.
<i>The Message</i>	And when the sturdier animals were mating, Jacob placed branches at the troughs in view of the animals so that they mated in front of the branches. But he wouldn't set up the branches before the feebler animals.
NIRV	Every time the stronger females were ready to mate, Jacob would place the branches in the stone tubs. He would place them in front of the animals so they would mate near the branches. But if the animals were weak, he wouldn't place the branches there. So the weak animals went to Laban. And the strong ones went to Jacob.
New Simplified Bible	When the strongest of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods. When the flock was feeble, he did not put them in. That way the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Contemporary English V.	When the stronger sheep were mating near the drinking place, Jacob made sure that the spotted branches were there. But he would not put out the branches when the weaker animals were mating. So Jacob got all of the healthy animals, and Laban got what was left.
The Living Bible	Moreover, he watched for the stronger animals to mate, and placed the peeled branches before them, but didn't with the feebler ones. So the less healthy lambs were Laban's and the stronger ones were Jacob's!
New Berkeley Version	Jacob used to place the rods at the troughs in sight of the sturdier flocks whenever they bred so that they might breed by the rods; but for the weaker herds he did not place them, so that the weaker fell to Laban and the strong to Jacob;...
New Life Version	When the stronger animals of the flock were mating, Jacob would put the sticks in the water in front of the flock so they would mate by the sticks. But when the flock was weak, Jacob did not put the sticks in. So the weaker animals went to Laban and the stronger ones went to Jacob.
New Living Translation	Whenever the stronger females were ready to mate, Jacob would place the peeled branches in the watering troughs in front of them. Then they would mate in front of the branches. But he didn't do this with the weaker ones, so the weaker lambs belonged to Laban, and the stronger ones were Jacob's.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	Thereafter, Jacob [continued] to put the rods in the troughs before the cattle, so they would mate in front of the rods. And when the cattle gave birth, [he would give] the unmarked ones to Laban, but he set aside the marked ones as his.
Beck's American Translation	Whenever the strong animals were mating, Jacob would lay the rods in the troughs so the flock would see them and would mate by the rods. For the weaker ones he

	didn't lay down the rods. And so Laban got the weak animal, and Jacob got the strong ones.
International Standard V	Whenever the more vigorous of the flock came into heat, Jacob would place the branches in the troughs in front of the flock to make them mate by the branches. But he didn't put the branches in front of any of the feeble members of the flock. As a result, the feeble ones belonged to Laban, but the stronger ones belonged to Jacob.
New Advent (Knox) Bible	And this was his plan; at the earlier breeding-season he fitted the branches into the troughs, before the eyes of ram and ewe, so that the dams might be looking at them when they conceived; but when the later breeding happened, and the time for conceiving was at an end, he put the branches there no longer. So all the late-bred (weaklings) belonged to Laban, and all the (strong) early-bred belonged to Jacob. The words 'weaklings' and 'strong' are not expressed in the Latin, but the Hebrew text shews that this was the author's meaning. Apparently it was thought that winter lambs were more robust than spring lambs.
Translation for Translators	In addition, whenever the stronger female sheep were ready to mate, Jacob put some of those peeled branches in the troughs in front of them, so that they would mate in front of the branches. But when weak animals were ready to mate, he did not put the branches in their troughs. So the weak ones became part of Laban's flock, and the strong ones became part of Jacob's flock.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	Jacob is to have separated the lambs, and was to setting them turned before the small cattle, towards the striped and dark, of the small cattle, of Laban, and was to set apart his flock, he is to have set them apart from Laban's small cattle. As the robust of the small cattle is to conceive, Jacob is to have placed the rods before the eyes of the small cattle, in the troughs, that they are to conceive by the rods.
Conservapedia	So it happened that whenever the more sinewy cattle were in conception season, Jacob set the sticks in the faces of the cattle in the troughs, so that they might conceive among the sticks. But when the cattle were droopy, he did not put the sticks in. So the droopy cattle belonged to Laban, and the sinewy cattle belonged to Jacob.
Ferrar-Fenton Bible	Thus when any of the strong sheep were hot for union, then Jacob placed the wands before the eyes of the sheep, near the troughs, to inflame them among the wands. Before the feeble of the sheep, however, he placed them not; so the feeble went to Laban and the strong to Jacob.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And always in the first bucking time of the sheep, Jacob put the staves before the sheep in the gutters, that they might conceive before the staves: But in the latter bucking time, he put them not there: so the last brood was Labans and the first Jacobs.
HCSB	Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob placed the branches in the troughs, in full view of the flocks, and they would breed in front of the branches. As for the weaklings of the flocks, he did not put out the branches. So it turned out that the weak sheep belonged to Laban and the stronger ones to Jacob.
H. C. Leupold	And it came to pass whenever the sturdier cattle were breeding, Jacob would place his rods before the eyes of the cattle in the drinking troughs in order that they might have breeding heat among the rods. But when the flocks showed feebleness, he did not lay out (his rods). As a result, the more feeble were Laban's, and the sturdier, Jacob's.
Tree of Life Version	Whenever the strong flocks mated, Jacob put the branches in the watering troughs before the eyes of the flocks, to have them mate near the branches. But when the flocks were sickly, he did not put the branches down—so the sickly ones became Laban's and the stronger ones became Jacob's.

Urim-Thummim Version	Then whenever the stronger flocks came into heat, then Jacob laid the branches near the sight of the herds near their trough, which caused them to come into heat next to these branches. But he did not do this with the weaker flocks so that the weaker were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And it was that at every conception of an exceptional sheep, that Jacob put the sticks for the sheep to see, in the stalls, so that they would conceive in front of the rods. And for the feeble sheep, he did not put; and the feeble ones went to Laban, and the exceptional to Jacob.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	Whenever the stronger of the ewes were breeding, Jacob put the branches in the channels in front of the eyes of the ewes so that they would mate there among the branches. But for the feebler ewes he did not put them there so that the feebler were for Laban and the more robust for Jacob.
The Heritage Bible	And it was, when all the flock animals bound <i>with fat</i> conceived, that Jacob put the poles before the eyes of the flock animals in the troughs that they might conceive by the poles. And the flock animals that were languishing, he did not put in, and those languishing were Laban's, and those bound with fat Jacob's.
New American Bible (2011)	Whenever the hardier animals were in heat, Jacob would set the shoots in the troughs in full view of these animals, so that they mated by the shoots; but with the weaker animals he would not put the shoots there. So the feeble animals would go to Laban, but the hardy ones to Jacob.
New Jerusalem Bible	Furthermore, whenever the sturdier animals were mating, Jacob put the shoots where the animals could see them, in the troughs, so that they would mate in front of the shoots. But when the animals were feeble, he did not put them there; so Laban got the feeble, and Jacob the sturdy.
Revised English Bible	As for the goats, whenever the more vigorous were in heat, he set the rods in front of them at the troughs so that they mated beside the rods. He did not put them there for the weaker goats, and in this way the weaker came to be Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	Whenever the hardier animals came into heat, Ya'akov would set up the rods in the watering troughs; so that the animals would see them and conceive in front of them; but he didn't set up the rods in front of the weaker animals. Thus the more feeble were Lavan's and the stronger Ya'akov's.
The Complete Tanach	And it came to pass, that whenever the animals that were bearing their first would come into heat, Jacob would place the rods in the troughs, before the eyes of the animals, [in order] to bring them into heat by [means of] the rods.

that were bearing their first: תוֹרְשָׁקְמָה. [To be interpreted] according to the Targum : Those who were giving birth to their first, but [for this interpretation] there is no evidence in Scripture. (Machbereth Menachem p. 160), however, associated it with (II Sam. 15:31): "Ahithophel is among the conspirators (שׂוֹקֵב מִיָּד)"; (ibid. 12): "And the conspiracy (רִשְׁקָה) was strong." Those who bind themselves together to hasten their conception.

But if the animals would delay, he would not place them, so that the ones that delayed were Laban's, and the ones that bore their first became Jacob's.

But if...would delay: Heb. פִּיטְעָהָבוּ, a term denoting delay, as the Targum renders תוֹ שְׂקֵלְבוּ, but Menachem (Machbereth Menachem p. 132) associated it with (Isa. 3:22): "the tunics and the wraps (תּוֹפְטְעֵמָהוּ)," a term denoting a wrap, meaning that they enwrapped themselves in their skin and their wool, and they did not desire to come into heat through the males.

exeGesese companion Bible	And so be it, whenever the conspired flocks conceive, Yaaqov set the sprouts in front of the eyes of the flocks in the troughs so that they conceive among the sprouts: and when the flocks languished, he puts them not in: so the languishing are for Laban and the stronger for Yaaqov.
Hebraic Roots Bible	And it happened that whenever the strong flocks conceived, Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the flocks, before the troughs, that they might conceive by the rods. And the flocks being feeble, he did not set them. And usually it happened that the weak were for Laban, and the strong for Jacob.
JPS (Tanakh—1985)	Moreover, when the sturdier animals were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the troughs, in full view of the animals, so that they mated by the rods; 42but with the feebler animals he would not place them there. Thus the feeble ones went to Laban and the sturdy to Jacob.
Kaplan Translation	Whenever the stronger animals mated, Jacob placed the wands before their eyes at the troughs, so that they would mate facing the wands. But when the sheep were feeble, he did not place [the wands]. The feeble ones thus went to Laban, while Jacob got the stronger ones.
Orthodox Jewish Bible	And it came to pass, whensoever tzon hamekusharot (the stronger flock) did breed, that Ya'akov set the maklot before the eyes of the tzon in the trough channels, that they might breed among the maklot. But when the tzon were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler would belong to Lavan, and the stronger to Ya'akov.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	Furthermore, whenever the stronger [animals] of the flocks were breeding, Jacob would place the branches in the sight of the flock in the watering troughs, so that they would mate and conceive among the branches; but when the flock was sickly, he did not put the branches there; so the sicker [animals] were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.
The Expanded Bible	When the stronger animals in the flock were ·mating [in heat], Jacob put the ·branches [rods] before their eyes so they would mate near the branches. But when the ·weaker [feebler] animals ·mated [were in heat], Jacob did not put the ·branches [rods] there. So the animals born from the ·weaker [feebler] animals were Laban's, and those born from the stronger animals were Jacob's..
Kretzmann's Commentary	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, in the very midst of the pilled staves. This was in the spring, for the lambs and kids born in the fall were considered the stronger and better. But when the cattle were feeble, in the late fall, when the pasturage was no longer so good, he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. Thus Jacob, with the blessing of God, Genesis 31:12, succeeded in obtaining some of the wages which were so richly due him for his many years of faithful service. He used all his business sagacity in beating his covetous uncle at his own game, but incidentally kept his word not to appropriate so much as one animal that did not belong to him.
NET Bible®	When the stronger females were in heat [<i>Heb</i> "and at every breeding-heat of the flock."], Jacob would set up the branches in the troughs in front of the flock, so they would mate near the branches. But if the animals were weaker, he did not set the branches there [<i>Heb</i> "he did not put [them] in." The referent of the [understood] direct object, "them," has been specified as "the branches" in the translation for

The Pulpit Commentary	<p>clarity.]. So the weaker animals ended up belonging to Laban [<i>Heb</i> “were for Laban.”] and the stronger animals to Jacob.</p> <p>And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, literally, in every heating of the cattle, the bound ones, i.e. the firm, compact sheep, “the spring flock” (Luther), which, being conceived in spring and dropped in autumn, are supposed to be stronger than those conceived in autumn and dropped in spring; but this is doubtful—that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. Jacob’s third artifice aimed at securing for himself a vigorous breed of sheep. But when the cattle were feeble,—literally, in the covering (sc. with wool; hence weakening) of the flock, which took place in autumn—he put them not in (partly to prevent the introduction of feeble animals amongst his parti-colored flocks, but partly also, it is thought, to avoid prematurely exciting Laban’s suspicion): so the feebler were Laban’s, and the stronger Jacob’s.</p> <p>Whenever the stronger <i>females</i> of the flock were ready to mate, Jacob laid the striped branches in the troughs right in front of them, so that they would breed among them. But when he saw the feebler animals <i>ready to mate</i>, he didn’t lay the rods out so that in the end, the feebler of the animals became Laban’s and the stronger became Jacob’s.</p>
The Voice	

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner’s Mechanical Trans.	<p>...and it came to pass in all the heating of the robust flocks and Ya’aqov ^[He restrains] set in place the rods to the eyes of the flocks in the troughs, for her heating in the rods, and with the feeble of the flocks he will not set in place and the feeble ones existed to Lavan ^[White] and the robust ones to Ya’aqov ^[He restrains],...</p>
Concordant Literal Version	<p>And it comes, in every season of warming with desire of the sinewy of the flock, then Jacob places the sticks before the eyes of the flock, in the troughs, for them to warm with desire among the sticks. Yet with the drooping ones of the flock he is not placing them. And the drooping became Laban’s and the sinewy Jacob’s.</p>
Darby Translation	<p>And it came to pass whensoever the strong cattle were ardent, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might become ardent among the rods; but when the sheep were feeble, he put [them] not in; so the feeble were Laban’s, and the strong Jacob’s.</p>
<i>Emphasized Bible</i>	<p>So it came to pass whensoever the stronger of the flocks were in heat, that Jacob set the rods before the eyes of the flocks in the channels,—that the females might be in heat among the rods; but, when the flocks were late in bearing, he did not set them,—and so the late-born were Laban’s, out the strong ones Jacob’s.</p>
English Standard Version	<p>Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks, but for the feebler of the flock he would not lay them there. So the feebler would be Laban’s, and the stronger Jacob’s.</p>
NASB	<p>Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods; but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban’s and the stronger Jacob’s.</p>
New European Version	<p>It happened, whenever the stronger of the flock conceived, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods; but when the flock were feeble, he didn’t put them in. So the feebler were Laban’s, and the stronger Jacob’s.</p>
New King James Version	<p>And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put <i>them</i> in; so the feebler were Laban’s and the stronger Jacob’s.</p>

Third Millennium Bible

And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger animals conceived, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the animals in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the animals were feeble, he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

Young's Updated LT

And it has come to pass whenever the strong ones of the flock conceive, that Jacob set the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, to cause them to conceive by the rods, and when the flock is feeble, he does not set them; and the feeble ones have been Laban's, and the strong ones Jacob's.

The gist of this passage:

Jacob attempted to influence the breeding of the animals. Those which were the strongest, they would breed before the branches; and the weak ones would simply be bred, with little effort given to them.

41-42

Genesis 30:41a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of, any</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
yâcham (יָחַם) [pronounced <i>yaw-KHAHM</i>]	<i>to conceive (sexual); to be warm with sexual desire; to have sexual intercourse; to conceive; to be in heat (used of animals)</i>	Piel infinitive construct	Strong's #3179 BDB #404
tsô' (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
qâshar (רָשָׁק) [pronounced <i>kaw-SHAHR</i>]	<i>robust, vigorous</i>	feminine plural, Pual participle with the definite article	Strong's #7194 BDB #905

Translation: And it was in all the breeding of the stronger ones of the flock,...

Now, here is what worked. Jacob concentrated on the stronger ones among his flock.

The breeding of certain characteristics in dogs has been done over the past 1000–2000 years. They have gone from being the despised beasts in the Bible to man's best friend today (not mine). However, with this breeding, has come some very specific characteristics. Wire haired terriers, for instance, are high strung, jealous dogs, prone to emotional outbursts. Some large dogs, like chows or pit bulls, can be particularly dangerous around people. I know people who claim that these dogs can be gentle as can be; but there are certainly stories of them harming their master or children—even children of the household where they live. My point here is not to begin

a discussion of dogs, and whether or not pit bulls are dangerous—but to recognize that careful breeding can affect even the psyche of a breed.

When a sheep is strong and healthy, it is more likely from the result of mixed breeding rather than inbreeding. So, it is more likely that strong and healthy sheep are going to carry a variety of recessive genes—and these recessive genes could result in the oddly colored and blotched sheep which would then belong to Jacob. I doubt that Jacob knew this, based upon his other (apparently faulty) theories of genetics.

Genesis 30:41b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
sîym (שׂיַם) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sûwm (שׂוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962
All of the BDB meanings: <i>to put, set, lay, put or lay upon, lay (violent) hands on; to set, direct, direct toward; to extend (compassion) (figuratively); to set, ordain, establish, found, appoint, constitute, make, determine, fix; to set, station, put, set in place, plant, fix; to make, make for, transform into, constitute, fashion, work, bring to pass, appoint, give.</i> Gesenius adds: <i>to direct, to turn [in any direction]; to make, to prepare.</i> I have used the translation <i>to designate, to designate.</i>			
Ya'ăqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-ăuh-KOH^BV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	Indicates next word is the object of the verb; sometimes translated <i>to</i>	untranslated mark of a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
maq ^e lôwth (מַקְלֹוֹת) [pronounced <i>mahk^e-LOHTH</i>]	<i>sticks, staves, rods, staffs</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4731 & #4732 BDB #596
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^e</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
'êynayim (עֵינַיִם) [pronounced <i>ăy-nah-YIM</i>]	<i>eyes, two eyes, literal eye(s), spiritual eyes; face, appearance, form; surface</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
The lâmed preposition + 'ayin mean, literally <i>to [for] [one's] eyes; before [one's] eyes.</i> The sense is <i>before any one.</i>			
tsô'n (צֹן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

Genesis 30:41b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
r ^e hâṭîym (רְהִטָּיִם) [pronounced reh-haw-TEEM]	watering troughs, ringlets, curls (because they are flowing down?)	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #7298 BDB #923
lâmed (ל) [pronounced l ^e]	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
yâcham (יָחַם) [pronounced yaw-KHAHM]	to conceive (sexual); to be warm with sexual desire; to have sexual intercourse; to conceive; to be in heat (used of animals)	Piel infinitive construct with the 3 rd person feminine plural suffix	Strong's #3179 BDB #404
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^e h]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
maq ^e lôwth (מַקְלֹוֹת) [pronounced mahk ^e -LOHTH]	sticks, staves, rods, staffs	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #4731 & #4732 BDB #596

Translation: ...[that] Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the troughs for their breeding among the rods.

Jacob continued to use these rods that he had peeled, putting them in the troughs to use with their breeding. The stronger animals were bred in front of these rods.

The NEV Commentary: *The differing behaviours of pure white and spotted animals when the group is under stress has been studied, and it has been found that the spotted will become dominant and more virile, and the unspotted less so. This on a human level may have been behind the blessing experienced. An academic article in the Russian Journal of Genetics: Applied Research, 2011 confirms this, and actually quotes this passage in Genesis 30 as confirmation for what was observed by academics at the University of Novosibirsk, Russia: "Stress can induce piebaldness in progeny. We are able to test this statement not only experimentally, but in natural conditions. Animals with white spots are always present in the water vole population that we have been studying for many years. We regularly assessed the level of stress in this population. Indeed, the assumption that in years with higher stress more white spotted animals would be born was confirmed. Then we found that the spotted animals are more resistant to stress and outperform unspotted animals in reproduction in stressful years" (Mikhail Anatolievich Potapov, 'Evolutionary ecology of animal fertility: Five decades of studies of reproduction as a link between generations' in Russian Journal of Genetics: Applied Research · July 2011).*⁵²³

This would give credence to the idea that, using sheep and goats which are healthier would be more likely to produce spotted and striped offspring.

Genesis 30:41 And it happened when the stronger flocks conceived, Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the flocks in the troughs, so that they might conceive among the rods.

⁵²³ From <http://www.n-e-v.info/cm/gen30com.html> accessed September 11, 2017.

Jacob now chooses the stronger and more healthy animals to breed, and he has them drink from the water and stare at the branches, believing that he has outsmarted his uncle.

Genesis 30:41–42 *And it was in all the breeding of the stronger ones of the flock, [that] Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the troughs for their breeding among the rods.* (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:42a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿâṭaph (עֲטַף) [pronounced <i>ġaw-TAHF</i>]	<i>to be wrapped in darkness, to languish, to be feeble, to faint</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5848 BDB #742
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective noun; with the definite article	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
lô' (לֹא or לוֹ) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
sîym (שִׁים) [pronounced <i>seem</i>]; also spelled sūwm (שׁוּם) [pronounced <i>soom</i>]	<i>to put, to place, to set; to make; to appoint</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7760 BDB #962

Translation: He did not place the weaker ones [there]...

Jacob did not spend time breeding the weak animals from the flock. He did not place the tree branches around them. They either bred or they didn't; and Jacob did not spend much time with them.

Genesis 30:42b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʿâṭaph (עֲטַף) [pronounced <i>ġaw-TAHF</i>]	<i>languishing, fainting</i>	masculine plural, Qal passive participle	Strong's #5848 BDB #742

Genesis 30:42b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Lâbân (לָבָן) [pronounced <i>lawb-VAWN</i>]	<i>white; shining; gentle; brittle; and is transliterated Laban</i>	masculine singular proper noun; location	Strong's #3838 BDB #526
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
qâshar (קָשָׁר) [pronounced <i>kaw-SHAHR</i>]	<i>strong, firm [and therefore] robust</i>	masculine plural, Qal passive participle with the definite article	Strong's #7194 BDB #905
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
Ya'âqôb (יַעֲקֹב) [pronounced <i>yah-guh-KOHV</i>]	<i>supplanter; insidious, deceitful; to circumvent and is transliterated Jacob</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3290 BDB #784

Translation: ...but [he put] the feebler ones with [the flock belonging to] Laban and the stronger ones with [the flock belonging to] Jacob.

What Jacob did was, he placed the weaker animals with Laban's flock, and he kept the strong animals, both the breed and with his own animals.

Now, although there is something to selective breeding, there is likely no relationship between the branches and their markings to the animals and their markings. That Jacob built up a very large herd was a matter of God's doing, something that Jacob would later testify to in Genesis 31:9 ("Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me."—ESV).

Genesis 30:42 He did not place the weaker ones [there] but [he put] the feebler ones with [the flock belonging to] Laban and the stronger ones with [the flock belonging to] Jacob. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Interestingly enough, the Bible here testifies to the key being, the stronger sheep who bred were more likely to bear sheep that would belong to Jacob. It is the strong sheep that Jacob paid attention to and spent his time with.

Gill: [N]ot only his flocks became more numerous than Laban's, but were a better quality.⁵²⁴

At least two commentators talked about the animals breeding in the Spring and the Fall; and they suggest that Jacob bred the stronger animals in the Spring, and the weaker ones in the Fall (Poole and Keil and Delitzsch made this suggestion).⁵²⁵ I am not completely clear where exactly this is mentioned in this chapter.

Even though these are the things that Jacob did, this does not mean that everything that he did was efficacious in the building up of Jacob's herds.

⁵²⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:42.

⁵²⁵ Poole writes: *It is known that the cattle in those parts did conceive and bring forth twice in a year, at spring and in autumn; and it is supposed that the stronger here mentioned, are such as joined in the spring, and the feeble they that joined in autumn.* Matthew Poole, *English Annotations on the Holy Bible*; ©1685; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:41.

Genesis 30:41–42 And it was in all the breeding of the stronger ones of the flock, [that] Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the troughs for their breeding among the rods. He did not place the weaker ones [there] but [he put] the feebler ones with [the flock belonging to] Laban and the stronger ones with [the flock belonging to] Jacob. (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:41–42 Jacob concentrated on breeding the strong one of the flock. He continued to breed them using the rods, but he placed the weaker animals with Laban's flock and the stronger ones with his flock. (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:41–42 Jacob concentrated on breeding the strong one of the flock. He continued to breed them using the rods, but he placed the weaker animals with Laban's flock and the stronger ones with his flock.

Jacob breeding the strong of the flock (Various Commentators)

Victor Bravo's theory: *My pet theory is that Jacob was an ace cattle breeder and he herded the best animals together. . . . but he used the sticks to make it look like magic to the poor observers dispatched by Laban. But, I acknowledge it is speculation. I grew up among cattle and sheep folk and it is amazing the mix of old-time superstition and cutting edge genetics you can find among them, even now.*⁵²⁶

The Cambridge Bible seems to understand a portion of what happened: *A third device on Jacob's part. He is careful, at the breeding season, to pick out only the finer animals before which to place the peeled rods. Hence he obtained for his own share the young of the better animals.*⁵²⁷

Gill: *[Jacob concentrated on the strong of the flock, which would] bring forth party coloured ones, and such as were robust and strong like themselves; and this was another device of Jacob's to get the best of the flock. Aben Ezra thinks this refers to the two seasons of the year, when the flocks conceived; the one was in Nisan, in the spring, and such as were brought on that conception were strong, and therefore Jacob chose to lay the rods in the gutters at that time, that he might have the best cattle; and so the Targum of Jonathan calls these here the forward ones, as it does those in Genesis 30:42 we render feeble, the latter ones; which, according to Aben Ezra, conceived in Tisri or September, and what they brought were weak and feeble. (Based on the laws of genetics, Jacob's breeding of the best of the flock would produce higher quality offspring. Ed.)*⁵²⁸

Whedon presented a view like Keil and Delitzsch did: *This was a third trick. The Eastern sheep lamb twice a year, in spring and fall, and those born in the fall, according to Pliny, were the stronger. It is probable that after a time Laban suspected or discovered Jacob's artifice, and accordingly changed his wages, or the terms of the contract, many times. See Genesis 31:7–8. But Jacob was smart enough to frustrate all his attempts to overreach him.*⁵²⁹

Although Jacob may have manipulated the times of breeding as well, I cannot find enough information in this chapter to support him taking that approach.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

⁵²⁶ From <http://www.puritanboard.com/f40/jacob-spotted-sheep-genesis-30-25-43-a-56391/> accessed December 21, 2013.

⁵²⁷ *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*; 1882-1921; by Cambridge University Press; General Editor J. J. S. Perowne, from e-sword, Genesis 30:41.

⁵²⁸ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:41.

⁵²⁹ *Whedon's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Editor: Daniel D. Whedon, D.D. L.L.D.; ©1874–1909; from E-sword; Genesis 30:42.

Another comment on this from Rich: *We don't always have God providing a "voice over" in every event saying: "I endorse this behavior" or "I condemn this behavior".*⁵³⁰

What Jacob is doing is not right either. It is one underhanded move to match Laban's underhanded move. His nature of deception comes out again. Jacob is attempting to breed this stock of goats and sheep so that the stronger ones are born spotted or speckled and are therefore Jacob's, and that the weaker ones are born all white and therefore would remain with Laban. His idea of how to do this was primitive and it would not work. However, God still blessed Jacob.

Genesis 30:42 But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put them in. And usually it came to be, the weak ones were Laban's and the stronger ones Jacob's.

This is how genetics work. The more inbreeding there is, the more certain characteristics hold (like being all white) and the often the weaker the animal is.

By choosing the stronger animals, Jacob was getting a greater DNA range (I don't know if that is the proper way to state this).

His plan with the rods has nothing to do with it.

Genesis 30:41–42 Jacob concentrated on breeding the strong one of the flock. He continued to breed them using the rods, but he placed the weaker animals with Laban's flock and the stronger ones with his flock.

Jacob's Plan to Influence Breeding Outcomes (Various Commentators)

*Barnes: Jacob devises means to provide himself with a flock in these unfavorable circumstances. His first device is to place party-colored rods before the eyes of the cattle at the rutting season, that they might drop lambs and kids varied with speckles, patches, or streaks of white. He had learned from experience that there is a congruence between the colors of the objects contemplated by the dams at that season and those of their young. At all events they bare many straked, speckled, and spotted lambs and kids. He now separated the lambs, and set the faces of the flock toward the young of the rare colors, doubtless to affect them in the same way as the pilled rods.*⁵³¹

*Guzik: Jacob also used selective breeding to increase the strength and vitality of his flock. We don't know exactly how this method worked. It is possible Jacob knew more about animal husbandry than we do today; but it is more likely Jacob did the best he knew, and God blessed it.*⁵³²

*Richard Wallach: God had revealed to Jacob how to get the most from Laban's herds by asking for the dominant genes (marked animals) which would emerge in the offspring of the recessive gened animals (unmarked). This story shows that God knew about genetics before Mendel and revealed some of it to Jacob. See Genesis 30:32 and 31:10-12. Jacob didn't have full confidence in God's plan and decided to try to help it along with some primitive ideas of his own.*⁵³³

⁵³⁰ From <http://www.puritanboard.com/f40/jacob-spotted-sheep-genesis-30-25-43-a-56391/> accessed December 21, 2013.

⁵³¹ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37–43.

⁵³² *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:37–43.

⁵³³ From <http://www.puritanboard.com/f40/jacob-spotted-sheep-genesis-30-25-43-a-56391/> accessed December 21, 2013.

Jacob's Plan to Influence Breeding Outcomes (Various Commentators)

Dr. Peter Pett: *The description shows with what care Jacob bred the young. He took individual care to ensure that the right males studded the right females. He trusted inter-breeding and the white rods used in connection with the water troughs. And it worked. We may recognise the inter-breeding as the important factor, but there may well have been something in the trees used which got into the water supply and assisted the process. And there may even have been something in the psychological factor which is hidden from us today. Jacob trusted the whole. But there is the underlying assumption that his prosperity was due to Yahweh's blessing (Genesis 30:27 and Genesis 30:30).*⁵³⁴

I think that Pett almost gets this. I think the key is, Jacob is using human viewpoint solutions; and God will bless him, nevertheless.

I think the key to Jacob's success was not this breeding, nor was it God miraculously interfering with nature. Stronger animals have a great variety of genes (I am not quite sure how to state this scientifically); and weaker animals are often bred for very specific genetic outcomes. Stronger animals which breed are more likely to have lambs and kids who have some of these colors; weaker animals probably more reliably turn out all white lambs and kids; but that careful breeding also breeds out their strength (this is why we do not marry our sisters). So, without knowing it, Jacob, by encouraging breeding among the stronger animals, also was encouraging animals with the most diverse genetics to breed. This would result in more of the oddly colored sheep and kids, which is to Jacob's financial benefit.

This understanding does not eliminate God from the process. God is the Great Giver of Life.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Jacobus tries to make sense of Jacob, Laban and God's intent: *As regards the morality, however, Jacob seems to have bargained with his secret scheme in view, and consulted only his own interest and avarice, the effect of which was to secure a large portion of the flocks. Laban, discovering this, regarded himself as released from the compact, and changed the terms time after time. This loss to Laban was only a providential punishment for his exaction of Jacob's service those fourteen years. But Jacob was guilty in relying more upon craft than upon the covenant of God.*⁵³⁵

Quite a lot is made of this passage by critics of Scripture. These critics rightly point out that, the offspring of sheep are affected by the genetics of the sheep, not by almond branches which have been peeled into various patterns.

Jacob, the Peeled Branches and the Bible

1. The Bible accurately records the thoughts, motivations and actions of various individuals throughout history.
2. Although the Bible does offer some prescriptive behaviors, it is clear that the Bible also requires some thinking and evaluation on the part of the reader. Not everything is spoonfed to the reader.
3. This passage describes the mistaken notion of Laban and Jacob when it comes to the breeding of animals.
4. Laban believed that if he removed all of the spotted, striped and blotched animals from Jacob's flocks, that such young would not be produced in large numbers. He was wrong, but he was more correct than Jacob.
5. Jacob believed that if he placed various tree branches in front of and in the water of his flocks, that he could somehow influence their breeding (I see no reason to interpret his actions as being anything other than a slick breeding scheme). He thought if the branches were striped, spotted or blotched, then the

⁵³⁴ Dr. Peter Pett; *Commentary Series on the Bible*; from e-sword, Genesis 30:41–42.

⁵³⁵ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:37–43 (Suggestive Comments on the Verses).

Jacob, the Peeled Branches and the Bible

- young that his flock produced would also be striped, spotted or blotched. He was wrong; there was no such causal relationship.
6. The Bible records the actions of these two men accurately. Even though they are both wrong, it is Jacob who would be prospered. The animals of Laban which he was overseeing would produce a great many striped, blotchy and spotted animals.
 7. Go back and remember the duplicity of Jacob in order to be blessed by his father; he would still receive such blessing, but not because he duped his own father.
 8. This in no way tells us that this ought to be our approach to breeding. Nowhere in this narrative do we find God communicating with Jacob, saying, "Okay, I have this great idea." All of this is 100% Jacob's idea. God is only involved in prospering Jacob, which is what God has done all along, despite Jacob being so hard-headed.
 9. In fact, getting Jacob to abandon his scheming and duplicity required God to wrestle with him, to reveal to Jacob what he has done all of his life.
 10. Therefore, even though Jacob believed that these branches would affect the breeding of his sheep, that does not mean that God thinks this; nor does this mean that the Bible is teaching this about genetics.

So, the final conclusion is, this is a scheme that Jacob came up with—a scheme which did not work—and yet God blesses Jacob anyway. We have seen these same pattern throughout Jacob's life. Jacob has tried various schemes to get the upper hand over those around him; but God still blesses Jacob, despite his scheming.

The application to us should be obvious. We are very imperfect people. We sometimes give our sin nature full reign over our lives, sometimes for minutes, sometimes for hours, and sometimes for days. Whenever you sin and neglect naming that sin to God, then you are out of fellowship until you eventually rebound (name you sins to Him). Now, does God remove all of His blessings to you while you are out of fellowship? He does not! If this persists over a period of time, God may begin to discipline you, but He does not take away your wife, your job, your wealth, etc.

So this is what is happening with Jacob. He is still the schemer; he is still trying to get the upper hand over Laban; he is probably still mad at Laban because of the whole marriage thing.

Throughout your life, people are going to treat you unjustly; people are going to get the upper hand and cheat you. You will suffer things that you do not deserve. For a believer, you simply move on. You do not carry a grudge; you do not put this in your memory bank in order to strike out against the offending party when given the chance; you simply move on and you let God sort things out.

Now, in some cases, you do retain this information when it will affect others. If someone has worked for you and they stole from you or they cheated you—it is reasonable to hold on to that information, in case you are asked for a reference. However, you do not run around and tell all of your mutual friends that Charley Brown stole from you (unless, of course, they are in danger of him stealing from them). In other words, you use Bible doctrine in order to determine what are the appropriate steps to take after being treated unjustly. In many cases, the appropriate step is to put that in God's hands and move on. *Never* bear a grudge; *never* carrying around a load of mental attitude sins toward the person or persons or have mistreated you.

I have, on two occasions, been fired from my job for a set of unjust circumstances.⁵³⁶ In one case, I could have sued the other party (one co-worker even suggested that I do that). However, I chose not to pursue that option for a variety of reasons. As a result my life was very different and very good. God used this to move me from point A to point B, so to speak. Have I looked back on occasion and been angry at the people involved? Sometimes, yes; and that was a sin and I named that sin to God. The key is, God is God, and no life is too small for Him to consider. Therefore, I could put it all in God's hands and move on. As a result, I was greatly blessed in many ways.

⁵³⁶ I have also been fired for very just reasons as well from other jobs.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Jacob belongs to the line of promise and blessing, and God will bless him, even though he often strays from God's plan.

Application: You may ask, *well, what if I am not in the line of promise?* In the Church Age, all believers are in the line of promise, so to speak. All believers are blessed directly by God; all believers have an escrow account of temporal and eternal blessings. As the Bible says, God is standing there, tapping His foot, waiting for more opportunities to bless you (Isaiah 30:18–19). Do not be confused—the Bible does not promise every believer in time that he will become a millionaire and live in a mansion. However, the blessings are there and God will pour these blessings out upon you, if you meet the conditions of escrow (just as funds are dispersed from an escrow account when all conditions of the escrow are met).

Jacob and Genetics

1. There is a very common objection to this chapter: this goofy stuff that Jacob does with the branches is unscientific; so the Bible is completely wrong.
2. What we have in this chapter is two men trying to out-scheme the other. Jacob made an offer for his wages, to keep certain types of livestock (the rarer types); and that would be his pay.
3. Laban then culls these out of Jacob's flocks and herds, so that he does not have a breeding stock from which to get this type of animal.
4. Then Jacob comes up with this goofy idea that, he will put these markings on tree branches and put them in front of his present stock of animals while they are drinking water so that they will breed with this result.
5. What Laban did was somewhat unscientific and it would not work. The livestock remaining could still carry those genes to produce the kind of animal markings that would give the animal to Jacob. Laban had not been ordered by God to do this.
6. What Jacob did is interesting, but unscientific, and would not change the outcome. Jacob had not been ordered by God to do this.
7. Throughout his life, Jacob does stuff which does not lead to blessing from God. He got Esau to give him his birthright; and he fooled his father into blessing him—but none of this was the reason why God blessed Jacob.
8. God is able to produce a variety of animal markings, even if those markings are not present in the breeding pair. God can simply work through genetics, which He invented; or He can influence genetics, if He so chooses. After all, God is the creator.
9. What Laban did will not affect the final outcome. What Jacob did would not effect the final outcome. What God does affects the final outcome.
10. Jesus Christ controls history.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

Lessons from Jacob's Genetic Experiments

1. Jacob believed that he could affect the breeding of his livestock by putting branches in front of breeding and drinking animals, so that their offspring would look like the markings on the branches.
2. Today, we know this to be foolishness.
3. Just because it is in the Bible, that does not mean that God condones it. Just because it is in the Bible, that does not mean that this is *Bible-science*. After all, the fact that Cain killed Abel is in the Bible. That does not mean that Cain did a good thing or that God supports the killing of brothers.

Lessons from Jacob's Genetic Experiments

4. Think of Jacob's genetic experiments as human good. They may have involved a lot of effort; these actions may have seemed to be good to Jacob. However, their end result would be fruitless. Nothing that Jacob did by way of genetic experimentation helped his cause.
5. The animals which did eventually result from breeding favored Jacob (in his agreements with Laban), but that was a result of what God did, not a result of Jacob's schemes.
6. Jacob's scheming has been a consistent theme throughout this portion of the Old Testament and at no time are his schemes credited with his eventual success. God rewards Jacob not on the basis of his schemes but on the basis of God's sovereignty and God's grace.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

This seems like a very odd chapter; and there are two unusual subject matters which appear to come out of nowhere: mandrakes, to make people randy and fertile; and cut branches placed in the watering troughs in order to get sheep and goats to mate and have oddly colored ones. Why do we have these two things mentioned together in the same chapter? Surprisingly enough, there is a reason for this.

There is another oddity related to this chapter: it begins in the middle of the children that Jacob's wives and mistresses give birth to. In Genesis 29, we have Jacob's first 4 children being born at the end of that chapter; and now, we resume this chapter with these children being born to Jacob's 2 wives and 2 mistresses (the personal maids of his wives). At first, this made no sense to me. Why didn't the person (s) put all of the genealogical stuff together? Does that not make the most sense? Then, after working through this entire chapter, I looked back at Jacob's words to Rachel, and suddenly, it all fit together as a unified whole.

I am not aware of this being presented by any other commentator. However, whoever divided up these chapters as they did—in a way that superficially seems mixed up—recognized what I finally recognized (after a month of study), that this chapter is a brilliant literary unit.

The ESV, capitalized is used below:

The Mandrakes and Jacob's Breeding Scheme

1. Jacob and Rachel have a discussion at the beginning of this chapter, and this is tied in with two very odd and seemingly unrelated topics in the rest of this chapter.
2. What we have is a very carefully constructed literary whole. Now, God the Holy Spirit did not inspired the chapter divisions; but very likely, godly men were often involved in dividing these chapters up, and I believe that one man or a group of men saw all the connections here, and determined, *this must be a single chapter*.
3. Let's go back to the first two verses: Gen. 30:1–2 **When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I shall die!" Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"**
 - 1) Jacob tells us Who is in charge of the births of his children—God.
 - 2) Jacob explains to Rachel that has no choice in the matter.
 - 3) He asks her, "Am I God that I can keep you from getting pregnant? That is preposterous!"
4. What follows is, two events recorded in this chapter, both of which are rather odd; but they can be tied together thematically. Furthermore, they can be tied to these words of Jacob: **"Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"** The thematic organization is actually quite brilliant.
5. Leah's son brings home mandrakes which they believe will cause the woman to conceive (and possibly increase the ardor of the man). In any case, the result of eating these love apples (mandrakes) is fertility—or so they believe.
6. However, it does not work. Rachel uses the mandrakes, yet Leah gets pregnant. Genesis 30:14–17
7. Now, why does Leah get pregnant? **And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth**

The Mandrakes and Jacob's Breeding Scheme

- son. (Genesis 30:17) It was not the mandrakes. Rachel, who bargained for the mandrakes, did not get pregnant, but Leah, who apparently did not use them, did.¹ God is in charge, despite the gift of life seeming to us to be a very natural, biological process (bees do it, birds do it²).
8. Eventually, Rachel does get pregnant. Why? Not because she or Jacob consumed mandrakes, but for this reason: **Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.** (Genesis 30:22)
 9. So, on the one hand, we have human viewpoint and human schemes; and on the other, we have God accomplishing His purpose. What Jacob said to Rachel is clearly vindicated. "Am I God that I can determine whether or not you will bear children?"
 10. Later in this chapter, Jacob and Laban come to an agreement about how Jacob will be paid (as he has already worked 14 years for his two wives). Jacob is going to get all of the oddly colored sheep and goats. Genesis 30:27–34
 11. After making this agreement, Laban takes all existing sheep and goats with odd markings, and removes them from his flock which Jacob manages. Laban knows that oddly colored animals who mate will throw off oddly marked offspring. Those lacking in such markings, when bred, are likely to have no markings. Genesis 30:35–36
 12. Jacob is fine with this agreement; but he has a scheme about breeding. He takes these branches and cuts off portions of bark, apparently to make the branches look like the coloration he wants in Laban's flock. The idea is, they will look at these branches (placed where they drink), and begin having oddly colored offspring. We know today that this plan is bunk; but Jacob does not know it. Genesis 30:37–42
 13. We understand today that Jacob's plan would not work. Having visual stimuli does not affect the conception process (insofar as we know). What Jacob did was an illustration of human viewpoint solutions (as was Rachel's trade for the mandrakes). The human viewpoint solution is no solution. Even if perfectly executed, that which comes from human viewpoint can lead us nowhere. There is absolutely no eternal impact from executing a human viewpoint scheme.
 14. Nevertheless, it is God's plan for Jacob to be blessed. **Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.** (Genesis 30:43) Just as it was God's plan for Jacob to have children by both Leah and Rachel.
 15. Who is the source of Jacob's blessing? God. Gen 32:9–10 **And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that You have shown to Your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps."**
 16. Both Rachel and Jacob had schemes by which they might be prospered. They executed their schemes; but it is God who blessed them. God gave Rachel children and God gave Jacob many sheep and goats. They were not blessed as a result of their schemes executed in the power of the flesh, they were blessed just as God willed.
 17. As Jacob told Rachel, "Am I God that I am able to cause you to be pregnant?" It is God Who gives life and God Who gives us blessing.

To sum up, both Rachel and Jacob had their own human viewpoint schemes. They had hoped to increase their own fertility (for Rachel, it was her personal fertility; for Jacob, it was the fertility of Laban's flock). God still chose to bless both of them; but God blesses them apart from their human viewpoint schemes.

¹ We do not know if Leah made use of the mandrakes or not.

² Even educated fleas do it.

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:37–42 Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. He set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs. So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating; but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.

Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:37–42: Jacob Engages in Selective Breeding

1. Jacob is left with only white sheep and black goats.
2. These animals of course are Laban's which Jacob tends according to the agreement.
3. Jacob had no off-colored animals to start with as Laban had separated them and removed them from the flocks left in Jacob's care (see above discussion).
4. The white and the black genes respectively were dominant genes.
5. Jacob resorts to a belief current in his time that the coloration of the lambs and kids was influenced by what the parents viewed as they were mating.
6. The belief was that if the mating animals viewed something that was variegated in color then the offspring produce in accord with the recessive gene.
7. If the white sheep and black goats looked at multicolored posts when they mate, then the newborn will be multicolored.
8. To accomplish this effect Jacob removed fresh branches from indigenous trees (e.g. poplar, almond and plane/chestnut; v. 37).
9. He then peeled off some of the bark exposing the white or light colored bark (v. 37).
10. He then placed these "rods" in the watering troughs (v. 38).
11. When the sheep and goats came to drink it was here that they typically mated (v. 38).
12. While they mated they were exposed to these stripped branches.
13. Jacob resorted to "sympathetic magic" similar to the case with Rachel and the mandrakes.
14. The result for Jacob was a resounding success (v. 39).
15. The explanation for this success is that God is sovereign over the laws of genetics.
16. Jacob's success had little or nothing to do with his ambitious efforts.
17. Note the same adjectives describing the first crop of newborns as are mentioned back in v. 32 and 39 (cp. 31:8, 10, 12).
18. According to the last verse in narrating this experiment, Jacob continued to use the stripped-rod technique (cf. v.42).
19. The meaning of v. 40 is difficult to ascertain.
20. The view that seems to best satisfies the text is that Jacob has multicolored young of the sheep facing toward "the striped and all the black (goats) in the flock of Laban" while they mated (v. 40a).
21. The result: the black goats produced off-colored kids.
22. As the number of off-colored animals grew Jacob separated his flocks from Laban's flocks (v. 40b).
23. Naturally, Jacob's flocks gradually outnumbered the flock of Laban during the six years of selective breeding.
24. Whatever the exact meaning of v. 40 is the result was the Laban was outsmarted.
25. Jacob was blessed with breeding large numbers of off-colored animals from the monochrome animals that Laban left him with.
26. What isn't readily apparent in this section is the fact that Laban kept changing the rules (see 31:8).
27. But each time he did so, God intervened denying Laban any advantage.
28. Jacob was forced to separate his animals from Laban's due to Laban's duplicity (v. 40b).
29. At each cycle of birthing Laban was on hand to see the results.
30. That is why he kept changing the rules of the game.
31. This involved a lot of extra work for Jacob during the final six years of his employment.
32. Jacob introduced another version of his selective breeding experiment (v. 41).
33. Over time he took the "strongest of the flock" and placed the rods before them, leaving the weaker animals to breed in the absence of the rods (vv. 41-42).

Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:37–42: Jacob Engages in Selective Breeding

34. The result: Jacob's animals were much more vigorous than those of Laban's.
35. In the end, Jacob had the superiority both in numbers and quality.
36. Even though Jacob resorted to "sympathetic magic", in the same vein as that of Rachel's mandrakes, God blessed him.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

And so spreads out the man exceedingly, exceedingly; and so he is to himself flocks great and maid-servants and slaves and camels and donkeys.

Genesis
30:43

So Jacob become extremely wealthy [lit., *the man spreads out exceedingly, exceedingly*] and so he had [lit., *and so there is to him*] many flocks, male and female slaves, [as well as] camels and donkeys.

Jacob became extremely wealthy, having many flocks and slaves, as well as camels and donkeys.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text (Hebrew)	And so spreads out the man exceedingly, exceedingly; and so he is to himself flocks great and maid-servants and slaves and camels and donkeys.
Targum (Onkelos)	And the man increased very greatly, and had a multitude of flocks, and handmaids, and servants, and camels, and asses.
Targum (Pseudo-Jonathan)	And the man increased greatly, and had a multitude of flocks, and handmaids and servants, and camels, and asses.
Revised Douay-Rheims	And the man was enriched exceedingly, and he had many flocks, maid servants and men servants, camels and asses.
Aramaic ESV of Peshitta	The man increased exceedingly, and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.
Peshitta (Syriac)	And the man grew exceedingly rich, and had large flocks, menservants, maidservants, and <u>she asses</u> , camels, and he asses.
Septuagint (Greek)	And the man became very rich, and he had many cattle, and oxen, and servants, and maid-servants, and camels, and asses.

Significant differences: The phrase *it is to him* is often translated *he had*. Again, the two versions of the Peshitta which I have are in disagreement. The second has *she-asses*; this is not found in any other ancient version.

Limited Vocabulary Translations:

Bible in Basic English	So Jacob's wealth was greatly increased; he had great flocks and women-servants and men-servants and camels and asses.
Easy English	By doing this, Jacob became very rich. He had many animals, female servants and male servants and camels and donkeys.
<i>The Message</i>	The man got richer and richer, acquiring huge flocks, lots and lots of servants, not to mention camels and donkeys.
NIRV	That's how Jacob became very rich. He became the owner of large flocks. He also had many male and female servants. And he had many camels and donkeys.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Common English Bible	The man Jacob became very, very rich: he owned large flocks, female and male servants, camels, and donkeys.
Contemporary English V.	Jacob soon became rich and successful. He owned many sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys, as well as a lot of slaves.
The Living Bible	As a result, Jacob's flocks increased rapidly and he became very wealthy, with many servants, camels, and donkeys.
New Berkeley Version	...who grew richer and richer with great herds, male and female servants, camels and donkeys.

Partially literal and partially paraphrased translations:

American English Bible	And [before long], he became very rich with many cattle, oxen, male and female servants, camels, and burros.
International Standard V	Therefore the man Jacob [The Heb. lacks <i>Jacob</i>] prospered so much that he had large flocks, female and male servants, as well as camels and donkeys.
Revised Knox Bible	Thus he became rich beyond measure; many were the herds, the men-servants and maid-servants, the camels and asses that were his.
Translation for Translators	As a result, Jacob became very rich. He owned many large flocks and many male and female slaves and camels and donkeys.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

Awful Scroll Bible	The man was to spread out exceedingly abundantly, with many small cattle, maid servants and male servants, camels and asses.
Conservapedia	The man thus grew very, very rich, and had a lot of livestock, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and donkeys.
God's Truth (Tyndale)	And the man became exceeding rich and had many sheep, maidservants, menservants, camels and asses.
Tree of Life Version	And the man grew exceedingly prosperous and had numerous flocks, along with female and male servants, camels and donkeys.
Urim-Thummim Version	And the womb burst open exceedingly for the man, and he had many flocks, and male and female slaves, camels, and donkeys.
Wikipedia Bible Project	And the man's wealth expanded very very much, and he had much sheep, and handmaids, and slaves, and camels and donkeys.

Catholic Bibles (those having the imprimatur):

Christian Community (1988)	In this way he became extremely rich with a great number of sheep, maidservants and menservants, camels and donkeys.
The Heritage Bible	And the man broke out exceedingly, exceedingly, and there were to him many flock animals, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and donkeys.
New American Bible (2002)	Thus the man grew increasingly prosperous, and he came to own not only large flocks but also male and female servants and camels and asses.
New Jerusalem Bible	Thus the man grew extremely rich, and came to own large flocks, men and women slaves, camels and donkeys.
Revised English Bible	So Jacob's wealth increased more and more until he possessed great flocks, as well as male and female slaves, camels, and donkeys.

Jewish/Hebrew Names Bibles:

Complete Jewish Bible	In this way the man became very rich and had large flocks, along with male and female slaves, camels and donkeys.
-----------------------	---

The Complete Tanach And the man became exceedingly wealthy, and he had prolific animals, and maidservants and manservants, and camels and donkeys.

prolific animals: Heb תּוֹבֵר. They were fruitful and multiplied more than other animals. — [from Tanchuma Buber, Vayetze 24]

and maidservants and manservants: He would sell his animals at a high price and purchase all these for himself. — [from Gen. Rabbah 74:5]

exeGesese companion Bible And the man breaks forth mightily mightly and has much flocks and maids and servants and camels and he burros.

Hebraic Roots Bible And the man increased very much, and many flocks were his, and slave-girls, and male slaves, and camels and donkeys.

Kaplan Translation In this manner, the man became tremendously wealthy. He had many sheep and goats [The Hebrew word tzon denotes small domestic animals, including both sheep and goats, as we see from context here (cf. Rashi on Exodus 12:5). We usually translate it here as 'flocks' or 'animals.'], as well as slaves, slave-girls, camels and donkeys.

Orthodox Jewish Bible And the ish increased exceedingly, and had much tzon, and shefachot, and avadim, and gemalim, and chamorim.

Expanded/Embellished Bibles:

The Amplified Bible So Jacob became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks [of sheep and goats], and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Kretzmann's Commentary And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses. All this he acquired, with the blessing of God, in the next six years. Without the blessing of God all wealth is a curse.

NET Bible® In this way Jacob [*Heb* "the man"; Jacob's name has been supplied in the translation for clarity.] became extremely prosperous. He owned [*Heb* "and there were to him."] large flocks, male and female servants, camels, and donkeys.

The Pulpit Commentary And—as the apparent result of the triple stratagem, though vide supra, Genesis 30:38, and cf. Genesis 31:12—the man increased exceedingly,—literally, broke forth greatly (vide verse 80)—and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses—like Abraham (Genesis 13:2) and Isaac (Genesis 26:13, Genesis 26:14). Thus far the historian simply narrates the fact of the patriarch's priority, and the steps which to it, "without expressing approbation of his conduct or describing his increasing wealth as a blessing from God. The verdict is contained in what follows (Keil).

The Voice In this way, Jacob grew extremely rich, and he ended up with very large flocks, male and female slaves, and camels and donkeys too.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Benner's Mechanical Trans. ...and the man broke out very greatly and he existed to him abundant flocks and maids and servants and camels and donkeys,...

Concordant Literal Version And breaching is the man exceeding exceedingly, and coming is he to have many small cattle and herds and maids and servants and camels and asses.

Darby Translation And the man increased very, very much, and had much cattle, and bondwomen, and bondmen, and camels, and asses.

Emphasized Bible Thus did the man break forth, exceedingly,—thus came he to have flocks in abundance, and maid-servants, and men-servants and camels and asses.

English Standard Version Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Green's Literal Translation	And the man increased very much, and many flocks were his, and slave-girls, and male slaves, and camels and asses.
Modern English Version	The man became exceedingly prosperous and had many sheep and female servants and male servants and camels and donkeys.
Young's Updated LT	And the man increases very exceedingly, and has many flocks, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.

The gist of this passage: Jacob became quite wealthy with great flocks, servants, and other animals.

Genesis 30:43a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pârats (פָּרַץ) [pronounced <i>paw-RATS</i>]	<i>to break, to break down, to destroy; to break asunder, to scatter, to disperse, to spread abroad; to break forth upon, to produce by breaking through; to act violently; to break through [negative volition, a bad attitude, a mindset, or whatever]; to spread, to distribute</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6555 BDB #829
This verb was also found back in v. 30.			
ʾîysh (אִישׁ) [pronounced <i>eesh</i>]	<i>a man, a husband; anyone; a certain one; each, each one, everyone</i>	masculine singular noun (sometimes found where we would use a plural); with the definite article	Strong's #376 BDB #35
m ^o ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced <i>m^e-ODE</i>]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
m ^o ôd (מְאֹד) [pronounced <i>m^e-ODE</i>]	<i>exceedingly, extremely, greatly, very</i>	adverb	Strong's #3966 BDB #547
H. C. Leupold: <i>The Hebrew says: "the man burst out exceedingly exceedingly."</i> ⁵³⁷			

Translation: So Jacob become extremely wealthy [lit., *the man spreads out exceedingly, exceedingly*]...

This is expressed in a very unusual way; impersonally, and using words that I would not have used. The idea is that Jacob and his possessions continue to spread out dramatically.

Despite the many translations to the contrary, there is a way in the Hebrew to write, as a result, in this way, *accordingly*. We simply have the normal wâw consecutive which is nearly always found with a new imperfect verb.

This is a very impersonal way to state this fact, referring to Jacob as *the man*. Throughout, we have seen Jacob working a deal with Laban and then working out a breeding scheme with Laban's flocks; but at the end, when his

⁵³⁷ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

wealth is spoken of, he is just called *the man*. Almost as if he is being divorced from the person presented previously in this chapter.

Genesis 30:43b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and; so, that, yet, therefore, consequently; because</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>lê</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
tsô'n (צֹאן) [pronounced <i>tzohn</i>]	<i>small cattle, sheep and goats, flock, flocks</i>	feminine singular collective nou	Strong's #6629 BDB #838
Owens says that this is the construct form; I think that he is mistaken. No need for that here.			
rab (רַב) [pronounced <i>rah^bv</i>]	<i>many, much, great (in the sense of large or significant, not acclaimed)</i>	masculine plural adjective	Strong's #7227 BDB #912
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
shiph ^e châh (שִׁפְחָה) [pronounced <i>shif-KHAW</i>]	<i>maid, maid-servant, household servant, handmaid, female slave</i>	feminine plural noun	Strong's #8198 BDB #1046
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>GE^B-ved</i>]	<i>slave, servant; underling; subject; this can mean military men, soldiers in the plural</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #5650 BDB #713
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
gâmâl (גָּמָל) [pronounced <i>gaw-MAWL</i>]	<i>camel (this is obviously a transliteration)</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1581 BDB #168
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ, or ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though; as well as</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
châmôwr (חֲמוֹר) [pronounced <i>khuh-MOHR</i>]	<i>ass, male donkey, he-ass, burrow</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #2543 BDB #331

Translation: ...and so he had [lit., and so there is to him] many flocks, male and female slaves, [as well as] camels and donkeys.

Over a few years, Jacob's wealth was build up greatly.

Jacob left his homeland with essentially nothing, on the run from his brother, and God has prospered him greatly. There are all kinds of people out in Jacob's world who have worked hard and do not have anything to show for it. God has blessed Jacob. In visiting with a friend, we had both noticed that God had blessed us materially beyond what we could imagine and that this blessing seemed to be independent of the money that we made. God chooses whom to bless and whom to curse.



Jacob would have purchased slaves in order to oversee his own household, his women and his 11 sons.

Genesis 30:43 **So Jacob become extremely wealthy** [lit., *the man spreads out exceedingly, exceedingly*] **and so he had** [lit., *and so there is to him*] **many flocks, male and female slaves, [as well as] camels and donkeys.** (Kukis mostly literal translation)

Genesis 30:43 **Jacob became extremely wealthy, having many flocks and slaves, as well as camels and donkeys.** (Kukis paraphrase)

Genesis 30:43 (a graphic); from allacin.blogspot; accessed September 15, 2017. "The man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys."

Genesis 30:43 **Jacob became extremely wealthy, having many flocks and slaves, as well as camels and donkeys.**

Jacob's Accumulating Wealth (Commentators and Commentary)

H. C. Leupold: *To take care of the ever increasing flocks a multitude of servants became necessary, and camels and asses as well, for keeping in touch with the various movements of the flock and for moving from place to place with the nomadic establishment. God had fulfilled His promise of 28:15 beyond what Jacob could ever have anticipated.*⁵³⁸

⁵³⁸ From <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/leupold/genesis.xxxi.html> accessed September 14, 2017.

Jacob's Accumulating Wealth (Commentators and Commentary)

Gill: *[With] his flocks increasing so very much, Jacob sold many of his sheep at a good price, as Jarchi observes, and with it bought camels and asses; and these were very fit for his use, when he should be obliged or think fit to remove into his own country, and which he was meditating, and had a direction from the Lord for, as in the following chapter.*⁵³⁹

These beasts of burden certainly could have been purchased with the idea of a move in mind. Recall in this chapter that Jacob, when he was allowed to name his salary, backed off pretty quickly on this whole moving to Canaan threat.

Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary: *Heb. "The man broke forth largely, largely." On every side he expanded—his prosperity was enlarged.*⁵⁴⁰

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Furthermore, God's blessings are multifarious. Some people can only see wealth as a blessing and they miss the other tremendous provisions of God in their lives. Everyone has adversity and some do not see what God has provided, they see only their problems. And some people are not blessed with much of anything beyond logistical grace (the basic necessities are provided for). However, what your focus should be upon is God's Word. All these other things will be added to you, apart from the lottery, apart from financial planning, apart from the amount of worrying that you do. This is not the green light to go out and charge up your credit cards to their maximums (as Thieme said, that handles the 1% of the audience who just listen for that one sentence that they can take and distort beyond belief).

The emphasis should be in our life to eagerly search through His Word and to trust God implicitly with our lives. We do not need to even worry about blessing or cursing. Follow that advice and you may wake up some day, as I did, and realize that you have been blessed beyond your wildest dreams.

Genesis 40:43—Jacob is Blessed with Many Children and Flocks (a graphic); from [Last Days Bible](#); accessed September 15, 2017.

Interestingly enough, even though Jacob will twice recognize what God has done for him in terms of making him wealthy (Genesis 30:12–32:10); this final verse does not even mention him by name. I believe that the literary intention is to separate Jacob and his schemes from the wealthy man who has accumulated so much by this time.

Wealth is a very relative thing. Jacob recognizes that God has made him wealthy. Although Esau's wealth will not be enumerated, it seems plain to me in the study of Genesis 32 that Esau had a much greater wealth buildup than Jacob had. He will leave Haran thinking, at some point, that he is the cat's meow with all of his wealth; but when he meets up with Esau, it will become clear to him that Esau is much wealthier.



⁵³⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:43.

⁵⁴⁰ *The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary*; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:43.

Solomon is considered one of the wealthiest men in human history. I can guarantee you that, if you were picked up and put in his place for a day, you would come running back to your middle class or lower middle class existence, because our lives as Americans are so incredibly good. We have conveniences that Solomon could not even dream about.

Genesis 30:43 **Jacob became extremely wealthy, having many flocks and slaves, as well as camels and donkeys.**

God's Blessing of Jacob (Many Commentators)

Keil and Delitzsch: *In Genesis 30:43 the account closes with the remark, that the man increased exceedingly, and became rich in cattle (רֹבַח וְאֵצְטוּבָה many head of sheep and goats) and slaves, without expressing approbation of Jacob's conduct, or describing his increasing wealth as a blessing from God. The verdict is contained in what follows.*⁵⁴¹

Guzik: *God blessed Jacob, but it was not because Jacob was especially good. It was because of the promises God made to Jacob (Genesis 28:13–15) and the covenant made to Abraham. In the same way, blessing comes from the LORD to us, not because we are great or good, but because of the covenant God has made with us through Jesus, and promises He has given us in His word.*

Guzik continues: *We may note Jacob's principles for prosperity:*

- *Don't make wealth your goal (Genesis 30:25–26)*
- *Don't be afraid to work for others and try to increase their wealth before or as you work to increase your own wealth (Genesis 30:27)*
- *Work hard, dedicating yourself to your employer's success (Genesis 30:26; Genesis 31:38–42)*
- *Trust God (Genesis 30:31–33).*⁵⁴²

Trapp: *So shall all those do, if it be for their eternal good, that depend upon God for success and blessing upon their hard and honest labours.*⁵⁴³

Jacob did work hard and honestly; but he was not depending upon God, but upon this breeding scheme in order to outsmart Laban.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all very different people. Abraham was a great man who trusted God (most of the time), and was the father of the Jewish race. We know less about Isaac, as he did not appear to record much Scripture. Every person with Jacob's genes is a racial Jew.

God Blesses the Patriarchs with Wealth

Gen. 13:1–2 **So Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the Negeb. Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold.**

Abraham received his calling back in Genesis 12. He did eventually travel to the land, but then, he also went to Egypt when there was a famine. Here, he is returning from Egypt.

⁵⁴¹ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; Genesis 30:41–43.

⁵⁴² *David Guzik's Commentary on the Old Testament*; courtesy of e-sword; ©2006; Genesis 30:37–43.

⁵⁴³ John Trapp *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments*; Edited by W. Webster and Hugh Martin; e-sword, Genesis 30:43.

God Blesses the Patriarchs with Wealth

Gen. 24:34–35 So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. The LORD has greatly blessed my master, and he has become great. He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male servants and female servants, [as well as] camels and donkeys."

Abraham sent his servant to Haran to find for his son a wife. He indicates to his master's family in the east how success Abraham is; and therefore, how much he will be able to assure the success of his son.

Gen. 26:12–14 And Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich, and gained more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and many servants, so that the Philistines envied him.

When Isaac was faced with famine, he was ready to move to Egypt; however, God guided him to the land of the Philistines instead, where God greatly blessed him.

Gen. 28:13–15 And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring. Your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and your offspring shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. For I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

Before Jacob leaves the Land of Promise, God appears to him and gives him these amazing promises, which are a continuation of promises which God had already made to Abraham (his grandfather) and to Isaac (his father).

Gen. 31:6–9 "You know that I have served your father with all my strength, yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times. But God did not permit him to harm me. If he said, 'The spotted shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore spotted; and if he said, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock bore striped. Thus God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me.

Jacob is speaking to his wives, convincing them that they all need to move to the Land of Promise. He tells them how God had blessed him so that, no matter how his father-in-law changed his wages, God overruled him.

Gen. 31:41–42 "These twenty years I have been in your house. I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had not been on my side, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God saw my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night."

Jacob testifies to Laban of his honest and fair labor and how God had looked out for him, despite Laban trying to manipulate his wages.

Gen. 32:9–11 And Jacob said, "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,' I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children."

Jacob is worried about meeting Esau after all these years, and he prays to God, recognizing in this prayer, how God has blessed him.

God Blesses the Patriarchs with Wealth

Gen. 36:6–7 Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the members of his household, his livestock, all his beasts, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan. He went into a land away from his brother Jacob. For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together. The land of their sojournings could not support them because of their livestock.

For a time, Esau and Jacob lived together in the Land of Promise. However, their wealth became so great that they could not keep all of it separate from one another. Esau decided to return to Seir as a result.

David was quite wealthy; and Solomon had wealth that was the greatest of his time in that era. Eccles. 2:4–11.

These verses were primarily taken from *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880; from E-sword, Genesis 30:43.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Genesis 30:43 And the man [Jacob] increased exceedingly, and had many flocks, and maidservants, and male servants, and camels, and asses.

Jacob's increase came because he was the grandson of Abraham; and the child of promise. None of this came about because of his scheming. This all occurs despite Laban's schemes; and despite Jacob's schemes.

This has been the story throughout Jacob's life. He continues to be blessed of God, despite his many schemes to outsmart others. Remember back—he traded for his brother's birthright because his brother was starving. Later, he took a blessing meant for Esau because he pretended that he was Esau (at the urging of his mother). Now he has this scheme going where he has his animals look at almond branches.

Jacob did put in an honest day's work; he did give care to Laban's flocks. So, that cannot be dismissed as trivial.

*Matthew Henry: Those who, while their beginning is small, are humble and honest, contented and industrious, are in a likely way to see their latter end greatly increasing. He that is faithful in a little shall be entrusted with more. He that is faithful in that which is another man's shall be entrusted with something of his own. Jacob, who had been a just servant, became a rich master.*⁵⁴⁴

All things being equal, God does bless a man who works hard, if not directly, then through the laws of divine establishment.

Jacob does not receive blessing because of his schemes; he is blessed because of his relationship to Abraham.

Jacob was *not* the recipient of the greater birthright because Esau sold it to him; and he was not blessed of God because he deceived his own father to give him Esau's blessing. Similarly, he is not being blessed with many sheep because of his goofy scheme here. They all fit the same pattern. Jacob thinks he is the smartest person in the room; he tries to take advantage of circumstances and he tries to work circumstances so that they benefit him. However, he is blessed because God blesses him; and God continues to bless him, despite his schemes.

Ballinger's translation of Genesis 30:43 **So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.**

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:43: Jacob's Prosperity

1. "So the man became exceedingly prosperous" brings the era of Jacob's employment to Laban to a conclusion.
2. During the first fourteen years Jacob was under a labor contract for his wives.

⁵⁴⁴ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:37–43.

Jack Ballinger's Analysis of Genesis 30:43: Jacob's Prosperity

3. In the last segment God brought Jacob from a the status of a beleaguered laborer to that of a very successful entrepreneur.
4. Thus God fulfilled this part of the promise made to Jacob in 28:15 ("I am with you and will keep you wherever you go...").
5. Like his grandfather and father before him, Jacob came into his own based largely to divine intervention.
6. Abraham prospered in Egypt even though he sinned; and Isaac prospered in Gerar even though he sinned.
7. Jacob arrived in Haran with next to nothing to call his own, but left with "large flocks, female and male servants and camels and donkeys."
8. This is listing is familiar to readers to the patriarchal narrative.
9. The material prosperity came to pass in just six years, and that in spite of Laban's interference.
10. Jacob in exile was prospered just as Abraham was in Egypt.

From <http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/Gen30.htm> accessed September 8, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Ron Snider's translation of Genesis 30:37–43 Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; in front of the flocks. Now the flocks mated when they came to drink. So the flocks mated by the rods and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with laban's flock. And it came about whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, that Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods; but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were laban's and the stronger were jacob's. So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:37–43

1. Jacob, whom Laban did not trust, here demonstrates that he indeed did have a scheme in mind all along.
2. His activity here is based on the assumption that animals, particularly sheep are susceptible to various prenatal influences.
3. There are many who state that as far as they know there is no evidence that prenatal influence determines the color of sheep or goats.
4. Whatever the case, the Bible here clearly teaches that Jacob employed this approach and was successful.
5. Sheep are supposedly especially susceptible to the things which are seen at the time of copulation or during the gestation period.
6. However, man cannot so definitely control the course of genetics among animals, or everyone would be engaged in this activity.
7. The issue which must be brought to bear in all this activity is the providence of God, Who is controlling events to bless the positive believer and jam the negative believer.
8. The method Jacob employed was relatively straightforward and simple.
9. He took branches which were darker in color, and peeled back the bark to expose the lighter color underneath, resulting in rods which were either striped or spotted.
10. He placed these around the area of the watering troughs, since this was where the sheep customarily mated.
11. The notion was that this sight would cause solid colored sheep and goats to bring forth young, which were striped and spotted, due to the influence of what they saw during copulation.

Ron Snider Summarizes Genesis 30:37–43

12. This is precisely what happened.
13. Through this process, Jacob began to acquire a flock of his own, which he kept separated from the flocks of Laban.
14. He kept a close eye on the process and the animals involved so that when the more sound, sturdy animals were mating, he used his device.
15. When the weaker animals were involved, he allowed them to mate without the presence of the rods.
16. The natural sense of the text is that when the rods were not there, the animals brought forth normal colored offspring.
17. When they were employed, the animals brought forth multi colored offspring.
18. Through his selective breeding process, the end result was that the more desirable animals were Jacob's and the less desirable animals were Laban's.
19. The ultimate result over a period of six years is recorded in vs 43.
20. Jacob became exceedingly wealthy through this rather dubious scheme.
21. The Bible records this story, with no comment on the effectiveness or ethics of Jacob's actions.
22. While the desired end was achieved, the WOG does not say that Jacob's activity was the reason.
23. This is just another example of Jacob relying on his own wits to aid his cause.
24. God was the one who superintended all this process, the actions of Jacob were not necessary.
25. But once again, he fails to faith-rest the promises which were made to him earlier.
26. The ethics of his action cannot be approved, since he acted in unbelief and a selfish desire to cheat his boss.
27. Jacob did not rely on the Lord to vindicate him, neither did he do his job as unto the Lord. Col. 3:22ff; IPet. 2:18ff
28. The ends do not justify the means, and believers should not rationalize this sort of activity as acceptable.

From <http://makarios-online.org/notes/genesis/gen30.doc> accessed September 10, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines](#)

[Beginning of Document](#)

[Definition of Terms](#)

[Introduction and Text](#)

[Chapter Summary](#)

[Addendum](#)

[A Complete Translation](#)

www.kukis.org

[Exegetical Studies in Genesis](#)

A Set of Summary Doctrines and Commentary

Although one commentator suggested that this chapter was far too carnal for the Christian to read and study; I found this chapter to be rich in information, theme, and Bible doctrine. I rarely have this many points in a single chapter for the two doctrines which follow.

An Abbreviated Exegesis of Genesis 30:

Bible translation used: The Scriptures 2009. Unless otherwise noted, all other quotations will be taken from this translation as well.

In the Scriptures 2009, instead of *God*, we have the word *Elohim*, which is a transliteration from the Hebrew. The other name for God, YHWH (or Jehovah, Yahweh, Adonai, Lord, JHWH, Y^ehowah) is represented with the actual

Hebrew יהוה. The reason for there being so many different words used here is interesting. Originally, the Hebrew was written without vowels—not just YHWH, but every single Hebrew word. Because the Hebrew Scriptures (which we know as the Old Testament) were read aloud so often, the reader could look at the Hebrew consonants and know the word that was there. In fact, the Masoretes, who preserved the Bibles' pronunciation, introduced diacritical marks in the 7th century A.D. (these are vowel points, which was added above and below the original Hebrew text). Up to that time, every word in the Bible was read aloud except for one, and that was YHWH. When the Jews came to this proper name, they said, *Adonai* (= *Lord*). As a result, the Jews preserved the pronunciation of the Biblical text for all but one word. Of the nearly 100 translations of the Old Testament to which I refer, any one of those eight forms may be found—and one of them, the Message (I believe) uses *GOD*. Furthermore, Bible translations are not necessarily consistent at this point. One place we may read *Lord*, and elsewhere we may read *Jehovah* in the same translation.

Genesis 30 Divided into Subsections

vv.	1–24	Jacob's Great Prosperity with Children
vv.	25–43	Jacob's Great Prosperity with Wealth

At first reading, I want very much to place the births of Jacob's children altogether in the same chapter. However, even though these two sections of Genesis 30 seem rather disparate, they have some things in common. Rachel and Leah are confused about a traditional myth of that era. They go for it, following that myth, which, of course, is not going to yield any results. However, God prospers Jacob with many children anyway. In the second section, Jacob himself believes a myth of his era (and maybe he came up with this idea himself); but, despite depending on a silly myth, God still prospers Jacob with great wealth (having many domesticated animals in this era was equivalent to having great wealth).

Jacob is not prospered with children or with wealth because they followed these myths. God blesses him greatly in spite of them following these myths.

Jacob's Great Prosperity with Children

Genesis 30:1 *And when Raḥēl [= Rachel] saw that she bore Ya'aqob [= Jacob] no children, Raḥēl [= Rachel] envied her sister, and said to Ya'aqob [= Jacob], "Give me children, or else I am going to die!"*

Jacob began to sire children in the previous chapter, having four sons by Leah. Genesis 29.

Although Jacob loves Rachel, he is not a fan of nagging, especially when this is nagging about something over which he has no control. She nags for him to give her children. Unless Jacob is withholding sex, there is nothing he can do about her infertility.

Rachel's complaint, "Give me children or else I am going to die!" is very wrong. It is bearing children which will cause her to die. Whereas her sister is made to bear children, Rachel is not. Her second child will be too much for her and she will die as a result of that difficult birth.

Genesis 30:2 *And Ya'aqob's displeasure burned against Raḥēl [= Rachel], and he said, "Am I in the place of Elohim, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"*

Jacob focuses in on the problem with her complaint: "Do you think that I am God, that I can make you pregnant or not?" Here, Jacob is 100% right and Rachel is 100% wrong. Don't expect to see her apology recorded in Scripture.

Genesis 30:3 *And she said, "See, my female servant Bilhah; go in to her, and let her bear for me, and let me be built up from her as well."*

As we will see, both sisters will offer up their maids in order for Jacob to father more children. Neither one seems to grasp that, when Jacob fathers a child by Bilhah, this does not change things with Rachel (regardless of what the culture of that day held).

Genesis 30:4 So she gave him Bilhah her female servant as wife, and Ya'aqob [= Jacob] went in to her.

Jacob gives in and has intimate relations with Bilhah, Rachel's personal maid.

Genesis 30:5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Ya'aqob [= Jacob] a son.

Bilhah provides Jacob with a son.

Genesis 30:6 And Raḥēl [= Rachel] said, "Elohim has rightly ruled my case, and has also heard my voice and given me a son." So she called his name Dan.

Rachel names the son, but it is not really hers. She is the son of Bilhah.

Genesis 30:7 And Raḥēl's female servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Ya'aqob [= Jacob] a second son.

Rachel has her maid and Jacob do this again.

Genesis 30:8 And Raḥēl said, "With great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have overcome." So she called his name Naphtali.

Bilhah provides Jacob with another son.

Despite Rachel's words, she did not wrestle with her sister and she did not overcome a thing.

Genesis 30:9 And Lě'ah saw that she had ceased bearing, and she took Zilpah her female servant and gave her to Ya'aqob as wife.

Leah observes all of this, and since she has stopped having children, she presses her own personal servant, Zilpah, to take up the slack.

Genesis 30:10 And Lě'ah's female servant Zilpah bore Ya'aqob a son.

Zilpah bears Jacob a son.

Genesis 30:11 And Lě'ah said, "Fortune comes!" So she called his name Gad^a.

^aHebrew Gad, meaning fortune.

Zilpah's son is named *Gad*.

Genesis 30:12 And Lě'ah's female servant Zilpah bore Ya'aqob a second son.

Leah has her servant do this again.

Genesis 30:13 And Lě'ah said, "I am happy, for the daughters shall call me happy." So she called his name Ashēr.^a

^aHeb. Ashēr, meaning happy.

Zilpah bears another son for Jacob, and he is named happy. Is Leah really happy over this?

Genesis 30:14 And Re'ubēn went in the days of wheat harvest and found love-apples in the field, and brought them to his mother Lě'ah. And Raḥēl said to Lě'ah, "Please give me some of your son's love-apples."

Reuben, Jacob's oldest son by Leah, comes across what are known to that culture as love-apples. Whether they act as an aphrodisiac or are supposed to improve the chances of birth, we don't know. Possibly the current culture believed both things would take place.

On the one hand, certainly it is possible to have none of these effects, or one or both of them. However, the key is God, not love apples.

Genesis 30:15 But she said to her, "Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's love-apples too?" And Raḥēl said, "Therefore let him lie with you tonight for your son's love-apples."

Rachel and Leah work out a deal, where Leah would lay with Jacob on one night, and Rachel the next. Love apples apparently would be a part of Rachel's night with Jacob. It is unclear whether they played a part in Leah's night with him.

Genesis 30:16 And when Ya'aqob came out of the field in the evening, Lě'ah went out to meet him and said, "Do come in to me, for indeed, I have hired you with my son's love-apples." And he lay with her that night.

It is unclear whether *love apples* were given to Jacob (or to Leah). It does not actually matter.

Genesis 30:17 And Elohim listened to Lě'ah, and she conceived and bore Ya'aqob a fifth son.

Leah bears Jacob a 5th son by her. Leah's desire was to have another son; and God heard that prayer and answered it.

Genesis 30:18 And Lě'ah said, "Elohim has given me my hire, because I have given my female servant to my husband." So she called his name Yissaskar [or, *Issachar*].

Leah names this son *Issachar*. Even though she relates it to the agreement with her sister about the love apples, it was God who provided the life.

Genesis 30:19 And Lě'ah conceived again and bore Ya'aqob a sixth son.

Leah has another son by Jacob—again, totally unrelated to the so-called *love apples*.

Genesis 30:20 And Lě'ah said, "Elohim has presented me with a good present. Now my husband is going to dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name Zebulun.

Leah's sixth son is named Zebulun.

Leah speaks of Jacob dwelling with her. Apparently, Jacob was gone a lot with the flocks of Laban. When he came back into their camp, he likely stayed with Rachel. The three of them (actually, five) did not live together in one happy home.

Genesis 30:21 And afterward she bore a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

Leah gives birth to a daughter, and she is named Dinah.

Genesis 30:22 And Elohim remembered Raḥēl, and Elohim listened to her and opened her womb.

God knows that Rachel wants children, and He hears her prayers and opens her womb. These may have been old prayers, as Rachel has apparently put her faith in the love apples.

Love apples were not the key; God's response to her fervent prayer was. Now, I am still making mention of the love apples, but the Scriptures stopped doing that a few verses back.

Genesis 30:23 *And she conceived, and bore a son, and said, "Elohim has taken away my reproach."*

Because giving birth would be hard on Rachel, God kept her barren for a long period of time, allowing Jacob to more fully enjoy his wife (at least, when she was not nagging).

Genesis 30:24 *So she called his name Yosēph [= Joseph], and said, "הוהי [= YHWH, Y^ehowah] has added to me another son."*

Even though Rachel says another son, this is her first son. She mistakenly still counts Bilhah's sons as hers.

Jacob's Great Prosperity with Wealth

Genesis 30:25 *And it came to be, when Raḥēl had borne Yosēph [= Joseph], that Ya'aqob said to Laban, "Send me on my way, to go to my own place and to my land."*

At this point, with his 11th son having been born, Jacob asks Laban to send him on his way. His own place and his own land is in Canaan. God gave him this land and that is where Jacob belongs.

Genesis 30:26 *"Give my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go, for you yourself know my service which I have done for you."*

Jacob has worked many years for Laban, and now he is ready to return to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 30:27 *And Laban said to him, "If I have found favour in your eyes, please stay, for I have diligently watched that הוהי has blessed me for your sake."*

Laban recognizes that he is blessed through Jacob, who is blessed by God. This is known as blessing by association. Laban is a believer; but he has apparently not grown much spiritually. However, Laban fully understands that Jacob played a big part in his own personal wealth. So, Laban is not an idiot by any means.

Genesis 30:28 *And he said, "Name me your wages, and I give it."*

Laban asks Jacob to name his price in order to stay.

Genesis 30:29 *So he said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me."*

Jacob recounts how he has faithfully served Laban, and that his livestock has prospered under him.

Genesis 30:30 *"For the little you had before I came has increased greatly, and הוהי has blessed you since my coming. But now, when am I to provide for my own house too?"*

"You had little before; and now you have a lot," Jacob points out. "However, it is time for me to increase my wealth for my own family."

Genesis 30:31 *And he said, "What do I give you?" And Ya'aqob said, "Give me naught! If you do this for me, I shall again feed and guard your flocks:"*

Jacob then proposes an novel approach.

Genesis 30:32 “Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the black ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats. And these shall be my wages.

Jacob proposes: “I will remove all of the speckled and spotted sheep, and those which are all black. The same for the goats. Those will be mine in payment.”

Later, I will present a slightly different view of this.

Genesis 30:33 “And my righteousness shall answer for me in time to come, when you come concerning my wages: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and black among the lambs, it is stolen if it is with me.”

Jacob says, “This is how you will be able to tell your sheep and goats from mine.”

Genesis 30:34 And Laban said, “See, let it be according to your word!”

Laban agreed.

Genesis 30:35 And on that day he set aside the male goats that were speckled and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had some white in it, and all the black ones among the lambs, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

Jacob put this group of sheep and goats with his sons, who were just beginning to mind the livestock.

Genesis 30:36 And he put three days’ journey between himself and Ya’aqob, and Ya’aqob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks.

What seems to be the case—but these first verses do not support this interpretation—is the oddly colored sheep and goats were completely removed from Jacob’s responsibility. Then, any such oddly colored sheep or goat which occurred with what remained would be his to keep.

Given what follows, Jacob clearly wants to produce livestock which are oddly colored (with stripes, spots or with being all black).

Even today, these are known as *Jacob’s Sheep*.

Jacob’s Sheep (a photograph); from [Meridians Jacob](#); accessed July 5, 2024.

Genesis 30:37 And Ya’aqob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which was in the rods.

Now Jacob comes up with a scheme which we understand today does not work and has no effect upon the resulting offspring. He took several branches and made them to look like the spotted or striped sheep or goats that he wanted.



Genesis 30:38 And he set the rods which he had peeled before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, and they conceived when they came to drink.

Jacob took these branches (or rods) and put them in front of the sheep or goats at a time when they would mate. The idea was, they would be inspired to throw off offspring with the coloration seen in the branches or rods. Obviously, we know that such an approach does not work.

Genesis 30:39 **So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted.**

Critics complain about this section of Jacob's story and say, "This is nonsense; it would not work." And they are absolutely correct—they are not correct to be critical of the text but of Jacob's method. Now, God did not tell Jacob, "Here is what you do with these branches." Jacob came up with this idea completely on his own (or it may have been a part of the local lore).

Nevertheless, despite his nutty idea (which may have seemed brilliant in that era), there were many offspring with the spots and stripes. These were to belong to Jacob. God blesses Jacob, despite him following some false folklore.

Genesis 30:40 **And Ya'aqob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the black in the flock of Laban, but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.**

This group of sheep and goats were put aside for Jacob.

Genesis 30:41 **And it came to be, whenever the strong ones of the flock conceived, that Ya'aqob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the gutters, so they would conceive among the rods.**

Jacob, having been a shepherd for at least fourteen years, recognized which sheep were strong and which were weak. Strong sheep had a better gene pool and were more likely to produce a varied number of odd colored sheep and goats. The weak ones had a more limited gene pool and, therefore, were less likely to produce that kind of offspring that Jacob wanted.

Genesis 30:42 **But when the flocks were weak, he did not put them in, so the weak ones were Laban's and the strong ones Ya'aqob's.**

The strong ones were used to produce Jacob's oddly colored offspring; the weak ones produced the flocks which would stay with Laban.

This is how I see this as taking place. The narrative here does not appear to agree with my approach exactly. Either I am wrong or the translation is off (or both).

Genesis 30:43 **Thus the man increased very much, and had many flocks, and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.**

Over the years, Jacob increased his wealth dramatically, but not because he had weird ideas about breeding. God blessed Jacob and all those associated with him.

When Jacob comes back to the land of promise, he will have a very large amount of wealth.

The idea here is, there are things which we find in this chapter which are extremely important.

Why Genesis 30 is in the Word of God

1. We continue to monitor the schemes of Jacob. We find out that this sort of scheming and manipulation is a family trait, given the actions of Laban and Rachel.
2. Even though God has not, at this time, forbidden polygamy (of any sort), we see that such a marriage is rife with problems. This is probably the most close up view of a polygamous marriage in the entire Bible.

Why Genesis 30 is in the Word of God

3. We have the births of 7 more sons and one daughter—all of these sons will become the patriarchs of the Hebrew family.
4. In later chapters, it is quite apparent that Joseph is very different from his older brothers. We see over and over again how his older brothers failed in the many things that they did. This chapter identifies the distinguishing factor in Joseph's life which probably indicates why he is spiritually advanced, while his brothers are spiritual losers throughout most of their lives.
5. We come across a variety of ancient world traditions: surrogacy in marriage, polygamy, mandrakes (and other such stimulants), ancient labor contracts, and ancient concepts of breeding. It also becomes clear that the woman is not necessarily the subservient little woman in the marriage.
6. Regarding life, it is clear that God is sovereign. Despite all of the various schemes found in this chapter, God gave life as He will throughout.
7. Although Jacob is generally portrayed fairly negatively in Scripture, we find in this chapter that he does have the good points. He is honest in business and a hard worker.
8. We studied how two manipulators hammer out a deal, and the kinds of things that they do behind the scenes.

Chapter Outline

Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines

These are things which we learn while studying this particular chapter.

What We Learn from Genesis 30

1. One of the most interesting discoveries of this chapter is how unified and thematic it is. It is actually correct for the previous chapter to end with Leah's 4th child being born and to then pick up in the new chapter with Rachel's complaint to Jacob. This chapter division is actually brilliant and inspired (and I have not seen this properly explained anywhere else).
2. Despite polygamy not being God's first choice for a relationship between men and women, we learn not to blame everything bad in Jacob's life on his marriage; and we find out it is useless to suggest that Jacob marry only Leah; and that after being tricked as he did, to not marry Rachel.
3. As an application of this point (a fairly narrow and rare application) is, when evangelizing a culture where there is polygamy, it is not up to you to get them to convert to single-wife marriages. That would be a mistake, and out of the purview of the missionary.
4. We got a unique approach to Rachel and Jacob's initial conversation. It seems at first the Rachel is totally irrational, but that might not be the proper way to understand her.
5. We have a chance to explore the woman's role in marriage in the ancient world; and the woman's place in the ancient world. Many current faux-historians believe that marriage in the Bible was akin to slavery; but this is not the case.
6. We had a chance to examine gay marriage and same-sex relationships in this chapter.
7. We had a chance to discuss and examine polygamy in detail for the time of Jacob. Some commentators have *very* strong opinions on this and they strongly condemn Jacob for marrying Rachel after he had been tricked into marrying Leah. I believe that we reach a balanced conclusion on this matter, and, at the same time, answer the question, *why didn't every man in the ancient world marry two or more wives?*
8. It will become clear in this chapter that a polygamous marriage is certainly not ideal.
9. We came to the realization that we have the interaction of two females in this narrative, something which occurs on many occasions in the Bible, but almost never in any other ancient literature.
10. We studied men and women in the Bible and women's liberation.
11. We determined that Jacob did not have but one daughter; and, at the time of moving to Egypt, one granddaughter.
12. I found out that I can pass through a passage 30 times or more, and on the 31st pass-through, still suddenly see something there which I had not seen before.

What We Learn from Genesis 30

13. We came across a strong example of blessing by association.
14. When studying this chapter, I came across a slide show that was absolutely horrible which did not seem to understand a thing being taught. I took the opportunity to share one slide and then to explain just how wrong they had it.
15. We even had a reason to briefly study syncretism and look at a couple of modern-day examples of it.
16. I fully explained Jacob's scheme, which is often misunderstood; and often used by skeptics of the Bible to denigrate it.
17. Jacob describes a dream in Genesis 31, and it is easy to mix that dream up with this chapter. It is explained with some reasonable thoroughness.
18. There is one natural explanation to the results that Jacob enjoyed.

Rarely do I have this many points for a single chapter.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

I must admit that, this chapter gave me problems in the two previous times that I covered it. What is the significance of the mandrakes and of Jacob's goofy breeding program? They seem both bizarre and unrelated. Why are they even needed in this narrative? Here is what I see as the message of God the Holy Spirit: there are human methods by which we obtain our goals; and there are divine methods which God uses. Leah wanted more children and Rachel wanted a child. The human approach was the use of the mandrakes, a sexual stimulant perhaps and possibly an aid to pregnancy. But it did not work. Leah, who did not use the mandrakes, got pregnant. Rachel, who used them did not get pregnant. When Laban proposed that Jacob keep all the oddly marked sheep and goats, Jacob agreed; and Laban took all of the goats and sheep with the odd markings away so that they could not be used in the breeding process (Laban understood a thing or two about breeding). Jacob tries another idea of his own—fully and completely human viewpoint—and that idea does not work for him, but God blesses Jacob nevertheless. In fact, what Jacob does, inadvertently works to breed the oddly colored sheep and goats; but not using the specific means that Jacob was counting on.

God has a plan; and God can bring the various components of His plan together, whether His people are working together with Him or not. Not unsurprisingly, this is a Biblical principle. [Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.](#) (Proverbs 19:21; ESV) ["For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"](#) (Isaiah 14:27; NASB)

Many chapters of the Bible look forward to Jesus Christ in some way or another. A person or situation might foreshadow the Lord or His work on the cross (or His reign over Israel in the Millennium). The chapter may contain a prophecy about the Lord or it may, in some way, lead us toward the Lord (for instance, by means of genealogy).

Jesus Christ in Genesis 30

Jesus Christ did not appear in this chapter either as the Angel of the Lord or in shadow form; however, He is closely involved with Jacob and Jacob's relationship with Laban. Furthermore, Jesus is the Giver of All Life; and understanding Him in that way explains most of this chapter.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Some commentators wrap this chapter up:

Summary Statements (Various Commentators)

Arno Gaebelein: *Little comment is needed on this. The avarice and deceit of Laban is matched by the dexterity and cunning of Jacob. Joseph's birth marks an important event. It is then that Jacob said unto Laban, "Send me away that I may go unto mine own place and to my country." All this is likewise typical. Rachel the first loved represents Israel; Leah, the Gentiles. The names Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Juda (see translations) tell out the story of His grace towards the Gentiles. Rachel, the barren, was remembered and gave birth to Joseph (adding), the one who was made great among the Gentiles and the deliverer of his brethren, and therefore the type of Christ. How interesting that Jacob thought at once of returning when Joseph had been born. But he had to wait six years more.*⁵⁴⁵

For me, I am having trouble wrapping my head around the idea that Rachel represents the Jewish people and that Leah represents the Gentiles, whom God loves as well. Generally speaking, typology is the result of characters in the Bible acting in obedience to God—they are in fellowship and doing God's will. Like Abraham offering up his son Isaac—this is a picture of God the Father offering up His Son for our sins. Abraham is acting in strict obedience to God, despite the fact that this is a very unusual demand made by God. It was only made one time to one person. The parallels here are many; but typology regarding Rachel and Leah as Jacob's wives—not so much.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

⁵⁴⁵ Arno Clement Gaebelein, *The Annotated Bible*; 1919; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:1–43.

A Visual Representation of Genesis 30 (a graphic); from [Pinimg](#); accessed September 16, 2017.

GENESIS

CHAPTER 30

Children of Jacob

DESIGNED BY PETER HUI

GIVE ME CHILDREN OR ELSE I DIE!

Sleep with my maid...

BILHAH
RACHEL'S MAID

DAN **NAPHTALI**

God has judged my case, heard my voice and given me a son.

I have had a great struggle with my sister and I have won.

Leah saw that she had stopped bearing...

ZILPAH
LEAH'S MAID

GAD **ASHER**

What good fortune! OR A troop comes!

How happy I am! The women will call me happy.

One day, Reuben found some mandrakes

Please give me some of your son's mandrakes

Wasn't it enough that you took away... **MY HUSBAND** ...

Will you also take my son's... **MANDRAKES** ...

Very well, he can sleep with you for your son's mandrakes.

— WHEN JACOB CAME BACK —

Jacob's Wages

YOU MUST SLEEP WITH ME FOR I HAVE HIRED YOU WITH MY SON'S MANDRAKES

LEAH

ISSACHAR **ZEBULUN**

God has rewarded me for giving my maid to my husband

God has presented me with a precious gift. Now my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him 6 sons.

DINAH

RACHEL
GOD

- REMEMBERED
- LISTENED
- OPENED HER WOMB

JOSEPH

God has taken away my reproach. The LORD shall add to me another son

SEND ME BACK TO MY LAND

GIVE ME MY WIVES & KIDS

YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WORK I HAVE DONE FOR YOU

PLEASE STAY

I LEARNED BY **DIVINATION** THAT THE LORD BLESSED ME BECAUSE OF YOU

NAME YOUR WAGES **I'LL PAY IT**

WHEN SHALL I PROVIDE FOR MY HOUSEHOLD?

Jacob's Flock Increases

BEFORE I CAME

AFTER I CAME

WHAT SHALL I GIVE YOU?

NOTHING

SPOTTED, SPECKLED, BROWN **MY WAGES**

THOSE THAT ARE NOT

CONSIDERED AS **STOLEN** IF THEY ARE WITH ME

OKAY!

So Jacob removed the...

SPOTTED MALE GOATS **SPOTTED FEMALE GOATS** **BROWN LAMBS**

JACOB'S SONS

3 DAY'S JOURNEY BETWEEN

LABAN'S FLOCKS **JACOB'S FLOCKS**

POPLAR → **PEELED**

ALMOND → **WHITE**

CHESTNUT → **STRIPS**

YOUNG OF THE FLOCK SET APART BY THEMSELVES

THE REST FACE THE OTHER FLOCK

When they were in heat and mated in front of the branches **THEY PRODUCED SPOTTED YOUNG**

STRONGER FEMALES IN HEAT → **JACOB'S**

WEAK FEMALES IN HEAT → **LABAN'S**

BECAME EXTREMELY PROSPEROUS

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary present a very weird, mostly unsubstantiated view of Jacob

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on Jacob's Feelings & Thoughts

- I. It was entered upon in opposition to his better feelings and convictions. There were ordinary considerations of self interest which would urge Jacob to leave the service of Laban. He felt now that the time had come when he must make an adequate provision for his own house. (Gen_30:30.) And with Laban's selfishness there was very little chance of accomplishing this. But in consenting to stay, he had to do violence to better feelings than this of self interest.
1. Natural affection. He longs to see his parents again and to visit the land of his nativity. He had been detained in a strange country for a much longer time than he had expected. The old feelings for home and kindred now grow strong within him. He had to overcome them in consenting—for the present—to stay.
 2. Religious faith. Jacob has now reached the age of fourscore years and ten, and as the birthright son he longed to visit the land which God had promised to him and to his seed. He remembered that the land of his sojourning was not the land of his inheritance. He now calls to mind the hereditary hope of his family, the parting benediction of Isaac, the vision at Bethel. He is also full of joy at the birth of Joseph, whom he considered as the Messianic son, and he naturally desires to bring him into the promised land. And if he overcomes these feelings for a time, it was only at the urgent solicitations of Laban, whom he did not like to make his enemy by refusing him. He also wanted to gain some wealth, so that he might not return to his friends in Canaan empty-handed. But his faith grasped the old promise. (Hebrews 11:9; Hebrews 13:14.)
- II. It was marked by worldly prudence.
1. That prudence which calculates. Jacob hints at the value of his long services, and Laban is ready to acknowledge how much they had contributed to his own prosperity. (Genesis 30:26–27.) Jacob agrees to remain for a sufficient consideration. (Genesis 30:28–33.) Here was the calculating prudence of a man who was able to survey the whole situation at a glance.
 2. The prudence which takes advantage of superior knowledge. Throughout the whole of these long years of Jacob's service, Laban had been working entirely for his own advantage. He now flatters Jacob, while he is trying all the time to overreach him. When he asks what wages Jacob would require, he makes sure to himself all the time that Jacob's modesty would dispose him to name a small sum. Laban now thought that he had caught him, but he had to deal with a man of cunning and of deep resources. Jacob took advantage of the superior knowledge, which he had gained from the study and observation of nature, in order to outdo his uncle. (Genesis 30:37–43). Here were cunning and sagacity matched against avarice. This kind of cunning, which makes use of superior knowledge, is often the resource of the weak against the strong. Men who are grasping and treacherous without art are often overmatched by men of unsuspected device and skill. There is much both to praise and to blame in Jacob's conduct.
 - (1.) He had justice on his side. His claims were righteous. (Genesis 30:29–30.) He was now only taking advantage of his superior knowledge of nature as an offset to the disadvantage under which he started.
 - (2) However, he is to be blamed for his want of candour. He lacked that openness and simplicity of character which we expect to see in the righteous man. His plan was successful, but the craft of it is not to be wholly commended. However, if we regard the historical order of development in Revelation, we must not severely consider the conduct of Jacob by the Christian standard.

Almost everything listed above seems to be pulled out of thin air or out from a very fertile imagination. Jacob never talks about seeing his parents again; and, insofar as we know, he may not have ever seen his mother or father again. He will be there for Isaac's funeral—we know that much, but little else. We have a lot of narrative on Jacob after he returns to the land—including a meet-up with Esau—but nothing about his parents.

Although I believe that Jacob knew the Scriptures and even repeated them from time to time, I do not think that

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary on Jacob's Feelings & Thoughts

he believed them. There are very explicit promises about the land, and even though Jacob expressed in this chapter a desire to return to the land, Laban says, "Well, then I will pay you this much;" and Jacob says, "Alright." So, whatever great religious reason Jacob has to go home, Laban's salary offer is better.

This general topic has been discussed previously—some people either grind Jacob into the dust for his many shortcomings or the nearly idolize him for his great faith.

The Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary; edited by Joseph S. Exell, 1892; from e-sword, Genesis 30:25–43 (Jacob's New Contract of Service).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob, even though his methods were not efficacious, was attempting to out-scheme is Uncle Laban.

Clarke on the Scheming Character of Jacob

Jacob certainly manifested much address in the whole of his conduct with Laban; but though nothing can excuse overreaching or insincerity, yet no doubt Jacob supposed himself justified in taking these advantages of a man who had greatly injured and defrauded him. Had Jacob got Rachel at first, for whom he had honestly and faithfully served seven years, there is no evidence whatever that he would have taken a second wife. Laban, by having imposed his eldest daughter upon him, and by obliging him to serve seven years for her who never was an object of his affection, acted a part wholly foreign to every dictate of justice and honesty; (for though it was a custom in that country not to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder, yet, as he did not mention this to Jacob, it cannot plead in his excuse); therefore, speaking after the manner of men, he had reason to expect that Jacob should repay him in his own coin

The talent possessed by Jacob was a most dangerous one; he was what may be truly called a scheming man; his wits were still at work, and as he devised so he executed, being as fruitful in expedients as he was in plans. This was the principal and the most prominent characteristic of his life; and whatever was excessive here was owing to his mother's tuition; she was evidently a woman who paid little respect to what is called moral principle, and sanctified all kinds of means by the goodness of the end at which she aimed; which in social, civil, and religious life, is the most dangerous principle on which a person can possibly act. In this art she appears to have instructed her son; and, unfortunately for himself, he was in some instances but too apt a proficient. Early habits are not easily rooted out, especially those of a bad kind. Next to the influence and grace of the Spirit of God is a good and religious education. Parents should teach their children to despise and abhor low cunning, to fear a lie, and tremble at an oath; and in order to be successful, they should illustrate their precepts by their own regular and conscientious example. How far God approved of the whole of Jacob's conduct I shall not inquire; it is certain that he attributes his success to Divine interposition, and God himself censures Laban's conduct towards him; see Genesis 31:7–12. But still he appears to have proceeded farther than this interposition authorized him to go, especially in the means he used to improve his own breed, which necessarily led to the deterioration of Laban's cattle; for, after the transactions referred to above, these cattle could be of but little worth. The whole account, with all its lights and shades, I consider as another proof of the impartiality of the Divine historian, and a strong evidence of the authenticity of the Pentateuch. Neither the spirit of deceit, nor the partiality of friendship, could ever pen such an account.

Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:43.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Wenstrom on Happiness in the Devil's World

(1) The propaganda of Satan's cosmic system has promoted the lie that wealth, good environment, sex, marriage, having children, approbation from men will produce true enduring happiness, contentment and fulfillment in life.

Satan's propaganda machine promotes the lie that good circumstances and people are the basis for happiness, but God's Word states that true happiness is based upon a relationship and fellowship with God for the purpose of doing the Father's will.

True enduring happiness and contentment and fulfillment in life is produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit when we obey the Father's will and appropriate by faith the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God that we have been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (See Romans 6; Ephesians 2:1-10).

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control; against such things there is no law."

Money, good environment, sex, marriage, having children, approbation from men can never produce true enduring happiness, contentment and fulfillment in life because all of these things are temporal and are passing away but he who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2:15-17

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

(2) Sex, love, marriage, and family can never be fully satisfying unless enjoyed within the confines of the will of God and the Word of God.

Love, sex, marriage, and family are all gifts from a good and loving God, but their enjoyment cannot be complete apart from fellowship with Him.

Now, when I speak of love here I'm referring to a personal love and affection between a man and a woman, which the Greek's referred to with the verb *phileo*. In fact, the Greeks and even the New Testament writers used different words to denote the concept, which is called "love" in our day and age.

The Greek's used four different verbs to denote the concept of "love": (1) *Erao* (*e*)*rauw* (verb), "to love passionately, to desire, to yearn" (2) *Stergo* (*stergwv*) (verb), "to affectionately love parents or children" (3) *Phileo* (*filevw*) (verb), "to personally love friends or family members" (4) *Agapao* (*a*)*gapavw* (verb), "to be satisfied with, to honor, to receive, to greet, to prefer."

The verb *erao* (*e*)*rauw* and the noun *eros* denote a "possessive" love between a man and a woman, which involves longing, craving, and sexual desire.

Stergo means, "to feel affection" and is used especially of the mutual love of parents and children and can also be used of the love of a people for their ruler, the love of tutelary god for the people and even of dogs for their master.

The verb *phileo* denotes the affection and attraction of people towards one another who are close together both inside and outside the family and it includes concern, care and hospitality, also love for things in the sense of being fond of.

There are many usages of *phileo* in the Greek New Testament.

Matthew 10:37, "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

1 Corinthians 16:22, "If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha."

The verb *agapao* is often used in the classical Greek to denote friendship between equals, or sometimes sympathy. Sometimes *agapao* took on the meaning of "to prefer, to set one good or aim above another, to prioritize, to esteem one person more highly than another."

The noun *eros* was a general love of the world seeking to satisfy itself wherever it can thus making no distinctions, whereas *agape* made distinctions, choosing and keeping its object. *Eros* is determined by a more or less indefinite impulsion towards its object, whereas *agape* is a free and decisive act determined by its subject. *Eros* was a self-serving love, whereas *agape* was a giving love for the benefit of another.

In the Greek New Testament the noun *agape* was used of a love that originates in the essence of God and is thus divine in character.

1 John 4:7 8, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

The verb *phileo* must have an attractive object to love whereas *agapao* does not need an attractive object to love since it is based upon the integrity of the subject rather than the attractiveness of the object.

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

The world was obnoxious and unattractive to God because of sin and rebellion against Him, but God was able to love the world from His own integrity.

The verb *phileo* denoted a personal selfish love and affection for someone, whereas the verb *agapao* on the other hand denoted a selfless love that was loyal to the point of self-sacrifice for another.

Jacob was an individual who not only had a *phileo* love for Rachel but an *eros* love as well, which is normal between married people. However, Jacob chose Rachel as his wife strictly based upon an *eros* love and in fact, his marriage was driven by this and for marriage to endure and the marriage partners to grow in their relationship with each other there must be more than *eros* love.

In Christian marriage, there must not only be a *phileo* love and of course an *eros* love but there also must be an *agape* love as the foundation of the marriage for it to flourish because *agape* love is directly related to the Christian's love for God and for the Christian loving others as God loves them.

(3) While *phileo* love without sex may be frustrating, sex without *phileo* love is folly.

This is a lesson which we learn from Jacob. Surely those years with Rachel where sex was not possible or permissible were frustrating (cf. Genesis 29:21), but sex without *phileo* love is just as bad. Jacob engaged in sex with his wife Leah, but there was no fulfillment in it but in fact, it degenerated to mere prostitution where Leah had to purchase his presence.

I feel that I must digress for a moment here on the relationship between sex and love, for this is not at all understood, even by Bible-believing Christians. It is said by some that "whoever" created men and women and sex must have been a very poor engineer but we must remember men respond very quickly to physical stimuli and women do not.

Men reach the peak of their sexual desire earlier in life but women, later. Secular thinking would suppose that

this is poor design and that man and woman should precisely correspond in these and other areas but I disagree. These differences are by design since God made man and woman distinctly different so that the ultimate in physical pleasure can only be obtained by a deliberate and conscious love which makes sacrifices of itself for the pleasure of the other. Without sacrifice, love-making deteriorates into mere self-seeking gratification at the expense of the other partner; therefore, love and sex must go together.

(4) Neither sex nor children can manufacture phileo love.

Leah would be quick to tell us that she learned no amount of sex could ever earn the love of her husband and even after six boys she was still not loved exclusively by Jacob.

Phileo love cannot be manufactured through sex since sex can only produce children, but it will never produce phileo love.

Many a couple with very serious marital problems have decided to have children in order to hold their marriage together, which does not work either since producing children, does not produce love.

(5) The one who places sex on an extremely high level of priority becomes its slave.

Jacob's love for Rachel was largely based upon an eros love, i.e. her physical attractiveness. Our society informs men and boys that their masculinity is largely indicated by the number of conquests they can make among women and so they think that the more women they bed, the more of a man they are. Jacob did rather well by these standards since he circulated among his four wives frequently enough to produce a growing family, but look at what happened to him in the process. Jacob was not the master of his harem, but he was mastered by his harem since he was pushed from bed to bed by his wives and he was purchased for the night. The passivity of Jacob in these verses is an indictment of his lack of leadership since he was a slave of sex and marriage, not its sovereign.

(6) Marriage cannot run for long on the fuel of eros love, i.e. physical attraction.

The love of Jacob for Rachel was primarily based on physical attraction. In the humdrum and pressures of married life, physical attraction is not sufficient to carry the relationship along for long. Jacob does not seem to have worked at deepening and broadening his love but instead it appears that his love was largely in the sphere of physical attraction. No wonder Rachel should look with jealous eyes at Leah and no wonder she seemed so threatened and desperate since she felt unloved, just as Leah did. Love needs to be meticulously maintained and vigorously strengthened.

(7) Physical attraction must never be the foundation of Christian marriage since it will fade with age.

(8) Personal love and affection must never be the foundation of Christian marriage since it can vacillate when the object of your personal love and affection becomes obnoxious to you or fails you in some way.

(9) The foundation of all Christian marriages must be the common eternal relationship with the Trinity through faith alone in Christ alone that exists between the two marriage partners and the love of God.

(10) Maturity, and sustaining and prospering as an individual and as a team in Christian marriage is based upon both partners experiencing fellowship with God on a habitual basis, which is accomplished by obeying the Spirit who speaks through the teaching of the Word of God.

In Genesis 30:25-34, we have the record of Jacob's proposal to Laban regarding flocks, which Laban agrees to. Genesis 30:35-36 records Laban's mistrust of Jacob. As we noted in Genesis 28:10-15, the Lord promised Jacob His presence and protection while he was in Paddan Aram.

In Genesis 29:31-30:24, we saw that the Lord has prospered Jacob in the sense that He has given him eleven

sons and one daughter while in Paddan Aram. Therefore, in this passage, we see the Lord building Jacob's house but in Genesis 30:25-43, we see the Lord building Jacob's property.

Proverbs 27:23-27 teaches that one should prudently build up his property before his family, but Laban has prevented Jacob his own nephew from acting prudently.

Proverbs 27:23 27

"Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds; For riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations."

"When the grass disappears, the new growth is seen, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, the lambs will be for your clothing, and the goats will bring the price of a field, and there will be goats' milk enough for your food, for the food of your household, and sustenance for your maidens."

From https://www.gracenotes.info/bible_studies/genesis.pdf (p. 474–477); accessed September 9, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Since this is a very popular passage to criticize, there is a lot of discussion of it. I do not find any reason to change my approach to this passage, despite these other discussions.

Links to Discussions of Jacob and the Goats

"The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages"

by William J, Schepp

Some scientific principles are discussed. The branches in the water may have had an aphrodisiacal quality to them. The passage in question is restrictive, so that Jacob could breed black and white animals.

JACOB'S 'SCHEME' TO MULTIPLY SPOTTED SHEEP - DOES IT CONTRADICT TRUE SCIENCE?

J. D. Pearson's [A Mendelian Interpretation of Jacob's Sheep](#)

God's intervention is not required for the results that Jacob enjoyed. This material, in places, is fairly technical.

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's [commentary on Genesis 30:25-31:16](#)

Deffinbaugh generally writes pretty down-to-earth commentary on Scripture.

These links are provided in case you want more information.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Carroll summarizes portions of the Genesis narrative very much like Edersheim does.

B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 30

Now we come to the evils of polygamy forced upon Jacob. He never wanted but one woman, but this trickery of his uncle gave him two, and the jealousy of these two wives fastened upon him two more; so that there were two wives and two concubines. For quite a while the strife between the two wives goes on. What kind of a home do you suppose that was? Among the Mormons they do sometimes give a separate house to each wife, but others put a dozen in the same house. Jealousy is certain to develop and cause conflict among the children. A struggle between these two wives is manifested in the names given to the children. Leah, in these seven years, bore Jacob seven children, six sons and one daughter. Rachel bore one son, Joseph, and afterward another. The two maidservants bore two each. That makes twelve sons. I will call the names out in the order in which they were born. Reuben, Leah's firstborn, means "See, a son." It expresses her pride, that Jacob's firstborn was a son, and not a daughter. Simeon, her second, means "a hearing": that she asked God, as the

B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 30

love of her husband had not come when Reuben was born as she supposed, to send her another child, but Jacob still did not love her. Levi, her third, means "a Joiner"; "Now I will be joined to my husband." But he did not join them. Judah, her fourth, means "praise"; "Praise Jehovah for the blessing that has come upon me, now that I have borne four sons to my husband." When Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid, bore a son, Rachel named him Dan, meaning "a judge"; "God has judged my side of the case." When Naphtali, the second son, was born to her handmaid, Rachel names him "wrestling." She had wrestled in prayer to God for still additional hold on the husband. Then Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, bore a son and he is named Gad. The literal Hebrew means "good fortune," but when we come to interpret it in chapter 49, it means "7 troop," i.e., four sons have already been born on the Leah side and here is another. That means there is going to be a troop of them. Her next son is named Asher, which means "happy" – happy in getting the advantage of Rachel. Then Leah herself bears another son, Issachar, which means "reward." Her next son, Zebulun, means "dwelling." "I have borne six sons to my husband. Surely he will dwell with me." When her daughter was born she named her Dinah, which means "vindication": "God is vindicating my side of the marriage relation." At that time Rachel bore her first child and she named him Joseph, "May he add, as I now have a start." Later on, Rachel's last son is born, and dying she names him Benoni, "the child of my anguish." But the husband steps in and for the first time gets to name one of the children. He names him Benjamin, "the child of my right hand." These are the twelve names bestowed on the sons. When we come to the dying blessing that Jacob pronounces in chapter 49 upon all of the children, we will see some additions to the names and the characteristics there brought out. These titles come from what the mothers thought of the twelve children at the time they were born, but the names from chapter 49 come from the developments of character in the boys themselves. In Deuteronomy 33, where Moses pronounces the blessing on the twelve tribes, calling them by their names, he leaves out one of the twelve altogether, and brings in new titles not based upon what was in the mother's mind, nor upon the characteristics of the twelve sons, but upon the characteristics of the tribes descended from the sons. In Revelation 12, we will come upon another list of them, where the reference is not at all to the reasons heretofore expressed in their names but to the later tribal characteristics. As we pass along I will ask you to compare these four lists of the children of Jacob. You know we have four lists of the twelve apostles, and sometimes different names for the same person. Yet more particularly will I call your attention to the birthright man. Reuben, the firstborn, is entitled to the right of primogeniture. You will find out later how he loses it, and how the several elements of the right of primogeniture are distributed among three other sons of Jacob. At the end of the fourteen years Jacob claimed the fulfillment of his contract. Up to this time he had not made anything, except the wife that he wanted. He has a large family, no money or property, but rich in this family. A young man of the present time, encumbered with twelve children in fourteen years of married life, would think himself pretty much hampered, particularly if he had no bank account, cotton field, or big salary. Now the question comes up about a new contract. God had marvelously blessed Laban on account of Jacob. Jacob had attended to his business so well, being competent from habits of earlier life to which I called your attention in a previous chapter, that Laban did not want to lose Jacob. Jacob makes another proposition: "You shall not pay me any salary, but I propose that we leave it for divine providence to designate how much I ought to get. Most of the sheep are white, brown, or black, an unmixed colour. I propose that my part shall be the speckled, striped or ringstreaked." Laban looked over his flocks and found only a little sprinkle in all the multitudes not having a solid color. So he accepted the proposition. He was a very shrewd old man. Before the contract goes into effect he moves every one that is already ring-streaked, striped, or speckled, three days' journey from Jacob, and puts them in the hands of his sons and says to Jacob, "We will start even." Jacob said nothing, but God was with him, and we have here presented in the history how Jacob got rich, and the expedients that he resorted to in order that the flocks might bear striped, speckled, and ring-streaked. And we learn how God intervened that Jacob, who had been working fourteen years and had been cheated, might have compensation. Through Jacob's expedient, and particularly through divine providence, Jacob's flocks increased. Old Laban looked on and it puzzled him. Laban's children looked on and it puzzled them. The pure white and solid colors began to get fewer and fewer. Jacob's flock began to multiply beyond all human calculation. What follows? Laban's sons begin to talk about it: "This stranger has come up here. He did not have a thing when he came to our house. He is managing this business and getting all of our father's property. After a while there won't be anything to divide between us." Laban heard the boys talking and he agreed with them. When he would pass Jacob he would look at him sideways and would not speak to him. Jacob saw a storm was brewing. God came to him in a vision and said, "Return to thy native land. It is time to

B. H. Carroll Summarizes Genesis 30

go, twenty years have passed." Jacob did not know how his wives would stand on the matter. So he sent for them to come out to the field. He would not talk to them about it at the house. He stated the case fairly: how badly he had been treated, and wanted to know if the wives would stand by him and would go with him. They told him they would, and he might have known it. A man need never be afraid, if he is a good husband, of her not standing by him. Everybody else in the world may go back on him, but a good wife will be true. Laban was away on a three days' journey, so they decided to strike out without letting him know. And to add to it, Rachel went into Laban's house and stole his teraphim, little images of idolatry and divination. Just as Demetrius, the silversmith at Ephesus, made little models of the temple of Diana at Ephesus, so they could tie them around their necks or put them in their pockets and carry them around with them. Wherever they felt like worshiping, they could bow down before this little trinket, or as they now tie crosses around their necks, or when they get up they bow down before that cross or little image of the virgin Mary. Now, the question comes up, Why did Rachel steal the teraphim? That is what I want you to answer. I have my own opinion, but I don't want to force it on you now. One may answer that she was herself at heart an idolater, at least in part. Now, you may adopt that, if you want to, for your answer. It is not mine. They started at a good time. Laban was gone to that other flock, and they knew he would not be back for three days and that they would have three days the start. So they crossed the Euphrates and set out with many servants, cattle, sheep, goats, and quite a sprinkling of children and only four wives. It was a pretty big caravan. I don't know just which way Jacob went. He may have gone down to Damascus, and from Damascus to Gilead.

From *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by Dr. B.H. Carroll; from e-sword; Genesis 28:10-31:55. Updated.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Alfred Edersheim wrote a book called *The Bible History, Old Testament*, which is very similar to Josephus, where he simply rewrites much of what is in the Bible, and adds in notes and comments as he deems to be relevant. This volume of the book is entitled *The World Before the Flood, and The History of the Patriarchs*.

This comes from Chapter 17, entitled *Jacob's Vision at Bethel - His Arrival at the House of Laban - Jacob's double Marriage and Servitude - His Flight from Haran - Pursuit of Laban, and Reconciliation with Jacob* (Genesis 28:10-31:55)

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 30

We do not suppose that Rachel, who had no children of her own, waited all this time without seeking to remove what she enviously and jealously regarded as her sister's advantage. Indeed, the sacred text nowhere indicates that the children of Jacob were born in the exact succession of time in which their names are recorded. On the contrary, we have every reason to suppose that such was not the case. It quite agrees with the petulant, querulous language of Rachel, that she waited not so long, but that so soon as she really found herself at this disadvantage compared with her sister, she persuaded her husband to make her a mother through Bilhah, her own maid, as Sarah had done in the case of Hagar. Thus the sins of the parents too often reappear in the conduct of their successors. Instead of waiting upon God, or giving himself to prayer, Jacob complied with the desire of his Rachel, and her maid successively bore two sons, whom Rachel named "Dan," or "judging," as if God had judged her wrong, and "Naphtali," or "my wrestling," saying: "With great wrestling have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed." In both instances we mark her gratified jealousy of her sister; and that, although she owned God, it was not as Jehovah, but as Elohim, the God of nature, not the covenant-God of the promise.

Once again the evil example of a sister, and its supposed success, proved infectious. When Leah perceived that she no longer became as before, a mother, and probably without waiting till both Rachel's adopted sons had been born, she imitated the example of her sister, and gave to Jacob her own maid Zilpah as wife. Her declension in faith further appears also in the names which she chose for the sons of Zilpah. At the birth of the eldest, she exclaimed, "Good fortune cometh,"* and hence called him "Gad," or "good fortune;" the same idea being expressed in the name of the second, Asher, or "happy." Neither did Leah in all this remember God, but

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 30

only thought of the success of her own device. But the number of children now granted to the two sisters neither removed their mutual jealousies, nor restored peace to the house of Jacob. Most painful scenes occurred; and when at length Leah again gave birth to two sons, she recognized, indeed, God in their names, but now, like her sister, only Elohim, not Jehovah; while she seemed to see in the first of them a reward for giving Zilpah to her husband, whence the child's name was called Issachar ("he gives," or "he brings reward"); while she regarded her last-born son, Zebulun, or "dwelling," as a pledge that since she had borne him six sons, her husband would now dwell with her!

* This is the correct translation; or else after another reading: "With good luck!"

It has already been stated that we must not regard the order in which the birth of Jacob's children is mentioned as indicating their actual succession.* They are rather so enumerated, partly to show the varying motives of the two sisters, and partly to group together the sons of different mothers. That the scriptural narrative is not intended to represent the actual succession of the children appears also from the circumstance, that the birth of an only daughter, Dinah ("judgment") is mentioned immediately after that of Zebulun. The wording of the Hebrew text here implies that Dinah was born at a later period ("afterwards"), and, indeed, she alone is mentioned on account of her connection with Jacob's later history, though we have reason to believe that Jacob had other daughters (See Genesis 37:35, and 46:7), whose names and history are not mentioned.

* In Jacob's last blessing (Genesis 49) we find quite a different succession of his sons; this time also with a view to the purposes of the narrative, rather than to chronological order.

And now at last better thoughts seem to have come to Rachel. When we read that in giving her a son of her own, "God hearkened to her," we are warranted in inferring that believing prayer had taken in her heart the former place of envy and jealousy of her sister. The son whom she now bore, in the fourteenth year of Jacob's servitude to Laban, was called Joseph, a name which has a double meaning: "the remover," because, as she said, "God hath taken away my reproach," and "adding," since she regarded her child as a pledge that God - this time "Jehovah" - "shall add to me another son." The object of Jacob's prolonged stay with his father-in-law was now accomplished. Fourteen years' servitude to Laban left him as poor as when first he had come to him. The wants of his increasing family, and the better understanding now established in his family, must have pointed out to him the desirableness of returning to his own country. But when he intimated this wish to his father-in-law, Laban was unwilling to part with one by whom he had so largely profited. With a characteristic confusion of heathen ideas with a dim knowledge of the being of Jehovah, Laban said to Jacob (we here translate literally): "If I have found grace in thy sight (i.e. tarry), for I have divined* (ascertained by magic), and Jehovah hath blessed me for thy sake." The same attempt to place Jehovah as the God of Abraham by the side of the god of Nahor - not denying, indeed, the existence of Jehovah, but that He was the only true and living God - occurs again later when Laban made a covenant with Jacob. (Genesis 31:53) It also frequently recurs in the later history of Israel. Both strange nations and Israel itself, when in a state of apostasy, did not deny that Jehovah was God, but they tried to place Him on a level with other and false deities. Now, Scripture teaches us that to place any other pretended God along with the living and true One argues as great ignorance, and is as great a sin, as to deny Him entirely.

* It is a very remarkable circumstance that the Hebrew word for divining is the same as that for serpent. In heathen rites also the worship of the serpent was connected with magic; and in all this we recognize how all false religion and sorcery is truly to be traced up to the "old serpent," which is Satan.

In his own peculiar fashion Laban, with pretended candor and liberality, now invited Jacob to name his wages for the future. But this time the deceiver was to be deceived. Basing his proposal on the fact that in the East the goats are mostly black and the sheep white, Jacob made what seemed the very modest request, that all that were spotted and speckled in the flock were to be his share. Laban gladly assented, taking care to make the selection himself, and to hand over Jacob's portion to his own sons, while Jacob was to tend the flocks of Laban. Finally, he placed three days' journey betwixt the flocks of Jacob and his own. But even so, Jacob knew how, by an artifice well understood in the East, to circumvent his father-in-law, and to secure that, though ordinarily "the ringstraked, speckled, and spotted" had been an exception, now they were the most numerous

Edersheim Summarizes Genesis 30

and the strongest of the flocks. And the advantage still remained on the side of Jacob, when Laban again and again reversed the conditions of the agreement. (Genesis 31:7) This clearly proved that Jacob's artifice could not have been the sole nor the real reason of his success. In point of fact, immediately after the first agreement with Laban, the angel of God had spoken to Jacob in a dream, assuring him that, even without any such artifices, God would right him in his cause with Laban. (Genesis 31:12, 13) Once more, then, Jacob acted, as when in his father's house. He "made haste;" he would not wait for the Lord to fulfill his promise; he would use his own means - and employ his cunning and devices - to accomplish the purpose of God, instead of committing his cause unto Him. And as formerly he had had the excuse of his father's weakness and his brother's violence, so now it might seem as if he were purely on his defense, and as if his deceit were necessary for his protection - the more so as he resorted to his device only in spring, not in autumn,* so that the second produce of the year belonged chiefly to his father-in-law.

* Thus we understand Genesis 30:41, 42. The spring-produce is supposed to be stronger than that of autumn.

From http://philologos.org/__eb-bhot/vol_I/ch17.htm accessed December 1, 2016.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

No matter what Laban does and no matter what Jacob does, God is going to bless Jacob.

Why God Blessed Jacob

- ✘ Jacob was related to Abraham
- ✘ Jacob had grown somewhat
- ✘ Jacob had a son who would grow to be a spiritual giant.
- ✘ So God blessed him.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

We should not over-think Jacob's doings in this passage. Jacob is a deceptive, charlatan by heart, and this is an attempt to get the most out of Laban's proposal. However, hasn't it ever happened to you that you did something which fell outside God's plan in order to get something, and God gave it to you anyway, despite the fact that we tried for it apart from His provision? That is all that is occurring. God overrules the wicked that men do and still blesses some despite their evil intent. I am certain that there is someone who has bought a lottery ticket that God was going to bless with millions of dollars anyway, and gave the winning numbers to this person, despite the fact that he depended upon a lottery ticket rather than God for his increase.

There are people hearing or reading this right now who have bought lottery tickets with the thought, "Well here I am God, here is a perfect opportunity for You to bless me. Just bought the ticket and I am ready to spend the money." This is what Jacob is doing and God will bless him anyway (just as God has blessed him despite the efforts of Laban to take control of his wealth).

Carol Summarizes Genesis 30

The best way that I can explain what I learned today is to paraphrase this passage, and try to explain what I think was going on between Jacob and Laban.

Jacob wants to take his family and go back to Canaan. Laban wants Jacob to stay, because Laban has become wealthy from the Lord blessing him on account of Jacob, and offers to pay Jacob if he (Jacob) will

Carol Summarizes Genesis 30

continue to be Laban's shepherd.

Note: Jacob has already worked for Laban for 14 years; 7 years to pay the wedding price for Rachel, and when Laban substituted Leah in Rachel's place, Jacob had to work another 7 years to pay the wedding price for the girl he wanted to marry all along. After 14 years of being Laban's shepherd, all Jacob had to show for his work was two wives, two concubines, eleven sons and one daughter!

Jacob agrees to work for Laban some more, under the condition that Laban pays him only in sheep and goats that are striped, spotted, and speckled - and that Laban does not pay Jacob with any of the flocks that he (Laban) already has. Jacob will be paid from the offspring of Laban's existing flocks, that were in Jacob's care.

Laban agrees to these terms, and then he (Laban) separates all the striped, spotted, and speckled animals from his herds. Laban gives these animals to his (Laban's) sons to care for, leaving only solid-colored animals for Jacob to watch. Laban also takes all the goats that had white in them, but were not solid white.

Then Laban moves all of his striped, spotted, and speckled animals a three-days journey away from Jacob, in order to eliminate the chance of any of Laban's striped, spotted, and speckled animals mating with the solid-colored animals in Jacob's care, and maybe producing striped, spotted, or speckled offspring (which would then be part of Jacob's wages).

Laban thought that he was being slick, that solid-colored animals would only produce solid-colored offspring. How was Jacob supposed to get spotted, striped, and speckled offspring from solid colored parents? Laban thought that striped, spotted, and speckled animals could only produce striped, spotted, and speckled offspring - and that solid-colored animals could only produce solid-colored offspring!

Jacob had told Laban that any solid-colored offspring in his (Jacob's) care would belong to Laban, and that Laban could even consider those solid-colored offspring to be stolen from him if he found any among the animals in Jacob's care. Not the first generation, but the later offspring. Jacob would only keep the striped, spotted, and speckled offspring from solid colored parents for himself.

Once Laban has gone away, Jacob peels sticks of wood to look like they were striped. I think that he did this in order to tell God what kind of offspring that he was hoping to get when the solid-colored animals in his care began mating.

Then Jacob made sure that he got the better of the deal by making sure that only the strongest of the animals mated in front of the striped sticks, while the weak and puny animals did not have those sticks in front of them. This way, God continued to bless Jacob in an unlikely way, which ensured Laban could not rightly accuse Jacob of stealing from him (Laban), although Laban tried to do that in Chapter 31!

From <http://boldlyproclaimingchrist.wordpress.com/2011/12/03/jacob-laban-and-the-spotted-sheep/> accessed December 21, 2013.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

Laban's New Deal
(30:25-36)

Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you." But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account." And he continued, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." But he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased to a multitude; and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?" So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: Let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen." And Laban said, "Good, let it be according to your word." So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks (Genesis 30:25-36).

The fourteen years of service for Leah and Rachel must have been fulfilled shortly after the birth of Joseph. Just as Jacob reminded Laban that it was time to take his wife (29:21), so he must seek his release so that he might return to his homeland and family. Several factors would have contributed to Jacob's desire to leave. First, his feelings toward Laban might not have been very positive at this point. He had been deceived, and his return had already been delayed seven years longer than he had expected. There certainly would have been a desire to return to his family. While we do not know if Rebekah was still alive, at least Isaac was. And, finally, God had revealed to him that he would someday return to the promised land where he would be blessed (28:10-22).

Having fulfilled his obligation to Laban, Jacob was free to go, but Laban was reluctant to see this happen. He had come to realize that his prosperity was the result of Jacob's presence (verse 27). If Jacob were to stay, Laban reasoned, it would be on the basis of the profit motive. All of Jacob's labor over those fourteen years had been in lieu of a dowry. He had nothing to show for his labor except for his wives and family. It was now time to re-negotiate Jacob's contract, and Laban asked him to name his terms.

Jacob was in no hurry to do this. He first strengthened his position by underscoring in Laban's mind the value he would be to him, just as it had been evident in the past (verses 29-30). Jacob now had a family to provide for, and thus his wages must be adequate to meet their needs. Jacob must think of the future. Laban's offer, he suggests, will have to be a good one.

Now that Laban is prepared to accept a hard bargain, Jacob names his terms. And frankly, Laban must have breathed a sigh of relief, for the request was one that was easy to accept. Normally goats in that land were black or dark brown, seldom white or spotted with white. On the other hand, the sheep were nearly always white, infrequently black or spotted.²⁵¹ Jacob offered to continue working as a tender of the flocks if he were but to receive the rarer of the offspring.

Jacob would examine the flocks that day, removing all the speckled and spotted animals, and these would be set aside as Laban's property. These animals would be taken three days' distance and kept by Laban's sons. Only those newly born spotted or striped would become Jacob's property. At some later time the herd would be examined, and the spotted or striped animals would go to Jacob, while the rest would be Laban's. Removing the spotted and striped which were in the flock benefited Laban in two ways. First, it left these animals to him, not Jacob. Also, it lessened the chances of other spotted or striped animals being conceived, since these would not be mating with the flock.

It was too good to be true, Laban must have thought. How could he possibly lose? However, it was an open-ended agreement, which encouraged Jacob to attempt to manipulate the outcome and also left God free

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

to overrule the normal course of nature in order to bless Jacob. The agreement was solidified, and the flocks were divided, with Jacob tending the unspotted, unspotted, and unstriped animals of Laban.

Jacob's Wheeling and Dealing
(30:37-43)

Jacob and Laban must both have departed while chuckling to themselves. Both thought the agreement was one that they could manipulate to their own advantage and at the expense of the other. Rather than conscientiously tending the flocks of Laban while looking to God for the increase, Jacob decided that this was something he could handle best by resorting to his schemes and devices. He employed three techniques which appeared to result in great success:

Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink. So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock. Moreover, it came about whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, that Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods, but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys (Genesis 30:37-43).

The first method Jacob used (verses 37-39) was peeled poles, which were supposed to have some kind of prenatal influence on the flocks. Jacob supposed that if the flocks had a visual impression of stripes while they were mating and conceiving, the offspring would assume this same form. So all about the trenches, which served as watering troughs, Jacob placed these peeled poles; and every appearance would incline him to believe that his scheme was working, for the resulting offspring were striped, speckled, or spotted (verse 39).

The second phase of Jacob's plan to predispose the outcome of his labors was to segregate the flocks. The striped, speckled, and spotted offspring (which belonged to Jacob) were put off by themselves. The rest of the flock was faced toward those animals which were either striped or all black (verse 40). While the peeled poles were artificial, the striped animals were the "real McCoy." Surely by seeing these animals, the rest of the flock would get the idea.

The third phase was a stroke of genius (verses 41-42). It was a kind of selective breeding. We are told that lambing took place twice during the year, once in the fall and once in the spring.²⁵² Those born in the fall were thought to be hardier, since they must endure the harsh winter. Jacob placed his peeled poles only in front of the superior animals and not before the weaker. In Jacob's mind the result was that the strong animals went to him, while the weak went to Laban (verse 42).

From everything that has been said, we would naturally conclude that the great prosperity of Jacob (verse 43) was due to his shrewd techniques for manipulating the outcome of the mating of the flocks. So it would seem. So it seemed to Jacob. There is only one problem: it didn't work because it couldn't work. From a spiritual perspective, it did not work because God does not bless carnal effort. From a physical point of view all of Jacob's schemes were of no avail because they operated on one assumption, and that assumption was scientifically erroneous. Each of the three techniques Jacob employed was predicated on the belief that visual impressions at the time of conception affected the outcome at birth. In the first and third techniques it was the peeled poles which were thought to produce striped offspring. No one believes that this is true today, and no farmer uses this technique to upgrade his cattle. The second device of Jacob was based on the same premise, but it employed the black and striped of the flock to create the visual impressions.

Only later will we be told the real reason for Jacob's prosperity. But mark this well-Jacob did not prosper

Robert L. (Bob) Deffinbaugh's Explanation of Genesis 30

because he pulled one over on Laban. Jacob's success was not the product of his schemes.

There is more for the next chapter at this link.

From <https://bible.org/seriespage/jacob-gets-laban%E2%80%99s-goat-genesis-3025-3116> accessed December 21, 2013.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

The scientific explanation

The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

From: JASA 3 (June 1951): 16-21.

Editor's Introduction: The following paper was the occasion of considerable comment at the convention, It represents a biochemical approach to a problem which has previously been considered only from the biological point of view, For a good statement of the latter case the reader is referred to an article on this subject by Professor Van Haitsma of Calvin College entitled "The Supplanter Undeceived."

Author's Introduction:

Up to this present time, I had hoped arrangements could have been made to attend the Convention and read my paper in person, and then participate in any discussion that might arise. However it does not seem possible now for me to be present. I would be happy to answer by mail any questions arising., in fact it often appears that the real fruit of "papers" is evidenced in the discussion that follows. Surely anything that we can say that would lead to a more carefully searching of the Scriptures is praiseworthy. "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honor of kings is to search out a matter.," Proverbs 25:2

Last week a friend of mine sent me the book "I Have Loved Jacob" by Joseph Hoffman Cohn,,D.D. (1948). Dr. Cohn takes exception to the prevalent misrepresentation of Jacob and states "Why to he not known as the Bible really presents him?" "The Birthright.," "The Blessing from Isaac" and "Life with Unkle Laban" are some of the opening chapters, I am happy that In my paper the highlights of Jacob's life are quoted direct from the Scriptures. However Dr, Cohn states on Page 51 that "The Angel of the Lord told Jacob to use the rods, to test his faith and obedience, And so Jacob took sticks from the trees and peeled them like peppermint sticks. These rods he laid down in the troughs, so when the cattle cam to drink they would gaze upon these striped sticks. But Laban could laugh at him, because Laban knew that the science of husbandry had proven that the color of the animals was determined by heredity and not by environment. But God had a law superior to the science of husbandry and we read a remarkable statement in Genesis 30:39-'rhe flocks conceived before the rodeo and brought forth cattle rigstraked, speckled and spotted.'" Then the dream mentioned in Genesis 31:11-12 is quoted.

In my approach I have used the chemistry of the pilled, or bruised, rods as one factor, and their employment at specific times as the resultant factor. in 30:41 the rods were laid in the gutters, and in 30:42 they were not put in. This follows the Scriptural account of the method. The dream which was told to: Rachel and Leah in Chapter 31 reveals that the angel of God knew his plans were meeting with success., but there is no Scriptural evidence that the angel of God told Jacob to use this method--in fact the dream terminates with "Now arise, get thee out from this land." (31:13). Away from heathen surroundings, just as God told Abraham In 12:1\$ "Get thee out of thy country.

I have just read Vol. 2. No. 3., and I got a blessing to see CHRIST preeminent in the midst and prevailing in all the papers, Would that our books of science in our schools and colleges followed such a pattern.

The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

Laban and Jacob's Wage Agreement: "The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lambs Shall Be My Wages"

"It shall greatly help ye to understand Scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken or written, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, and to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows."

Myles Coverdale

The highlights of Jacob's life from birth to his marriage to Laban's daughters to quoted here direct from the Scriptures for authenticity and to indicate the significance of the marks he selected to brand his wages,

Jacob is introduced in Genesis 25:26 as a twin born after his brother, but "with his hand on Esau's heel." This was a sign to conform a previous declaration made by the Lord Jehovah, "the elder shall serve the younger." (25:23). "And his name was called Jacob, Ya 'agob." (25:26). "ya" for Jehovah and "agob" for heel or supplant--supplanted by Jehovah. An example of Divine Election before birth as stated in Romans 9:11-12 together with a confirming sign at birth. Jacob was smooth not hairy like his brother, and was loved by his mother. (25:28; 27:11).

Esau was born as a red or ruddy child covered with hair (like a goat-25:25), Esau, Edom and Seir are three names descriptive of these details--Esau "covered with," Edom. "red" and Seir "hairy as a rough goat." He was probably larger and stronger than his brother Jacob, and became a cunning hunter and a man of the field. Esau was loved by his father because of Isaac's fondness for gamey meat. (25:28)

The birthright. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a morsel of meat and bound the transaction with an oath before partaking of the food. (25:33). Esau did not tell his father that he had sold his birthright and was therefore not entitled to the blessing, but after his mother's deceptive plan gained the blessing for Jacob, he said "Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright; and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing." (27:36). Thus Esau was rightly called "profane" in Hebrews 12:16 in the light of Nu. 30:2 where "profane" is ascribed to one who breaks his word. He did not intend to surrender his birthright even to the point of murder. (27:41).

Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife was barren; the Lord answered, and Rebekah his wife conceived. (25:21). For this he should have been very thankful to the Lord and hearkened to the declaration and sign of Divine Election. He blessed Jacob thinking it was Esau but when Esau subsequently arrived and sought the blessing, he said, "Yea, and he (Jacob) shall be blessed." (27:33). The prominent position of wood was replaced by the sovereignty of the Lord Jehovah.

Rebekah the mother (and Laban's sister) was told by the Lord that the struggle within her womb was due to twins of different nations and that the elder shall serve the younger, but overhearing Isaac's plan to bless Esau (27:7) she contrived to switch brothers deceiving him in his blindness or darkness. Jacob feared a curse would follow instead of a blessing if the deception was found out, but his mother ordered him to obey her, and said "Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice." (27:13). Rebekah covered the smooth white skin of Jacob's arms and chest with black goat hair and gave him a dish of savoury goat meat to present to his father for the blessing; and Jacob was blessed above Esau. (27:29).

Laban agreed to accept Jacob's proposition. "I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter." (29:18, 19). After the wedding feast, and in the darkness of the night, Laban switched sisters--he slipped the eldest daughter Leah in bed with Jacob, and thus the marriage with Leah was consummated. The "black sheep" of the family was substituted for Rachel's with a traditional custom given i.e., as an excuse. Thus Laban became "profane" because he broke his word according to the Agreement,

The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

"The Jews Require A Sign" (1 Cor. 1:22)

In view of Jacob's past experience with Beau and Laban, he decided to negotiate an agreement with visible evidence to mark his agreed-upon possessions. This he believed would remove any reflection upon his honesty when the time arrived for him to collect his wages. (30:33). But later the wickedness of Laban was revealed when he discerned the great number of Jacob's marked animals and he sought to murder him, employing as an excuse the theft of his daughters unawares and the Images which Rachel had stolen, but which was unknown to Jacob.

The History Of Melanism

One of the papers presented at the American Chemical Society at San Francisco., March 27 to April 1. 1949, bore this title by Drs. J. and M.L. Dufrenoy. They have sent me a complimentary copy of their pamphlet (in French) entitled "From Genesis to the Atomic Bomb," "Livery flock has its black sheep.," "It is recorded in Genesis that Jacob was successful in breeding Black sheep from white sheep and rams, which, as we now know white to be dominant in sheep., may have been heterozygous." A list of 309 publications is enumerated in the bibliography from 1591 to 1949. And stating that "to account for the occasional birth of 'black babies' among white folk, and for the occurrence of 'white negroes,' Maupertuis formulated laws of heredity, antedating Mendel by a century." "About 1850., melanin was recognized as a pigment, produced in special cells (chromatophores) and bound to a sulfur-containing protein; however, the biochemistry of melanin could not be elucidated before the significance of oxidases had been revealed by G. Bertrand (1896) and that of sulfhydryl groups, suspected by Rey Pailhade (1906), had been established by Hopkins.

Melanin (Gr. "melee" black) Is the pigment or negro skin distributed in the more superficial layers, in contrast to the pigment or the white races which is found principally in the basal cells. In the white races the tanning due to sunburn and its subsequent disappearance reveals a reversible reaction.. in contrast with the negro which is irreversible. It is also a pathological pigment associated with tumors and the blood in melanaemia. It is also present in the alkaline black ink of the squid which turns into brown sepia when neutralized with an acid., as for instance Hydrochloric. In hair and in wool It is present in the medulla only in white fibers., and in brown or black hair or wool the outer cells are impregnated. Tyrosine, tryptophan and phenylalanine produce melanin-like compounds upon irradiation with ultraviolet light by an oxidation-reduction system, "The normal pigmentary alterations observed in developing or aging cells, those alterations associated with physiological changes or sex hormones., or the pigmentary disturbances associated with pathological conditions are but visible evidence of a change in the oxidation-reduction potential of melanogenic centers in the cell." (Frank H. Figg 1940)..

Black in the Jacob-Laban episode to from the Hebrew word "chum" associated with a burnt" color in connection with the word "cham" which has been translated Ham. Ham's eldest son Cush was named "kush" which is derived from the Sumerian word "kus" for skin, and Kushly is translated into "Ethiopian" from the Greek "aithiops"--burnt face. This reminds us of Jer, 13:23; "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" Leopard to a combination word of "leo" the yellow lion and "pard" the black panther as a symbol also of an unholy alliance--the lion a symbol of the sunlight and the black panther a symbol of the dark unknown after death, the Egyptian priests in death-rite ceremonies wore a black panther skin.

Jacob's Specific Plan For Breeding Numerous Marked Animals

" And Jacob took branches of fresh white birch, and of benzoin and laurel, pilled white strokes in them., and set them in the gutters in the watering troughs whenever black and white animals were paired at the water-trough, but not for solid-colored pairs."

"Maqqelah Lach Libneh" generally translated as rods of green poplar should be rendered as branches of fresh white (birches).

The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

"Luwz generally translated as hazel, means "light" -- "luz" in Spanish and Portuguese, and "luxus" in Latin. A substance used for lighting as incense.

"Armown is generally translated as "chestnut tree" means "noble" and should be rendered Laurel as Laurel nobilis or Ndbble Laurel or Bay.

The pilling of rods and white strakes referred to here., can be better understood as a white gummy substance produced only when branches above referred to are bruised, particularly the younger branches and: when fresh in the spring of the year.

The white birch exudes a juice having a sweet and somewhat acidulous taste) and the bark contains a camiphoraceous body "betulin." The oil of birch has been used externally for skin diseases and internally for relief in venereal diseases. The fresh leaves are used to form a bed in which rheumatic patients lie, and which excites profuse sweating. The white birches grow in groves which reminds us of the groves of Baal and Ashtaroth sex worship.

The noble Laurel was sacred to Apollo who was supposed to be over the flocks and herds to ward off plaguesp also used for garlands by Greekwictori, The Oil of Baysp or noble laurel., has been used as an external stimulant,

Benzoin (luwz)."-'. The literature on this article reveals some very startling information. "Many centuries old., this substance was called 'incense of Java,' the words for which In native tongue., were "luban Jawl.I. The first syllable was dropped and one word made out of the two, 'Banjavi)l which developed through oevoral minute linguistic changes to lbenjui., 'benzoi., 'benzoin' and 'benjamin.'" The "luban javi" or white gum from Java finally corrupted into "benzoin" and is ben yamin." The wild allspice or fever-bush is the bencoinc of Arabia and might have been the parent of the trees now in Java. Only a Bible student could properly understand influences in connection with the corruption of this name. It was near luz where the youngest son was born and named Ben-oni which means "son of my sorrow" by Rachel, and which was changed by Jacob to Ben-yamen "son of my right hand." Thus ben-oni was the origin of benzoin and ben-yamen of benjamin, Yamen means both right and south, for when facing the East the right hand points to the south. Even today Yemen in southern Arabia is known as the "Land of the Eight Hand" to distinguish it from Syria "The Left-hand Land." And the left hand as well as the north was generally regarded as evil or unknown. When the benzoin branch is bruised a white gum exudes In the form of tears. If is used as a general and local stimlant.9 tending to elimination by the mucous membranes.

Aromatic and camphoraceous substances as mentioned above at first are Aphrodisiacs and the knowledge of their use was evidently known to Jacob from the heathen practices of Laban and the surrounding country. And Jacob used these substances to induce breeding when mixed pairs presented themselves at the watering trough.

"Stronger" translated from qesher" which means unholy alliance or mixture.. "Feeble" translated from "ateph" meaning covered over (Ps 65:13). Instead of "stronger" a better rendering would be "mixed colors" as black and white., and Instead of "feeble" a better rendering would be "solid colored."

Now to answer the final question--Did Jacob breed black or spotted animals from solid-colored ones perhaps by discovering the secret of emphasizing recessive traits? The maternal impression theory I believe comes from and belongs to mythology.

According to the agreement--first, all existing male and female spotted goats 'were removed., and any that had some white in it (30:32,35). What remained could well have been solid white and solid black males and females. The solid white were perhaps in the minority in the north mountainous country and the black predominated--this would account for a minor portion of spotted and speckled such as were present originally and removed. All

The Speckled and Spotted Goats and the Black Lamb Shall Be My Wages by William J. Schepp

subsequent spotted and speckled offspring were to belong to Jacob as his wages for tending to Laban's flocks and herds.

All the existing black or brown sheep were first removed and any subsequent so marked in the Offspring were to belong to Jacob. It is very interesting to note that only in 30:32..33.,35 is "sheep" translated from the Hebrew word "keseb". In other places "sheep" is translated from "toon" which name could include goats., as meaning "small grazing animals." The Levitical offerings can clarify this problem for In 3:6P 7, a peace offering is mentioned as a LAM, which can be either male or female., &nd the word "lambs" here has been translated from this same word "keseb." This would explain why the gender was mentioned in connection with the-goats and only implied In the sheep by a general name for both sexes. So the black sheep removed were lambs.. which would indicate that the adult black sheep remained. Here again the white sheep were evidently in the majority and the black ones in the minority--thus accounting for only' a small number of offspring which existed and were removed.

'This explanation should lift all confusion--heredity factors are unchangeable but mixtures as In crosses made deliberately can be accounted for. And of course there can be pathological changes and Individual changes with experimental substances--such as discovered in including Cobalt when feeding white sheep. But as stated in the Scripture everything produces after its kind and mixtures are-the products of man's experiments but not reproducible.

Jacob arrived at Leban's estate as a poor boy and left as a very rich men. His many children and the great increase in flocks and herds was due to the Lord Jehovah's blessing in withholding sickness and abort ion--"This twenty years have I been with thee; thy eves and thy she goats have not cast their young." (31:36).

Jacob's gift to Esau probably represented a number as a tithe and included she goats (oz), he goats (tayish) and ewes (rachel)p and rams (ayil)j etc. in the ratio of ten females for each male; mid very significantly an equal number of sheep and goats as the two different nations, But above all Jacob's animals were spotted, a symbol of the heathen practices Prevailing in Laban's country., and reminds us of Hosea 7:8. "Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people and is a cake not turned." When the true Scriptures are mixed with mythology the product is a half -baked philosophy.

Jacob deliberately crossed black and white animals by employing aphrodisiacs whenever they were paired at the watering trough, but withheld stimulants when solid-colored pairs were present. Thus the spotted offspring were greater in number then the solid-colored, type.

From <http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1951/JASA6-51Schepp.html> accessed December 21, 2013 (with some editing).

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics, Short Doctrines](#)

[Beginning of Document](#)

[Definition of Terms](#)

[Introduction and Text](#)

[Chapter Summary](#)

[Addendum](#)

[A Complete Translation](#)

www.kukis.org

[Exegetical Studies in Genesis](#)

Addendum

These births span 3 chapters in Genesis.

The Twelve Patriarchs from James Burton Coffman

The Sons of Leah

REUBEN (meaning "LOOKSON") so named because Leah said, "God has looked upon my affliction," referring to Jacob's not loving her as he did Rachel. She said, "Now my husband will love me."

SIMEON (meaning "HEARD"). God had heard her prayers.

LEVI (meaning "ATTACHED"). Leah believed Jacob would then be attached to her.

JUDAH (meaning "PRAISE"). She said, "I will praise Jehovah."

The Sons of Bilhah

DAN (meaning "DECISION", a judicial decision). So named because Rachel said, "God has judged me."

NAPHTALI (meaning "BOUT"). Rachel said, "I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed."

The Sons of Zilpah

GAD (meaning "FORTUNATE" or "LUCK"). So named by Leah who was glad to be gaining more ground on her sister.

ASHER (meaning "HAPPY"). Leah said, "Happy am I."

More Sons of Leah

ISSACHAR (meaning "HIRED MAN"). She had purchased a night's sleep with her husband for her son's mandrakes.

ZEBULUN (meaning "DWELLING"). Leah then believed that, "Now my husband will dwell with me."

The Sons of Rachel

JOSEPH (meaning "ADD"). This name amounted to a prayer by Rachel that she might have another son.

BENJAMIN (This name means "SON OF THE RIGHT HAND", a name given by Jacob. Rachel called him BENONI, meaning "SON OF MY SORROW," for she died in giving birth to the baby). This is related in Genesis 35:16-20.

Just the names of these sons of Jacob constitute as eloquent and convincing a commentary on his polygamous household as any that could be written. The bitter, unending rivalry between Rachel and Leah; Rachel was sitting like a queen in the middle and doling out to the other women WHEN they might lie with Jacob; her bitterness that she had no children; her desperate prayer, "Give me children, or I die"; Leah's frustration that Jacob never took her into his heart (Note how Jacob gave Benjamin a name that actually made him pre-eminent) ... What a tragic household that was!

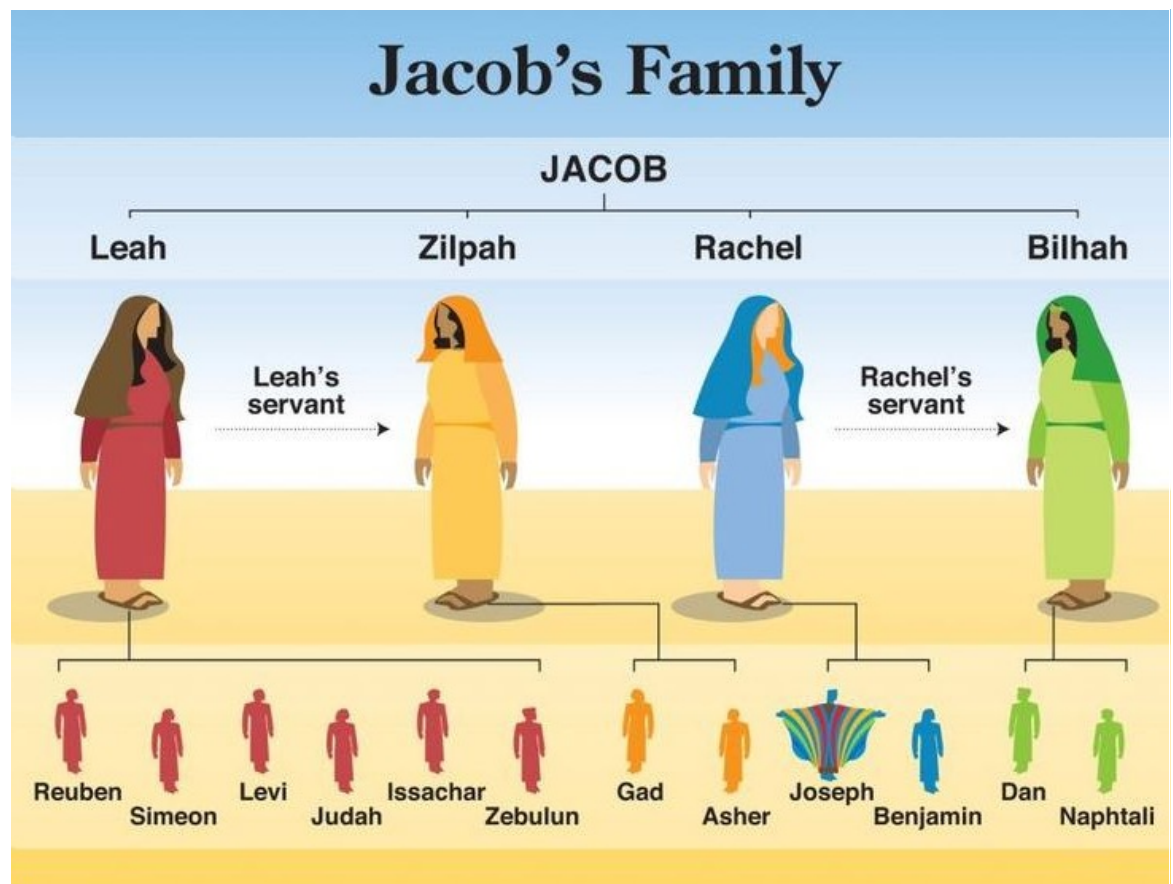
From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

Jacob's Family (a graphic); from **Blogspot**; accessed September 16, 2017.

You will notice the image of Joseph looks rather impressive, like he is batman or something. Actually, here he is wearing his coat of many colors, apparently.



The Providence of God (by James Burton Coffman)

The providence of God is evident everywhere in the Bible, but especially in this narrative concerning Jacob and the beginnings of Israel. We noted that it was God's providence that caused the ring-streaked, spotted, and speckled cattle, along with the black sheep, having as its purpose the enrichment of Jacob. At the same time, the hardships of Jacob were designed to harden and temper his character for the responsibility incumbent upon him. But God also over-ruled the fertility of Jacob's wives, giving the greater number of children to Leah, who was actually more suitable to be the mother of patriarchs. We appreciate what Willis said about this:

"The statement here (Genesis 30:22) that God opened Rachel's womb again affirms the inspired Biblical faith that God is personally and actively involved in human conception and birth, and that this process is not merely a natural phenomenon." [John T. Willis; Genesis; (Austin: Sweet Publishing Company), p. 344]

The divine force that shaped the destiny of the Chosen People was exercised without regard to human preference, using and overruling the most obstinate wickedness to achieve God's purpose. How wonderful it would have been if the chief actors in that historical drama had been able fully to trust God and to believe in their hearts that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:25). But we fear that, like ourselves, Jacob and his family were often resentful and fretful from the things they endured. Long after these events, while standing before Pharaoh, Jacob complained, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life" (Genesis 47:9). Our hearts reach out in sympathy and understanding in this poignant record of the tribulations of Israel in its beginnings.

From <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/genesis-30.html> accessed September 15, 2017.

Esau & Jacob—an Overall Summary of Their Lives (a summary on a slide); from [Slide Serve](#) (Slide 5); accessed March 9, 2019.



CLOSE-UP OF ISRAEL
Patriarchs, Parents, & Progeny (3)

- **Esau & Jacob**
 - *God revealed to mother Rebekah that the older would serve the younger.*
 - *Esau born first—didn't value his birthright, sold it to Jacob for red stew.*
 - *Not understanding his parents' faith, Esau took an unbelieving wife (Hittite).*
 - *Jacob took a believing wife, followed the faith of his father.*
 - *Rebekah helped Jacob deceive Isaac; he blessed Jacob instead of Esau.*
 - *The deception wasn't necessary as God had already revealed His will to Rebekah while she was pregnant that the older Esau would serve the younger Jacob.*
 - *To protect Jacob from angry Esau, Rebekah convinces Isaac to send Jacob to Paddan-Aram to find a wife. Isaac grants blessing of Abraham to Jacob.*
 - *Esau marries a daughter of Ishmael (non-Canaanite) to placate his parents.*
 - *Jacob encounters God in a dream at Bethel. Builds a pillar (not an altar).*
 - *In Paddan-Aram, God leads Jacob to his wife, Rachel, daughter of Laban.*
 - *Laban makes Jacob work 7 years for Rachel and gives her Leah. Jacob receives Rachel, and works for Laban another 7 years. Jacob blessed with many children.*
 - *Laban cheats Jacob out of a flock of sheep. Jacob works 6 years tending the flock.*
 - *God blessed Jacob with large flocks, servants, camels, and donkeys.*

The ancient historian Josephus seems to take the Old Testament texts at face value and uses them to record the history of this era.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF THREE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THREE YEARS.
FROM THE CREATION TO THE DEATH OF ISAAC.

CHAPTER 19.

CONCERNING JACOB'S FLIGHT INTO MESOPOTAMIA, BY REASON OF THE FEAR HE WAS IN OF
HIS BROTHER.

Josephus' History of this Time Period

8. Now each of these had handmaids, by their father's donation. Zilpha was handmaid to Lea, and Bilha to Rachel; by no means slaves,⁽³⁵⁾ but however subject to their mistresses. Now Lea was sorely troubled at her husband's love to her sister; and she expected she should be better esteemed if she bare him children: so she entreated God perpetually; and when she had borne a son, and her husband was on that account better reconciled to her, she named her son Reubel, because God had had mercy upon her, in giving her a son, for that is the signification of this name. After some time she bare three more sons; Simeon, which name signifies that God had hearkened to her prayer. Then she bare Levi, the confirmer of their friendship. After him was born Judah, which denotes thanksgiving. But Rachel, fearing lest the fruitfulness of her sister should make herself enjoy a lesser share of Jacob's affections, put to bed to him her handmaid Bilha; by whom Jacob had Dan: one may interpret that name into the Greek tongue, a divine judgment. And after him Nephthalim, as it were, unconquerable in stratagems, since Rachel tried to conquer the fruitfulness of her sister by this stratagem. Accordingly, Lea took the same method, and used a counter-stratagem to that of her sister; for she put to bed to him her own handmaid. Jacob therefore had by Zilpha a son, whose name was Gad, which may be interpreted fortune; and after him Asher, which may be called a happy man, because he added glory to Lea. Now Reubel, the eldest son of Lea, brought apples of mandrakes⁽³⁶⁾ to his mother. When Rachel saw them, she desired that she would give her the apples, for she longed to eat them; but when she refused, and bid her be content that she had deprived her of the benevolence she ought to have had from her husband, Rachel, in order to mitigate her sister's anger, said she would yield her husband to her; and he should lie with her that evening. She accepted of the favor, and Jacob slept with Lea, by the favor of Rachel. She bare then these sons: Issachar, denoting one born by hire: and Zabulon, one born as a pledge of benevolence towards her; and a daughter, Dina. After some time Rachel had a son, named Joseph, which signified there should be another added to him.

⁽³⁵⁾ Here we have the difference between slaves for life and servants, such as we now hire for a time agreed upon on both sides, and dismiss again after he time contracted for is over, which are no slaves, but free men and free women. Accordingly, when the Apostolical Constitutions forbid a clergyman to marry perpetual servants or slaves, B. VI. ch. 17., it is meant only of the former sort; as we learn elsewhere from the same Constitutions, ch. 47. Can. LXXXII. But concerning these twelve sons of Jacob, the reasons of their several names, and the times of their several births in the intervals here assigned, their several excellent characters, their several faults and repentance, the several accidents of their lives, with their several prophecies at their deaths, see the Testaments of these twelve patriarchs, still preserved at large in the Authent. Rec. Part I. p. 294-443.

⁽³⁶⁾ I formerly explained these mandrakes, as we, with the Septuagint, and Josephus, render the Hebrew word Dudaim, of the Syrian Moux, with Ludolphus, Antient. Rec. Part I. p. 420; but have since seen such a very probable account in M. S. of my learned friend Mr. Samuel Barker, of what we still call mandrakes, and their description by the ancient naturalists and physicians, as inclines me to think these here mentioned were really mandrakes, and no other.

From: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/josephus/ant-1.htm> accessed September 22, 2017. Josephus *Antiquities of the Jews*; Book 1, Chapter 1.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines](#)

Everett: *The Code of Hammurabi, believed by some scholars to have been written by a Babylonian king around 2100 B.C., impacted its culture for centuries.*⁵⁴⁶

Related Laws from the Code of Hammurabi

145. If a man take a wife, and she bear him no children, and he intend to take another wife: if he take this second wife, and bring her into the house, this second wife shall not be allowed equality with his wife.

⁵⁴⁶ Gary H. Everett *Gary Everett's Bible Commentary*; ©1981-2013; from e-sword, Genesis 30:1-24.

Related Laws from the Code of Hammurabi

This has no real application here (although two commentators⁵⁴⁷ at least, spoke about it). Jacob married both women within a week of one another.

146. If a man take a wife and she give this man a maid-servant as wife and she bear him children, and then this maid assume equality with the wife: because she has borne him children her master shall not sell her for money, but he may keep her as a slave, reckoning her among the maid-servants.

Although the two maidservants were used to bear children, most of the time, they are spoken of as the maidservants. Jacob acted, for the most part, as if he was only married to Rachel. Although Abraham kept Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian handmaid as a part of their family, she was expelled when Ishmael (their son) reached the age of 13.

Laws taken from <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/ancient/hamframe.asp> accessed August 25, 2017.

[Chapter Outline](#)

[Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

It may be helpful to see this chapter as a contiguous whole:

A Complete Translation of Genesis 30

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Rachel offers Bilhah, her personal servant, to Jacob as a surrogate	
Rachel sees that she has not given birth [to any children] to Jacob; and she [lit., <i>Rache!</i>] is therefore envious of her sister.	Because Rachel has not given birth to any children of her own, she became quite envious of her sister.
Consequently, she said to Jacob, "Give me sons; I will die if I don't [bear any children]."	Consequently, she said to Jacob, "You must give me sons; I will die if I cannot bear your sons."
Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel and he said [to her], "[Am] I in the place of Elohim, Who has withheld the fruit of [your] womb from you?"	Jacob's anger was stirred up against Rachel, and he said to her, "Am I as powerful as God, that I am able to hold back from you the fruit of your womb?"
Then she said, "Here [is] my maid, Bilhah. Go in to her and she will bear [a child] upon my knees and I, [even] I, will be built up by [lit., <i>from</i>] her."	Then she said, "Here is my maid, Bilhah. Take her so that she will bear a child upon my knees, and I will be built up by her."
She then gave him Bilhah, her personal maid, for a wife, and Jacob went in to her. Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob.	She then gave her personal maid, Bilhah, to Jacob, as his third wife. Bilhah conceived and bore a son to Jacob.
Then Rachel said, "Elohim has judged me and He has also heard my voice. Consequently, He has given me a son." Therefore, she called his name <i>Dan</i> .	Rachel then said, "God has judged me and He has heard my voice. As a result, He has given a son to me." For this reason, she named him <i>Dan</i> .
Again, Bilhah conceived and, [as] the handmaid of Rachel, bore a second son to Jacob. Rachel then said, "I have battled with my sister [With] the battles of Elohim; yet, I have prevailed." Therefore, she named him <i>Naphtali</i> .	Later, Bilhah conceived again and, as Rachel's maid, bore another son to Jacob. Rachel said, "I am constantly at odds with my own sister; and yet, I have prevailed." For this reason, she names the son <i>Naphtali</i> .

⁵⁴⁷ E. W. Bullinger said: *This was strictly in accordance with the Code of Khammurabi, 145.* E. W. Bullinger, *Companion Bible Notes*; 1909 in the Public Domain; from e-Sword, Genesis 30:3.

A Complete Translation of Genesis 30	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Leah uses her maid as a surrogate and bears Jacob 2 more children	
Leah observed that she had ceased from bearing [children]; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob for a wife.	Leah saw that she had stopped bearing children; so she took Zilpah her maid and gave her to Jacob as his wife.
Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob. Leah remarked, "[This birth comes] by [good] fortune." Therefore, she named him <i>Gad</i> .	Therefore, Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a son to Jacob. Leah remarked, "This birth comes by way of good fortune." Therefore, she named the child <i>Gad</i> .
Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore a second son to Jacob. Leah said, "By means of my happiness, the daughters will call me happy." Consequently, she named him <i>Asher</i> .	Zilpah, Leah's maid, bore Jacob another son. Leah exclaimed, "The daughters of Israel will call me happy and, by his birth, I am happy." Consequently, she named him <i>Asher</i> .
Leah trades her love apples for a night with her husband Jacob	
During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and found mandrakes in the field.	During the time of the wheat harvest, Reuben went out and discovered some mandrakes in the field.
He brought them to his mother Leah. Rachel then said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."	He brought them to his mother Leah. When Rachel heard, she asked for Leah to give her some of these mandrakes.
Leah [lit., <i>she</i>] said to her, "[Is it] a small [matter that] you have taken away my husband, and [now] you have also taken the love-apples of my son?"	Leah said to her, "Is this a small matter that you have taken my husband, but now you also want to take my son's love-apples?"
And Rachel answered, "[Let me suggest this:] he will lie down with you tonight in exchange for your son's love-apples."	And Rachel answered, "How about you give me the love-apples and he will spend the night with you?"
Jacob came in from the field in the evening and Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You will come in to me for I have definitely hired you by means of my son's love-apples." Consequently, he laid with her that night.	Jacob came in from the field that evening and Leah went out to meet him. She said, "You will come in to me, for I have paid for your services tonight with my son's love-apples." Consequently, he laid with her that night.
Leah has 2 more sons and a daughter by Jacob	
Elohim heard Leah and she conceived and bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, "Elohim has given my remuneration in which I have given my maid to my husband." Consequently, she named him <i>Issachar</i> .	God heard Leah and she conceived and then bore a fifth son to Jacob. Leah therefore said, "God has remunerated me because I had given my maid to my husband." Therefore, she named him <i>Issachar</i> .
Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. She [lit., <i>Leah</i>] then said, "Elohim has bestowed upon me a good gift. Now my husband will honor me, for I have given him [lit., <i>born to him</i>] six sons." And she named him <i>Zebulun</i> .	Leah conceive yet again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. She then said, "God has bestowed upon me a good gift. Surely now my husband will honor me and live with me, for I have given him six sons." And she named her son <i>Zebulun</i> .
Afterwards, she bore a daughter and she named her <i>Dinah</i> .	Afterwards, she gave birth to a daughter and she named her <i>Dinah</i> .

A Complete Translation of Genesis 30	
A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
Rachel finally gives birth to a son	
Elohim remembered Rachel and He [lit., <i>Elohim</i>] listened to her [voice] and He opened her womb. Consequently she conceived and gave birth to a son. And she remarked, "Elohim has removed my reproach." She then named him <i>Joseph</i> , saying, "Y ^e howah added another son to me."	God remembered Rachel and He listened to her prayers and opened up her womb as a result. Consequently, she conceived and gave birth to a son, which caused her to remark, "God has removed my shame and given me a son." Therefore, she named him <i>Joseph</i> , saying, "Jehovah has given me another son."
Jacob and Laban come to an agreement on Jacob's wages	
And it is, when Rachel gave birth to Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away so that I may go to my place and to my land. Give [to me] my wives and my children, [for] whom I have served you and I will go. For you [certainly] know [of] the [excellent] service [lit., <i>my service</i>] which I gave [lit., <i>served</i>] to you."	And after Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob went to Laban and said to him, "Send me away so that I may return to my place of origin; to my land. Give to me my wives and Children for whom I have served you, and I will leave. You certainly know of the excellent service which I have given to you for them."
Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, I have learned by divination [or, <i>experience</i>] that Y ^e howah is blessing me on account of you."	Laban said to him, "Now, if I have found grace in your sight, let me tell you that I have learned by experience that Jehovah is blessing me because of you."
He also said, "Specify your wages against me and I will give [you what you ask for]."	He also said, "Specify your wages against me and I will give you what you ask for."
Jacob [lit., <i>he</i>] then said to him, "You yourself know [just] how I have served you and [you know] how your cattle have been with me—for [there was] to you a small [herd] before me, [and it] has spread abroad abundantly. Therefore, Y ^e howah has blessed you wherever I turned, but now I [must] attend to my [own] household."	Jacob then said to him, "You certainly know just how well I have served you. You began with a small herd before I came here, and now they have spread across the land in great abundance. Jehovah has blessed you at each turn, but it is now time for me to provide for my own household."
Therefore, Laban [lit., <i>he</i>] said, "What should I give you?"	Laban therefore asked, "What exactly should I give to you?"
And Jacob answered, "You will not give me anything, if you do this thing for me: let me return [and] I will shepherd and guard your flock. I will pass through all your flocks today, removing every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb among the lambs, along with the speckled and patched [animals] among the goats—[such as] would be my wage. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you come to my wage [that is] before you.	Jacob answered, "You will not give me anything if you can do this one thing for me: let me return and I will shepherd and guard your flock. Furthermore, I will pass through all of your flocks today and remove every speckled and patched lamb and every black lamb from among your lambs; and the speckled and patched goats as well—those animals which could be mistaken for my wages. My righteousness will answer for me on another day, when you consider my wage.
All the goats which are not speckled or patched or black lambs [that are] with me [after this time will be considered] stolen."	Furthermore, the goats and lambs with me that are not speckled, patched or black will be considered stolen."

A Complete Translation of Genesis 30

A Reasonably Literal Translation	A Reasonably Literal Paraphrase
----------------------------------	---------------------------------

<p>Laban responded with, “Listen, would that [this] be done according to your word.”</p>	<p>Laban responded with, “That sounds good; would that this be done just as your have said.”</p>
--	--

<p>Therefore, Laban [lit., <i>he</i>] removed the striped and spotted he-goats that [very] day, along with the speckled and spotted she-goats—all [of those] with [some] white in him and every black lamb. He put [these] in the care of his sons, and the placed a three day journey between them [lit., <i>himself</i>] and Jacob. Jacob continued feeding the remaining flock of Laban.</p>	<p>That very day, Laban culled out the striped and spotted he-goats and the speckled and spotted she-goats, and every lamb that was partially white or completely black. He put them in the care of his sons and put them a three day’s journey from Jacob. Jacob continued to feed those that remained of Laban’s flock.</p>
---	---

Jacob’s breeding scheme

<p>[After all of this,] Jacob took the fresh rod from a poplar tree and an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark and he peeled them in white streaks, exposing the white [flesh] which [is] on the rods. He placed the rods which he had peeled in the troughs, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink—[so these branches are] in front of the flocks.</p>	<p>After all this, Jacob took a fresh branch from a poplar tree, along with an almond branch and a branch of stripped bark, and he peeled back to bark to expose the flesh of the tree under the bark. Then he placed these branches in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that the branches were in front of the flocks, as well as being in the water.</p>
--	---

<p>[The flocks] would breed when coming to drink. Therefore, they bred the flocks before the rods; and the flocks gave birth to [young that were] striped, speckled and spotted.</p>	<p>When the flocks came to drink, they also would breed. Jacob’s crew would breed their flocks and they produced young who were striped, speckled and spotted.</p>
--	--

<p>Jacob separated the lambs and he placed the face of the flock toward the striped along with all the black [ones] in Laban’s flock. He placed his own [flocks] by themselves; he did not put them near Laban’s flock.</p>	<p>Jacob separated out the lambs and had them facing toward the striped and black ones in Laban’s flock. He placed his own sheep and lambs by themselves, separate from Laban’s flock.</p>
---	--

<p>And it was in all the breeding of the stronger ones of the flock, [that] Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the flock in the troughs for their breeding among the rods. He did not place the weaker ones [there] but [he put] the feebler ones with [the flock belonging to] Laban and the stronger ones with [the flock belonging to] Jacob.</p>	<p>Jacob concentrated on breeding the strong one of the flock. He continued to breed them using the rods, but he placed the weaker animals with Laban’s flock and the stronger ones with his flock.</p>
--	---

God blesses Jacob, despite his schemes

<p>So Jacob become extremely wealthy [lit., <i>the man spreads out exceedingly, exceedingly</i>] and so he had [lit., <i>and so there is to him</i>] many flocks, male and female slaves, [as well as] camels and donkeys.</p>	<p>Jacob became extremely wealthy, having many flocks and slaves, as well as camels and donkeys.</p>
--	--

<p>Chapter Outline</p>	<p>Charts, Graphics and Short Doctrines</p>
-------------------------------	--

Doctrinal Teachers* Who Have Taught Genesis 30

Series	Lesson (s)	Passage
R. B. Thieme, Jr. does not appear to have covered this chapter in any available series.		
1976 Abraham (Genesis 11:26–22:24) (#600)	#	Genesis :1–
1963 Dispensations (#201)	#	Genesis :1–
R. B. Thieme, Jr.		
Ken Reed	https://www.lakeeriebiblechurch.org/exegesis/	Genesis 38–50
Dr. Robert Dean	https://deanbible.org/old-testament-menuitem/genesis-menuitem	Genesis 1–50
Bill Wenstrom	https://www.wenstrom.org/index.php?option=com_libwritten&view=libwritten&selCat=2&Itemid=124	Genesis 1–50
Jack M. Ballinger	http://www.versebyverse.org/classnotes/Genesis/genesisindex.html	Genesis 1–49
Ron Snider	http://www.makarios-bible-church.org/oldtest.html	Genesis 1–50

* By doctrinal teacher, I mean a man whose primary focus is the teaching of the Word of God, verse-by-verse and book by book. A believer under the teaching of such a man should fully understand the gospel and rebound after less than a month in attendance.

When it comes to teaching, I should think that a 45 minute teaching session would be the bare minimum; and that, at least 3x a week (with provisions for getting teaching in some way on the other days of the week). Although this man may interact or even learn from other teachers, he should clearly be the authority over his church; and the authority over him is the Word of God and God the Holy Spirit (Who guides the pastor in his study).

ICE teaching would also be a part of the package, ICE being an acronym standing for Isagogics (a teaching of the history of that time in order to understand the context of a passage), Categories (a study of categories of Bible doctrine), and Exegesis (a close study of each passage, word-by-word whenever necessary).

[Chapter Summary](#)

[Addendum](#)

[A Complete Translation](#)

www.kukis.org

[Exegetical Studies in Genesis](#)