

# Jacob's Children

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[ 0 : 00 ] As we come to this 30th chapter, we see the way in which the Lord designs and intends to bless and cause Jacob to become fruitful despite his, if you like, mistakes or the snares into which he has been brought in the past.

We looked this morning about the question of spiritual fruitfulness. Well, here in the Old Testament, here in Genesis, as is so often the case, the Lord illustrates spiritual blessing with physical reality.

And it's not that the spiritual is somehow less real than the earthly or the physical. It's the other way around. The earthly and the physical points us by painting the pictures and the factual illustrations and the demonstrations in earthbound terms of that which is the greater and more lasting spiritual reality.

Because ultimately this world will pass away. And all the things that we can handle and taste and touch and sense will likewise pass away. But eternity, which the Lord inhabits, will last forever and forever.

And so what he is seeking to do throughout is to guide and teach us of the things of eternity by using the things of the earth. And here in this chapter, we see how even the mistakes and you could say the sins in which Jacob has become involved.

[ 1 : 28 ] The Lord overcomes these and uses even these as a means of blessing. This is not to say, oh, well, so Jacob is right to, you know, to commit bigamy and all these other things.

And that's not the case. He is, as we know, tricked into this situation of having two wives. It would be, in one sense, a greater sin to say, oh, well, no, I've got Mia now.

I don't want anything to do with Rachel. That would be wrong. That would be a sin. It is a greater sin in one sense to have promised himself to her. And then having been, yes, deceived to say, oh, well, I'll take the deceiving wife and her father instead of the true wife.

Remember that for all these seven years, Rachel, in being betrothed, has been, if you like, shut off from all other possibility of becoming betrothed or married to perhaps a better man, a richer man, having greater prospects.

And although, yes, the family, as we've mentioned previously, was very likely comparatively poor so that she wouldn't be a great catch in terms of dowry or wealth, men, whether they are rich or poor, are men the world over.

[ 2 : 45 ] And in every generation.

And if Jacob was then to say, oh, well, sorry, tough, you know, off you go. She is now, if you like, almost tainted by that broken betrothal as she is cast aside.

And then the number of people who will then take a look at her is even less. He would be wronging her even more so if he doesn't honor his word to her. So he is tricked into this sin.

And let's make no bones about it. Bigamy is a sin. Taking more than one wife at the same time is a sin in the eyes of God. And so here is Jacob.

He's left with this situation. But the Lord overwhelms even the designs of the evil one. And the Lord uses even this sin to bring about not only blessing and enrichment for Jacob, but also to bring about the fulfillment of his promise to Abraham.

[ 4 : 09 ] Now, some commentators and some, you know, church leaders down the centuries have perhaps I would suggest a little over piously said that, oh, the only reason that Rachel and Leah were sort of competing with each other for this was because they felt in their hearts God's promise to bless and fulfill the promise to Abraham.

To increase his seed as the stars of heaven. And that's the only reason that they were competing when there was no sense of fleshly thoughts or lusts or competition or ill feeling with each other.

And really, you know, you have to just read the narrative to recognize, yes, there was God's greater purpose. But at the human level, all manner of all too human sentiments and emotions and, yes, ill feelings are at work here.

If you throw together two people who are by nature and family very close, as sisters are, and you put them then in competition with each other, the results are bound to be disastrous.

And this is what happens here between Leah and Rachel. Instead of being loving sisters supporting one another, they become competitors, which God never intended.

[ 5 : 26 ] That this is sin. This is wrongdoing by Jacob and by Laban and by all those involved. And yet God uses this to overcome the wrongdoing, to bring blessing and to fulfill his promise.

Let God be true, though every man a liar. When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister. Now, envy is grieving at the good of another.

It's not like jealousy. Jealousy is a concern to protect what is legitimately your own. Envy is grieving at the good of another.

And Rachel's situation here is made worse by the fact that her elder sister, who was not the chosen wife in the first place, but who precedes her in terms of marrying Jacob, is very, very fruitful.

She is having babies almost every year. And for Rachel, he is left with nothing in that sense. Now, the fact that there is a sister, a rival, who is producing children hand over fist makes Rachel's situation worse.

[ 6 : 40 ] Remember that Rebecca had to go 20 years without a child, but she didn't have a rival breathing down her neck. She didn't have a sister or a second wife who was showing her up, if you like, and putting pressure on.

And as we all know, you know, if one is tense or stressed about a situation, things are less likely to happen naturally or easily. So you've got this tension.

You've got this trouble in the home here, which God never intended. And which we see a contrast here, both with Rebecca, who waited long, and who, as we see in chapter 25, she took the matter to the Lord.

Isaac entreated the Lord, chapter 25, verse 21, for his wife because she was barren. The Lord was entreated of him. And Rebecca, his wife, conceived. And the children struggled together within her, and she said, if it be so, why am I thus?

And she went to inquire of the Lord. Likewise, again, in 1 Samuel, if you think of Hannah, who is childless, and when her rival, Peninnah, the other wife, is very, very fruitful in having children, and she takes it to the Lord.

[ 7 : 55 ] When they go to the tabernacle at Shiloh, she pours out her heart to the Lord. And her lips are moving, but she's silent, and Eli, the old priest, thinks she's drunk, and we all know the story, I'm sure, of what follows there.

You can read it in Samuel, chapter 1 there. But she takes it to the Lord. And the Lord blesses her for that she receives not only Samuel, but in the fullness of time, she receives five other children.

But she takes it to the Lord. Rachel, she instead goes to Jacob and says, give me children, or else I die. Now, she knows there's no problem with Jacob, because he's fathering lots of children with Leah.

The problem clearly is with herself. I know it was common to blame the woman anyway, but it is clear from the fact that her sister is able to have so many children, that she herself is the one unable as yet to conceive.

Give me children, or else I die. Jacob's anger was kindling against Rachel and said, am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from me the fruit of the womb? And some have said, oh, he's being very righteous, he's ascribing to God, and so on, that which is rightly, and that is true.

[ 9 : 04 ] And yes, Rachel is not going to the right source, but it's very easy for us, who are not in the situation that she is in, and not driven to the length of exasperation.

Say, oh, how badly she's behaving. She's been driven to the limit. We shouldn't judge Rachel too harshly here. There will be an element, yes, of the fact that being the beautiful one, she will have been used to getting what she wanted.

She will have been used to society and a family revolving around her. She will be used to being number one. And here she is now in a situation where, yes, as the beautiful wife, yet Leah is the one who is becoming more and more valuable in the eyes of society.

She is the one who is increasing her husband's stock and worth and position in society by giving him son after son after son.

And beautiful Rachel is left looking increasingly like an ornament and not much else. Give me children or else I die. And she said, behold, I may build her, going unto her, and she shall bear upon my knees that I may also have children by her.

[ 10 : 22 ] Now, okay, she was already an aunt to four sons. You would think, yes, she can shower her love upon them. But these are the children of her rival, of her sister.

You can understand why she does, as Sarah had done with Aida and Sarah. Go on, I have my maid Bilhah. If she has children, then I get to legally adopt them. They belong to me.

They are children over whom I then have claim. I have authority. And I then have some standing in society. Going unto her, she shall bear upon my knees that I may also have children by her.

And she gave him Bilhah, her handmaid to wife. And Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived and bear Jacob a son. 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, which means judge. When you get further into the prophets, remember, Daniel, Dan E, my judge.

[ 11 : 22 ] L, the generic term for God, my judge is God. But Dan when it's always just judge. So God hath judged me. He's given judgment in my favor. Remember that all of the names mean something.

They all have a certain sense here. Remember that we said Reuben is Reuben, look, behold, a son. And likewise, when she had Simeon, I am heard, heard of God, he heard.

And likewise, Levi joined. Now will my husband be joined to me. And Judah, Judah, now will I praise God. Praise is what his name is. So when Rachel had a son, she says, God has judged me.

He's given judgment in my favor. Bill, how Rachel's made, conceived again. And there Jacob, a second son. And Rachel said, with great wrestlings. Or the literal Hebrew is, with the wrestlings of God.

Such are the magnitude of these wrestlings. The wrestlings of God have I wrestled with my sister. And I have prevailed. Now, I don't know how she can say she has prevailed.

[ 12 : 28 ] She's got two children by her handmaid. Leah has produced four all by herself, as it were. But at least she has produced something which is legally hers.

She called his name Naphtali, which means wrestlings, or my wrestlings. And when Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah, her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.

And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, a troop cometh. And that's what the name Gad means. So she called him Gad. It means troop. So look, a whole troop of children.

This is what I've got. And Zilpah, Leah's maid, bare Jacob, a second son. And Leah said, happy am I. Or literally, in my happiness. I am in my happiness.

For the daughters will call me blessed. Again, the looking of both sisters, both wives. What will society think of me? What will people say about me?

[ 13 : 25 ] They'll call me blessed. They'll call me happy. And she called his name Happy, or Asher in Hebrew. That's what it means, happy. And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field.

Now, mandrakes is the mandra, let me get this right, mandragora plant, which is referred to in the authorised verses as mandrakes. It was an aromatic shrub or herb.

It's only mentioned here in Genesis and also in the Song of Solomon. It was poisonous. And yet it was sought out as medicinal, partly because, no doubt, of its emetic qualities.

That means, believe it or not, that which induces vomiting. And you would think, well, that's not very romantic, is it? I mean, who would want that? We are thinking in terms of a society where, if you've got something wrong, you go to the medicine cabinet, you get out some tablets, you get some ointment, you get some mixture, and you drink it.

Or you can go to the doctor, you can make an appointment with the nurse or whatever. They'll give you whatever you need. And our National Health Service has got everything sort of on top. Then there's a situation where if somebody falls ill, it's a disaster.

[ 14 : 38 ] If somebody imbibes or eats something potentially poisonous, how are you going to get it out? You want something which will induce vomiting.

You want something that will get out the poison of the thing that you have eaten, which will empty the stomach. So this, as a medicinal plant, would be sought after.

And the fact that it is poisonous means that it would not be too readily imbibed in and of itself. It was also reckoned to have narcotic properties. Whether when it was burned or ground down or whatever, then it would cause drowsiness or doziness or whatever.

It was meant to have narcotic properties. And that may have been another reason why it was sought out. But it was considered a special plant. It is the shape of the root was reckoned to be shaped like the human form.

And some accounts said that it would sort of shriek as it was pulled out of the ground. No doubt that's a whole lot of pagan mythology going with it. But perhaps because of its form, it may also have been regarded as an aphrodisiac.

[ 15 : 49 ] And that may have been one of the key things that we're looking at here. Leah's got them. Rachel wants them. And so they do a deal for this supposedly narcotic aphrodisiac plant.

I think that that's totally illogical. Why would something that may or may not be shaped like the human form, it's potentially narcotic, it's an emetic.

How can it possibly be an aphrodisiac? It can be if you think it is. If you think, you know, in some cultures, rhino horn is reckoned to be an aphrodisiac.

It's reckoned to be that if you powder it down and then you mix it in with a drink and drink it and it makes you terribly vigorous. Because people associate the rhino horn with strength and power and that which will make you really vigorous.

The rhino horn is composed of nothing other than basically the same kind of material as your fingernails are composed of.

[ 16 : 49 ] It's a sort of straw-like mesh of fingernail material which is simply layer upon layer packed tight and shaped into the shape of the rhino horn.

But in people's minds, this gives it power, strength, all the vigor of the right. So it's looked on as an aphrodisiac. And the mandrakes in the same way, perhaps because they are viewed as being in the human form, might be that which as a narcotic encourages an aphrodisiac kind of sensation.

Clearly they must have been aromatic. They must have been a certain scent associated with this kind of quality of them. The reason we say that is they're mentioned not only there in Genesis, but the only other mention is in the Song of Solomon.

Now the Song of Solomon, we all know what the content of that is about. But in chapter 7 where they're mentioned, the context is this. From verse 10, I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field. Let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards. Let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth.

[ 18 : 08 ] There will I give thee my loves. Now here is the whole sense of budding desire, of spring, of freshness, of the new growth, of the tender grape.

Just the beginnings of the vine, the pomegranates budding forth. We're out in the open, out in the country. Here's the freshness, here's the vigor of it all. And then verse 13, The mandrakes give a smell.

And at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

So in the context of the mandrakes scent, the mandrakes give us, now there is this pleasant fruits laid up, new and old. There's the fruitfulness of the vines, of the pomegranates, of the out in the open, fresh air, the vigor of spring, of newness of life.

And you can get the sense of it here. Now, that is what mandrakes are then associated with in scriptural times. The fact that Reuben has found a whole bunch of them and brought them to his mother, that makes them valuable.

[ 19 : 17 ] Leah has got a prize here. Now, and Rachel, of course, who still hasn't, at this stage, brought forth any children herself, says, Give me some of your son's mandrakes.

And she said, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? And wouldst thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And I think, Well, come on, he was only your husband for a week longer than he was Rachel's.

We must deduce from this that in the normal culture it would be that the husband of more than one wife would be required by custom to spend an equal amount of time with each of his wives, who would have separate tents, separate establishments.

If they had children, their children would live with them in their tents, not in the father's tent or the men's tents. The children would be in with the women, and the children would be allotted their dwellings where their own mother was.

So Leah would be there with her four children and with Zilpah and her two children. Rachel would be with Bilhah and her two children. They'd be quite separate. And Jacob would be obliged to spend his time equally between his two wives.

[ 20 : 31 ] Now, the sense here when Leah says, It's in a small matter that thou hast taken my husband. Now, it would imply that Jacob perhaps, partly because of Rachel's barrenness, was giving now a disproportionate amount of time to Rachel.

That Leah, having now left bearing herself and having to produce children simply through Zilpah, was perhaps being neglected. That Rachel was getting more attention, perhaps to help with the process of hopefully conceiving a child.

But Leah says, Look, you think it's nothing that you've taken my husband off of me? And now you want to take my son's mandrakes as though the two were in the same bracket. But Rachel, not to be outdone simply, says, Okay, you give me the mandrakes.

You can have Jacob for tonight. You know, one night, big deal. But here's the contract they go into. Notice how little say Jacob's actually got here. He doesn't say, Well, no, I'm spending the night with Rachel.

Whatever you like, you know, I'm heading to this house. So, no, it's pretty much, it's a done deal by the wives. And he just meekly goes along with it here. Perhaps there's a measure of guilt that he has not been spending as much time with Leah as he should.

[ 21 : 42 ] So, Jacob came out of the field in the evening. And Leah went out to meet her and said, Thou must come unto me, for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

And God harkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and there Jacob, the fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire. Now, the word hire is in the sense of reward, maintenance, payment for services rendered.

Hire, maintenance, reward. Because I have given my maiden to my husband. Because I made that sacrifice, in other words. She called his name Isaac or Issachar. Issachar it would be in the Hebrew.

Which means he will bring a reward. Or he will bring hire to me. And Leah conceived again, and there Jacob, the sixth son. And said, God hath endued me with a good dowry.

Now will my husband dwell with me. Because I have bore him six sons. And she called his name Zebulun, which means dwelling. Now you see throughout the tragedy, and yet the way that the Lord is using this.

[ 22 : 52 ] Leah is producing sons time and again. Six sons. Nobody could ask for more. It's thought that this is probably in the space of seven years, or thereabouts.

We'll come to that in a wee minute. But this is almost impossible fecundity that she's got here. And she, her stock is going up and up and up and up. She is the principal wife.

She is the valuable wife. She is the one who in society's eyes will be way up there. And Rachel, for all her beauty, will be way down there. Leah has six sons.

Her husband will be standing high in the sight of his fellow men in the society. Because of the six sons he has got from this, his first principal wife.

But what is she saying now? Will my husband love me? Because I have born him six sons. He will dwell with me. God hath endued me with a good daddy.

[ 23 : 51 ] She constantly wants the love of her husband. And yet she doesn't have it. Or not as much as Rachel has. Rachel wants children. But she doesn't have it.

She has the love of her husband, but doesn't have children. Leah has the children, but doesn't have the love of her husband. Always what we want in this world. It's just beyond our grasp.

Afterwards, she bade her daughter and called her name Dinah, which is the feminine of judgment, as in Dan. And God remembered Rachel and hearkened to her and opened her womb.

And she conceived and bade a son. And God said, God hath taken away my approach. And she called his name Joseph, which means he shall add, saying, the Lord shall add to me another son.

Now, it came to pass when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said to them, I would send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children, whom I have served thee.

[ 24 : 51 ] Let me go, for thou knowest my service, which I have done thee. Now, some people think, with good reason probably, that this verse 25 takes place at the conclusion of Jacob's second seven year period of service.

So, in other words, within that seven years, you've got Leah's six sons, Bilhah two, Zilpah two, and Joseph. Now, that means there has to be some overlap going on here, which is probably only likely.

It's unlikely that, you know, you've got Leah's four and then it says she left Bering. That almost implies years and years. It probably means a few months or a year went by, maybe, without having children.

And in the meantime, then, Rachel says, take Bilhah. And as soon as she gives Bilhah, she has one child, then she has another child. That's two years we're talking about. And then Leah thinks, oh, that's an idea.

And then gives Zilpah to Jacob. Look, the minute that Rachel gives Bilhah, probably Leah thinks, well, who can play at that game? And gives Zilpah as well. So there'll be overlap going on here.

[ 25 : 57 ] If, as seems likely, Jacob is saying to Laban, give me my wives and my children and let me go, that this is the end of the second seven years.

In other words, the 14 years he served Laban. One reason we say that is that in chapter 31, if you turn the page, at verse 41 it says, Thus have I been 20 years in thy house.

I served thee 14 years for thy two daughters and six years for thy cattle. And thou hast changed my wages ten times. Now, the six years for his cattle are just about to begin.

Because we're just at the stage where Laban says to him, look, say whatever your wages will be. And Jacob says, well, you won't give me anything except the ring straight and the speckled and the, you know, the slightly miscoloured amongst the goats and the sheep and the cattle and so on.

So six years that he's been building up his own stocks of flocks and herds. That only begins when he has said to Laban, look, I'm going home. Laban says, no, no, no, stay, stay.

[ 27 : 00 ] Just say what your wages will be. So that would imply that this verse 25 is happening at the end of the seven years. Which means that despite how the narrative reads, it's not a case of one, two, three, four, and then a space, and then two from Bilhah, then two from Zilpah, and then another two from Leah, and then finally Joseph comes at the end of it.

No, there's an awful lot of overlap, especially probably between the two handmaids going on. They're probably both expecting and producing pretty much parallel with each other.

And then he is to probably at the end, finally Joseph. Because it's after Joseph is born when Jacob finally says, right, send me away. Now you see what's happening here.

The Lord is building up Jacob's household. He doesn't have a lot for himself. He doesn't have much to come and go on. Despite the fact that he's got his two wives and now his 12 children, his 11 sons and one daughter at this stage, he doesn't have a lot to come and go on.

He hasn't asked Laban for a golden handshake or a parting bonus or anything like that. But rather, all the flocks and herds at this stage, every one of them belong to Laban. But Jacob trusts in the Lord here.

[ 28 : 18 ] These, those, Matthew Henry says, those that trust in God and his providence and promise, though they have great families and small incomes, can cheerfully hope that he who sends mouths will send meat.

He who feeds the brood of the ravens will not starve the seed of the righteous. And so Jacob says to Laban, look, normally your sheep are white and your goats are dark colored and your cattle are plain brown.

And wherever there's one that's mottled or speckled or ring straight or whatever the case may be, you can count that as mine. And that didn't happen very often in the normal way of things.

But the ordinary plain colored ones, you keep them. And Laban, fantastic. Great. No problem. Because all he's concerned about is increasing his own goods. He doesn't say, oh, come on, stay with me because I love you.

I love my daughters. I love my grandchildren. He says, I have found favor in thy eyes. I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. So while you're here, Jacob, I'm getting rich.

[ 29 : 21 ] Please stay so that I keep getting richer. And Jacob, for his part, he doesn't say, you're right. I've made you rich. He says, it was little that you had when I came.

And the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming. And now when shall I provide for my own house also? And so Laban says, well, tell us what your wages will be.

And we think, well, that's fair. That's generous enough. But in reality, of course, what he's reckoning is that an honorable man like Joseph is not going to bid too high because he'll look greedy.

He's going to be modest. He's saying, well, he's going to bid lower. And then so that Laban, who would have to offer him more, doesn't have to give him so much. And he says, just give me the ring straight.

Give me the speckle. Give me the orange. That way it's visible right away what belongs to me and what belongs to you. And Laban thinks, great. That's fine. No more. And so he takes out all those that are currently in that state.

[ 30 : 21 ] He gives them into the hands of his sons, verse 35. And he puts three days journey between himself and Jacob so that Jacob doesn't even get those to start with.

That's how mean Laban is. He takes out those that are currently ring straight and speckled. He gives them into the hands of his sons and he puts distance between himself and Jacob.

And then Jacob goes back to feeding Laban's flocks. He took him rods of green poplar, of hazel, and chestnut. He peeled white streaks and they peeled off the bark so the white lines are visible and different colors are there in front of them.

He puts them at the watering troughs. Now when the animals come to the watering troughs, of course, they're lapping up the water and their eyes will be looking up ahead. And what they see, what they're looking at, whilst they're taking their time or they will be making an impression on their brains.



And then it says when they can see that the watering troughs and so on, because when they've got refreshed and energy and so on, that might be the time when they're most likely to behave in that way.

[ 31 : 29 ] And what is imprinted on their brains will somehow or other have an effect on what they produce. Now, Jacob is using skills and tricks of the trade, but none of that is going to work without the Lord causing it to happen.

It is the Lord that makes the cattle produce speckled, wings straight, and so on. It is Jacob which tweaks the edges and makes the stronger ones his and the weaker ones Laban's.

He uses his skill, which has been accumulated over 14 years with Laban. God gives him his blessing because he has seen the way that Laban has behaved with him.

And so God uses Laban's wealth, which Jacob has built up for him, to now increase Jacob's wealth. Even Jacob's sufferings at the hand of Laban, even the way that Laban has perhaps dealt sharply or ill with him, is now coming back to roost.

Just as Jacob's deceit of his own father came back against him with the deceit that Laban tricked him with with his two wives, so likewise Laban's treatment of Jacob, getting rich at his expense, is now beginning to turn around.

[ 32 : 53 ] And the Lord is using Jacob's sufferings to be a means now of enriching him at Laban's expense. God is bringing fruitfulness out of Jacob's afflictions.

And these physical and historical and practical narratives point us to the way that the Lord uses the afflictions, the sufferings, the difficulties of this world to yet enrich us, bless, and help us.

Now as we said, it is only the Lord who could cause the flocks and the herds to increase in this way. Just as Jacob rightly said, you know, it's only God who could give rich children.

The old rabbis used to say, apparently, there were four keys which the Lord reserved exclusively to himself. He did not delegate to seraphim or to angels or to any other messengers.

He kept exclusively in his hand. And that was the keys to the clouds, which he either opened or closed. He either gave water or he didn't.

[ 34 : 02 ] The clouds can be overhead, but if they don't open and spill out the water, then we don't get any benefit from it. The clouds. The heart. The Lord alone unlocks the heart and causes somebody to love one person and not another.

And likewise them to love in return. And there is often no rhyme, no reason to why two people fall in love with each other or why somebody falls head over heels for this person but not for that one.

And it will be nothing to do with looks or personality or whatever. There will just be something that clicks. And the Lord opens and shuts the heart. The clouds. The heart. The grave.

As we were saying this morning, you know, nobody can say when their moment will come. When will be the number of their days fulfilled. The Lord opens or closes the grave.

And the womb is the other. Why? The Lord alone is in control of who will conceive and when and what children they will have. Now remember Revelation chapter 3 verse 7.

[ 35 : 02 ] To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, These things say, He that is holy that is true. He that hath the key of David. He that openeth and no man shutteth. And shutteth and no man openeth.

For the clouds. For the heart. For the grave. For the womb. Whether for the cattle and the beasts under Jacob's hand. Whether for the children with which the Lord blessed him.

Yes, Jacob can do so much. He can use his skill. He can use his ability. He can use the tricks of the trade. But only the Lord can increase the number of his flocks and herds and enriching.

Because now is the Lord's time. And before wasn't. This is another instance of how we have to entrust our whole life. body and soul and family and wealth and work.

All into the Lord's hands. Because he alone is able to bring blessing. He alone is able to unlock the riches and the grace and the mercy that he alone is able to give.

[ 36 : 07 ] In the fullness of time as we shall see as the chapters unfold. That with which the Lord had enriched Laban through Jacob's labours. Came to be returned again now to Jacob and to make him rich.

Just as Laban had tricked Jacob by giving him two wives, two sisters instead of the one he wanted. God returned that by causing these two sisters to be the means of building up the tribes of Israel.

God uses even our mistakes, even our sins, even our weaknesses, even our sufferings and afflictions. To bring to pass his purpose.

Just as the Israelites later spent 400 years serving the Egyptians and enriching them. So we read the children of Israel in Exodus 12. Did according to the word of Moses.

They borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment. And the Lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. So they lent unto them such things as they acquired.

[ 37 : 08 ] And they spoiled the Egyptians. All the wealth, all the power, all the glory of this world is in the Lord's hands. He gives it to whom he will, when he will.

He distributes it amongst his children or the children of this world as he sees fit. The thing for us to do is not to scramble around desperately trying to gather little piles of dust for ourselves.

The things for us to do are to commit ourselves into his hands. To entrust those keys to him and to him alone. And to believe that he desires to give and to bless that which will be to the best.

And to the blessing of those who are his and his alone. It's all that is to tornadoes. So he's a- Let us-