

CLASS NOTES - GENESIS (chapters 16 - 32)

16:2. Abram made the same mistake Adam did in Eden. He gave over his headship to his wife, going against revelation from God. Also he acted in impatience. Compare the same error in Ex. 32:1; 1 Sam. 13:8 - 12. How much sorrow we would avoid if we would just "wait on the Lord."

16:4 - 6. Compare Prov. 30:21, 23.

16:8. God does not address Hagar as Abram's wife.

16:16. Subtract one year during which Hagar carried her son and the ten years of v. 3 and you get 75 -- the figure given in 12:4. Since Terah died at 205 and Abram did not leave Haran until his death (Acts 7:4) he must have been 130 when Abram was born. The age of Terah in 11:26 must be when he began to have sons -- with Abram the youngest, not the eldest. Thus the order of names in 11:26 is not chronological, but putting Abram first because of his place of importance in the narrative.

17:1. There are 13 years between chapter 16 and chapter 17.

17:13, 14. These verses could be used by the legalizers very effectively **IF** Paul was still preaching the kingdom program in Acts, which he, very evidently, was not.

17:16 - 18. Up to this point Abraham is thinking in terms of himself. He was slow to transfer all these "dreams" to a son yet unborn.

17:17. Did Abraham think God was joking? Compare 18:12, where Sarah had the same reaction, saying almost the same thing in her heart that Abraham said in his. See Rom. 4:19, "And without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb" (NASB). He did not take a "leap of faith" by ignoring the "impossibilities" -- he looked them right in the eye and **believed God!** See also Heb. 11:11.

17:19. The covenant mentioned here was the covenant of circumcision, not the covenant of Law.

17:20. The nation of Israel would have been better off to this day if Abraham had not prayed the prayer of verse 19!

17:21. While Ishmael was circumcised before Isaac (because he was part of Abraham's household) the covenant of circumcision was with Isaac, not Ishmael. The word "covenant" is used 12 times in this chapter.

18:2. Of these three "men" who are mentioned here, one is the LORD (a Christophany, a pre-incarnation appearance of Christ -- v. 1) and two are angels (19:1).

18:8. One of these "men" was the LORD and two were angels, yet they all ate physical food! (See 19:3). Thus God, who is Spirit, and these spirit creatures, when they took upon them visible form, were not just illusions, for they ate physical food. Could it be that when the manna is called "bread from heaven" and "angel's food" it is not just a figure of speech? See Psa. 78:24, 25.

18:12. See Heb. 11:11. Surely Abraham had told Sarah of the revelation made to him in 17:16. She had had time to think about it -- yet still she laughed at the idea (v. 15).

18:14. This took place 9 months before the birth of Isaac. The incident in chapter 17 was 12 months before his birth (17:21). So 3 months elapsed between chapter 17 and chapter 18.

18:19. There is a balance between God's sovereignty and the responsibility of Abraham. God foreknew what Abraham would, by his own choice, do. God, in His sovereignty, will do what He has chosen to do.

18:20. See Ezek. 16:49, 50 for a list of the sins of Sodom.

18:20, 21. See note at 11:5.

18:25, 26. When the city was destroyed it was not because God was unrighteous, destroying the good with the wicked, but because, apart from Lot, **there were no righteous in the city!** When we see the hearts of men as God sees them the wonder will be, not that many go to hell, but that **all** do not go there!

18:32. At this time Abraham felt that the city would be spared. He didn't know the depth of the wickedness there. There was only **one** who was righteous -- **LOT!** (2 Pet. 2:7, 9). See Gen. 19:14, 22 and notes there.

19:1. See note at 18:2.

19:3. What a picture of the pitiable situation of the believer who has compromised his testimony. He was righteous (by faith), and exercised hospitality, even at danger to his own life (v. 6), sacrificing the honor of his daughters (v. 8) to do so. (He indeed entertained angels unawares -- Heb. 13:2) He (in the midst of all the **sin**) offered the men **unleavened** bread (the symbol of freedom from sin), but the men preferred to sleep in the street. His testimony bore no weight even with his own family (v. 14) and **even his own wife still loved Sodom** (v. 26).

19:5. "Know them" -- that is, have homosexual relations with them.

19:7, 8. Compare Judges 19:22 - 25.

19:12. This is a good passage to put alongside of Acts 16:31 - 34. While it is God's **desire** to save the family of the believer, if they turn away from the message in unbelief (19:14) they must perish with the other unbelievers.

19:14. When Lot finally talked to his sons in law about God, sin, and judgment they thought he was joking.

If Lot had sons -- as is suggested in v. 12 -- then there were at least **ten** in his family: Lot and his wife (**two**); sons (at least **two** - plural); sons in law (at least **two**); married daughters (at least **two**); unmarried daughters (**two**). Perhaps this is the reason Abraham **stopped at ten** in 18:32 -- because he thought **all** of Lot's family were righteous. If so, he was **wrong**. See note at v. 12.

19:22. It was not the **godliness** or the **testimony** of Lot that held back the judgment, but just the fact that **he was there**. Compare 2 Thess. 2:3, 6, 7. The very **presence** of the "one new man" (Eph. 2:15) -- the Body of Christ -- prevents the revelation of the "man of sin," and the resulting Tribulation, from coming about.

19:25. Evidently Zoar was slated for destruction also, but was spared because **just one righteous man** was in it. Though Abraham's intercession did not reach far enough to save Sodom, it still is true that God did not destroy the righteous with the wicked (18:25). Truly the God of all the earth **did** do right -- even beyond the expectation of the man of faith. Abraham is still given credit for the hand of mercy extended to Lot however (v. 29).

19:30. Did Lot fear to dwell in Zoar because he thought God might even yet destroy it also -- or because the wicked men there (deserving destruction) were as great a threat to himself and his daughters as the men of Sodom had been?

20:2. At this time Sarah is pregnant -- evidently early in her pregnancy -- and 89 or 90 years old!

20:6. Perhaps this will help us to understand the sense in which "God gave them [the Gentiles] up" in Rom. 1:24, 26, 28.

20:7. Samuel may have been the first of the prophets in some sense (Acts 3:24; 13:20), but he was not the first prophet in an absolute sense.

In this incident Abraham was a very poor testimony **for** God, but was still a prophet **of** God with access **to** God.

20:9, 10. God did not disown or forsake Abraham, but He allowed him to get a good scolding from this unbeliever.

20:11. Abraham discerned that Abimelech and his people did not **fear** God, but, here, Abraham failed to **trust** the God he **feared**.

20:12. A half-truth is still a lie. See notes at 11:29; 12:13. A good sermon could be preached on the excuses used by various Bible characters. See Gen. 3:12, 13; Ex. 32:22 - 24; 1 Sam. 13:8 - 14; 15:21; etc.

20:13. At last Abraham made a full confession. He evidently didn't try to protect

himself this way again. But see the effect it seems to have had on Isaac (Gen. 26:7). Isaac probably heard about what had happened before he was born -- at least he tried the same thing.

20:16. Sarah was in subjection to her husband when, in this case, she should have refused his request -- for God reproved her. See 1 Pet. 3:6. There is sarcasm here when Abimelech calls Abraham her "**brother**"!

20:17. Though Abraham was in the wrong, his prayers availed for the man he had wronged. In Job 42:10 Job's prayers for those who had so maliciously attacked him and accused him released God's grace to restore Job's wealth and health to him. How very important is prayer!

21:2. See 17:21. From 9 months to a year passed between chapter 17 and chapter 21. A lot happened during this short time, including the destruction of Sodom and the trip to Gerar. At Gerar there was a lapse of faith on Abraham's part. If Abraham **really** believed what God said in 17:19 he would not have feared for himself (20:11). Surely God would not work the miracle of Sarah's pregnancy and then fail to protect the life of the father. After all, God had also said, "**Thou** shalt call his name Isaac." He would be there at the naming of the newborn son! (17:19).

21:6. This is not the laugh of incredulity (or unbelief) of 17:17 and 18:12, but the laugh of **joy**. "Isaac" means "laughter."

21:12. Abraham had submitted to his wife. Now part of the result is that he must submit to her again -- in vastly different circumstances. Before it had, no doubt, appealed to his fleshly desires. Now it deeply grieves him. But the worst was yet to come -- for the descendents of Ishmael (the Arabs) are a source of trouble to the Jews to this day.

21:14. The "child," Ishmael, is at least 15 years old at this time. Contrast the way he sent his other sons away -- with gifts (25:6). Sarah was really being **hard** on Hagar. She provided no one to help her on the journey and not even enough food and water for the trip! Considering Abraham's love for Ishmael (v. 11), it must have really hurt him to treat them so harshly.

21:17. Hagar lacked faith here. If she had **believed** what God had said in 16:10 - 12 she would have been looking for God to undertake for them.

Has Ishmael been praying while his Egyptian mother has only been weeping? After all, he is the son of "faithful Abraham."

21:21. Ishmael's children were 3/4 Egyptian.

21:33. Was this grove to provide shade (and possibly fruit), or was it linked in some way with his worship -- as groves often were in the later history of Israel?

22:2. It is instructive that, in view of the fact that Ishmael was a son of Abraham, God speaks of Isaac, emphatically, as his **only** son. God pointedly ignores the product of Sarah's

attempt to "help God out." God had intended that the offering of Isaac should typify His own offering of Christ. The truth that Christ would be His "only begotten Son" (John 3:16) was dimmed in the type when Ishmael came on the scene. So God here emphasizes (He says it three times -- vs. 2, 12, 16) that Isaac was the son promised and, in God's sight, Abraham's only son. The other sons born to Abraham later (25:1 - 5) do not enter into the picture here for, at this time, Isaac was his only (legitimate) son. Even in 25:5 Isaac is the only heir. What the others received were "gifts" -- not their inheritance. See 24:36.

During the ministry of Christ He raised three people from the dead: an only daughter (Luke 8:42; an only son (Luke 7:12); and an only brother (John 11:1, 2). It appears that God had a special place in His heart for those who had lost an "**ONLY**" loved one -- for He was to give the life of His **ONLY** Son.

While God instructed Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering, it was never His intention that He would allow him to go through with it. In Micah 6:7 the question, "Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" implies a strong negative answer from God. Three times in Jeremiah God tells His people that He had never called for them to give their children as sacrifices, as did the worshippers of Baal (Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35). Why, then, did God tell Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering?

In order to see the truths revealed here it is necessary to realize that this whole chapter is highly typical. Abraham typifies God the Father, freely offering His Son. Isaac pictures Christ, willingly giving His life. I think I even see the sinner in the ceremonially unclean donkey burdened with the wood for the fire. That heavy burden (at least suggesting the burden of sin on sinners) was lifted from his back and laid on the back of Isaac, who bore it to the place of sacrifice and left it there. I like to think that on the return trip the donkey was privileged to bear Isaac back in triumph from the completed sacrifice. In much the same way my burden of sin was laid on Christ, left at the Cross, and I now bear Christ to those who need Him -- a glorious "burden" indeed!

Also Abraham was instructed to offer his son to indicate that no animal could take the place of the guilty sinner -- it must be a man. But he was not allowed to go through with it, instructing us further that not just any man would do, not even the only begotten son of Abraham, the man of faith. It must be the God-Man, Christ. He alone can be the sacrifice! There are many other wonderful truths found here. We can appreciate something of the cost of Calvary to God the Father as we identify with how Abraham must have felt when he raised the knife to slay Isaac.

22:5. According to Josephus, Isaac was 25 years old at this time and Abraham was 125 (Antiquities of the Jews, chapter XIII, paragraph #2).

"I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you." Here Abraham is clearly expressing his faith that God will raise Isaac from the dead (see Heb. 11:19).

22:7. Josephus gives a detailed account of just what Abraham said to Isaac, and Isaac's reply. Very interesting, but probably having no greater authority than the imagination of Josephus or some previous writer to which he had gone as a source (Antiquities of the Jews, Book I, chapter XIII, paragraphs 3, 4). **See Appendix # 3.**

22:9. If Isaac had not been willing to be the sacrifice, Abraham (125 years old) could not even have caught Isaac (25), much less tied him up! Evidently Isaac shared his father's

faith and / or he was obedient unto death as a type of Christ (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 10:9, 10 and context; Heb. 5:6 - 8 with Luke 22:42 - 44).

22:13. The sacrifice of the ram is vicarious. It is instead of, not merely in behalf of, Isaac.

22:17, 18. In verse 17 it is the multiplied "seed." The one and only (singular) "Seed" (Christ) is in view in verse 18 (Gal. 3:16). (As I understand it, the word in Hebrew is like the one used in English, in that the singular and plural forms are the same. Thus "seed" can mean either "seed" or "seeds" -- depending on the context).

23:1. Sarah was 76 when Ishmael was born. At her death (at age 127) Ishmael was 51, Isaac was 37 and Abraham was 137.

24:1. Abraham was 140 at this time. See notes at 23:1 and 25:20.

24:2 - 9. In this story God the Father is typified by Abraham, God the Son by Isaac, God the Holy Spirit by the servant, and those of any age who are willing to have a love relationship with Christ by Rebekah.

24:10. A caravan of 10 camels would necessitate fellow travelers, probably at least five or, more likely, even more. Surely he would not be travelling alone. So with his helpers on the scene it would be most unlikely, humanly speaking, that a woman would offer to draw water for the camels. The fact that she did was evidence of God's answer to his prayer (vs. 13, 14).

24:11. As the servant typifies the Holy Spirit, the "well of water" here seems to typify the Word of God. Compare Eph. 5:26. Also the water in John 3:5 is surely a reference to the Word of God when James 1:18 and 1 Pet. 1:23 are taken into consideration.

Notice how closely the servant is identified with the well of water. See how many times the words "well," "well of water," "water," and "drink" are found in this chapter! Just so, the Holy Spirit works closely with the Scriptures in seeking those who will love God's Son. The Holy Spirit found me by the "well of water"! I was saved by faith -- and that faith came by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).

It was the "time that women go out to draw water." This may be why he had to obtain water from a woman. Men, at such a time, would not have access to the well because of the presence of the women.

24:19. To fully satisfy ten camels with water at the end of a long trip across the desert takes a **LOT** of water!

24:21. He surely has no doubt that this is the one -- but he may be wondering if she will be willing -- see v. 5.

24:25. We learn a lot about Rebekah from this narrative. She was beautiful and pure (v. 16), kind (v. 18), far from lazy (vs. 19, 20), hospitable (v. 25), trusting and, probably, romantic (v. 58), eager to meet her future husband (v. 64), and modest (v. 65). Later (chapter 27) we learn that, like her brother, Laban, she was a schemer.

24:30. Trust Laban to see the gold!

24:36. See 25:5.

24:64, 65. See Job 19:27, "Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes behold, and **not another**; though my reins be consumed within me." My note there reads: "**Not another**" can be translated "**not as a stranger.**" Job knew God during his lifetime -- so, in resurrection, he expects to go to a God he already knows! In the story of Rebekah -- by the time the servant of Abraham had told her of Isaac during the long trip to Palestine, she **recognized him** when she saw him (Gen. 24:64, 65).

25:2. Here Abraham, who was too old to have children at age 99 (Rom. 4:19) has six more sons when he is over 139 (see note at 23:1).

25:5, 6. The sons of Keturah were treated well -- but did not share the inheritance of the land. Compare 24:36.

25:7. Jacob and Esau were 15 years old at this time. See 17:17; 25:20, 24, 26.

25:9. At least they "got together for the funeral." See 35:29. Isaac was 75 at this time and Ishmael was about 89 or so.

25:20. Isaac and Rebekah were married three years after the death of his mother. See 17:17 & 23:1. He was 40 at the time.

25:23. Here it is announced that Jacob will have the birthright. How unbelieving and futile was all of Jacob's scheming! Or is this merely God's foreknowledge in view of what He knew Jacob would do?

25:26. His first son, and his twin brother, were born 20 years after he married his wife. She really was barren -- 20 years of marriage without a child.

25:30. "Edom" means "red." I assume that the color of his hair (v. 25) may have contributed to his nickname also.

25:32. He did not see beyond the grave. He was living for the here and now. He didn't want any "pie in the sky" -- as worldly men often say.

Chapter 26. This chapter seems to go back to a time before the birth of Jacob. It would be hard to pass his wife off as his sister if she had children.

26:4. Here the Abrahamic covenant is extended to Isaac. The Messiah will come from among his descendents.

26:5. Yet Paul says of this time (from Adam to Moses) that there was "no law" (Rom.

5:13). The existence of laws does not constitute a covenant of Law! (See Appendix # 1 to Class Notes on Exodus, or the Bible Study "Law and Grace" available from the author.) Compare Ex. 15:26 where the commandments mentioned were before the giving of the Law in chapter 20.

26:7. "Like father - like son." But, while Abraham was telling a half-truth, it is here a total lie.

26:9. "-- Lest I die for her." Contrast Eph. 5:25.

26:19. This appears to have been an artesian well.

26:22. God honors the willingness of Isaac to be imposed upon and to suffer injustice. The Lord made room for Isaac and his family, gave them peace, and made them fruitful.

26:23. The city was not called "Beersheba" at this time -- the name was given to it by Isaac after the following events (see v. 33). This verse could be paraphrased, "-- to the place later known as Beersheba."

26:28. They saw the Lord was with him, not because of his victory when strife developed, but because of his peace loving willingness to move on and trust the Lord to give him water from another well.

26:29. This speech was just "apple taffy." They were "buttering him up" with misrepresentations of what had happened.

Isaac did not defend himself, but humbly overlooked their self-justification in order to have peace (vs. 30, 31).

26:32. Isaac dug five wells. Five is the number of grace.

26:34, 35. Isaac was 100 years old at this time (25:26). See 27:46; 28:9 and notes there.

27:2, 4. Isaac was not about to die, as Esau (and evidently Isaac) thought (v. 41). He lived at least 20 more years -- possibly as much as 50 - 55 years.

27:6 - 17. It is easy to see where Jacob got his scheming ways.

27:8. See vs. 13, 43. Jacob was not just a teen-ager, yet his mother expected to be obeyed!

27:9. Here Isaac showed himself to be much like Esau. The "savory meat" was what he loved (27:9), not the will of God.

27:12. Jacob really was a deceiver. He was afraid of being seen for what he really was.

27:14 - 17. Rebekah must have been quite a busy woman to have accomplished all this before Esau returned -- unless she had help from her servants, which she probably did, or unless the hunting expedition of Esau took several days (see V. 20).

27:19. It was not his father he obeyed, but his mother. Here is lie # one. See lie # two in verse 20 and lie # 3 in v. 24.

The instructions were not given to Jacob, but to Esau. It was not honoring to Isaac when Jacob "obeyed" the word of his father that was not directed to him. So today it is not honoring to God when we try to follow instructions addressed to Israel. Jacob did not "rightly divide" his father's word.

27:21, 22. Joshua found out that, in a world filled with deceivers, one cannot always judge by what he sees (Josh. 9:4, 5), and here Isaac finds out one cannot always judge by what he feels either. He should have believed the "voice." So, too, if we trust to feelings instead of the "voice" -- the Word of God -- we will be deceived.

27:29. Esau could not have received this blessing or it would have defeated God's revealed purpose in 26:23. If Esau had arrived first he would have received the same blessing he got anyway (for God is not blind), but would have received it from God and could not have blamed his brother. How much misery for himself (Jacob -- v. 41 & 31:38 - 42) and his descendents (see the book of Obadiah) he would have escaped if he had just believed God (26:23) and left it up to Him to fulfill His word!

27:33. He knew the blessing could not be reversed. Did he not also know that, since the blessing was from God by prophecy, he could not have given Esau the blessing he planned for him even if Esau had arrived there first? If the blessing of vs. 28, 29 was intended, by God, for Esau, God could have made Isaac aware of who Jacob was in spite of his blindness. See Gen. 48:10, 14, 19 where Israel (the name later given to Jacob), though blind, detected which son was which in spite of the fact that Joseph had placed them so the elder would receive the birthright. The preference of Joseph was over-ruled by God in spite of Israel's blindness!

27:34. Esau had nothing to be angry about. He had sold his birthright, with never a second thought, and then he was angry because he did not receive it anyway. He wanted to have this birthright and the red pottage too!

27:37. Esau was left with what Isaac had planned to give to Jacob -- **NOTHING**.

27:41. Once the blessing was given (since it was a prophetic utterance from God) Esau could not prevent its fulfillment by slaying Jacob. If he did, God would have had to raise him from the dead to fulfill His word -- just as he would have had to raise Isaac from the dead if he had been slain by Abraham (Heb. 11:17, 18). Esau would have known this if he were a man of faith.

27:44. The "few days" stretched into many years. There is no evidence that she ever saw her son again. As to Esau's fury, it was temporarily blunted by the extravagant gifts from Jacob, but it was passed on to Esau's descendents and continued until their destruction by

Nebuchadnezzar (Obadiah 10 and context).

27:46. This was just an excuse to send Jacob away. But see 26:34, 35; 28:9 & note.

28:3, 4. The blessing here is in keeping with that in 26:23 and 27:28, 29 -- but here there was no deception involved (except the reason for Jacob's journey).

28:9. Esau thought that, even yet, if he obeyed his father and mother in this way he would also receive a blessing as Jacob did (v. 6). He is trying to earn the blessing with his works. It didn't work. See 26:34, 35; 27:46.

28:13 - 15. Here is further confirmation of the blessing (a three-fold cord is not easily broken) by God Himself.

28:28:15. If Jacob had really believed this promise it would have saved him from a lot of fleshly worry, scheming, and sorrow.

28:22. How like Jacob! He is not giving the tithe as Abraham did -- out of respect for the greatness of Melchizedec -- but is using it as a bargaining device. To whom did he intend to deliver the tithe? We are not told.

29:2 - 10. The word "well" occurs seven times in this chapter and the word "water" or "watered" occurs five times. See note at 24:11.

29:8. Did they need all of the men to roll the stone away, were they waiting for the others out of courtesy, or were they just using this as an excuse to put off beginning the day's work?

29:10. Jacob evidently did it all by himself.

29:12. "Brother" -- that is "relative." He was her first cousin and her father's nephew.

29:18. It was at this point that Laban should have told Jacob what he told him in v. 26.

29:23. What Rachel must have been going through at this time! Surely she must have been very angry with both her father and her sister. How humiliating also for Leah to have to get a husband by trickery, to be resented by her sister, and "hated" by (possibly) both sister and husband (verse 31). See vs. 32 - 35; 30:8, 15.

29:26, 27. Laban was not so concerned about the cultural problem as he was to get seven more years of free work out of Jacob!

29:31. Humanly speaking, if Laban had not played this trick on Jacob, Israel would not have had either priests or kings. At least the priestly tribe and royal tribe would have been missing. Leah was the mother of half of Jacob's sons, and of the only daughter - at least as far as the record goes (daughters are often ignored in genealogies unless they play a significant part

in the narrative -- see Gen. chap. 34).

29:32 -- Jacob's sons:

By:	Leah	Zilpah, Leah's maid	Rachel	Bilhah - Rachel's maid
(1)	Reuben (29:32)			
(2)	Simeon (29:33)			
(3)	Levi (29:34)			
(4)	Judah (29:35)			
(5)	- - - - -			
Dan (30:6)				
(6)	- - - - -			
Naphtali (30:8)				
(7)	- - - - -	Gad (30:11)		
(8)	- - - - -	Asher (30:12)		
(9)	Issachar (30:18)			
(10)	Zebulun (30:20)			
	[Dinah -- a daughter - 30:21]			
(11)	- - - - -			- Joseph (30:24)
(12)	- - - - -			- Benjamin (35:18)

30:22. How long she must have been praying before the answer came!

30:24. "And she named him Joseph, saying, 'May the Lord give me another son'" (NASB). This prayer was answered when she bore Benjamin later.

31:1. Laban has forgotten what he said in 30:27. If his sons had been working as faithfully and tirelessly as Jacob had (vs. 38 - 40) he might have had more wealth. This is pure **envy**.

31:12. So it was not Jacob's attempts at "genetic engineering" which gave him the best of the flock, but God's intervention. See v. 9.

31:16. Contrast 27:8, 43 and compare John 2:5.

31:15. Laban had gotten quite a high price for his daughters -- fourteen years of free labor.

31:17 - 20. With 28:15 and 31:3 in view Jacob didn't have to sneak off. God could have, and would have, protected him, his family, and his possessions now as easily as he did later (see vs. 24, 29, 42).

31:26. How very uncalled for was this accusation! He had sold his daughters to Jacob for fourteen years labor (see v. 15) and they had gone with him willingly (v. 16).

31:27. And without his cattle, probably (vs. 42, 43).

31:38, 41. Since he had been with Laban seven years before he was married, his sons are well within 12 years of one another and, at this time, the eldest is only about twelve years old.

31:49. The "Mizpah benediction" is not a benediction at all, but a truce agreement between two angry men. See v. 52 and compare 1 Sam. 24:12.

32:6. With this many men, Esau's company could hardly have been perceived as a peace delegation! Jacob didn't send a gift until he knew Esau was on his way with a small army. So the gifts were really a bribe to try to buy his good will. See the notes at 27:44; 33:2 and 33:8.

32:9 - 12. Here, at last, Jacob is acting in faith. He remembers God's promises and bases his prayer upon them.

32:14, 15. From the size of the "gift" to Esau, Jacob truly was rich in cattle! Incidentally, with this many cattle Jacob must have had many servants (v. 16) in order to take care of them. His sons were far too young to help much.

32:20. Jacob knew his brother, and how much he valued material things.

32:25. That is, when the Lord (v. 30) saw that He did not prevail with Jacob. Jacob was resisting God's work in his life. It was when God brought him to a place of helplessness that Jacob stopped resisting and began praying. It was in prayer that he "prevailed." Jacob could have said, with Paul, "When I am weak, then I am strong!"

My note at Hosea 12:3, 4 reads, "*-- in his maturity he contended with God. Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; he wept and sought His favor. He found Him [God] at Bethel" (NASB). It was not in his physical strength that he prevailed against God, but in his weakness and desperation (when his thigh was put out of joint) he wept and made supplication. It was then that he prevailed and found God.*

32:28. See 35:9, 10. This change of name, like many others in Scripture, is at least a hint of the "new birth" occurring in the Old Testament. That the doctrine of the new birth, though not clear, nor fully developed in the Old Testament, is not a truth confined to the New Testament is sure from John 3:10.

--- William P Heath

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