



The Sons of Jacob (The Sons of Israel)	Verse in Genesis	Mother's Name
Reuben	29:32	Leah
Simeon	29:33	Leah
Levi	29:34	Leah
Judah	29:35	Leah
Dan	30:6	Bilhah
Naphtali	30:8	Bilhah
Gad	30:11	Zilpah
Asher	30:13	Zilpah
Issachar	30:18	Leah
Zebulun	30:20	Leah
Joseph	30:24	Rachel
Benjamin	35:18	Rachel

The Lord Jesus Christ descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (see the genealogies in Matthew 1 and Luke 3). Did the Lord Jesus descend from Joseph? _____ According to the genealogies in Matthew and Luke, which son of Jacob did the Lord Jesus descend from? _____ Therefore the Lord is called "the lion of the tribe of _____" (Rev. 5:5; the King James Version has "Juda")

which is another spelling for "Judah"). Joseph and Judah were brothers.

The Children of Israel

Long before Jacob and his sons were even born, the LORD told Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in a foreign land for _____ years (Genesis 15:13-14). What land (nation) was the Lord referring to (Exodus 1:13-14; Exodus 12:40-41)? E_____ How did the children of Israel end up in the land of Egypt? The life of Joseph provides the answer to this fascinating question.

Joseph and His Father's Love

Genesis 37:3 declares that _____ (Jacob) loved _____ more than all his children. Parents need to be careful not to show favoritism toward any one child. Every child is a special gift from God and the parents need to love each child and appreciate how special each child is. Each parent needs to be careful not to give special attention to one child while neglecting another child.

Jacob's favoritism resulted, in part, from the fact that he had more than one wife. Jacob had two wives (Leah and Rachel) and two concubines (Bilhah and Zilpah). A concubine is a secondary or inferior wife. Leah and Rachel were Jacob's primary wives and Bilhah and Zilpah were Jacob's secondary wives. Out of these four wives, Jacob had a favorite, and that was Rachel. It is not surprising, then, that Jacob's favorite son Joseph, would be the son of Rachel.

Be careful about showing favoritism among your classmates. Many young people have close friends and perhaps even a "best friend." Even if you have close friendships with some, it is important to be **friendly to all**, especially to those students who may be shy, who may be new to your class, or who may not have many friends.

Sometimes young people spend all their time with their favorite friends and they ignore others who are outside of their little group. Their group becomes a "clique," a narrow circle of friends who are selfish and who will not let others be part of their little group. What is wrong with this? How can this be hurtful to others? How can cliques be avoided? How can you be a friend **to all**? How can you be a friend to those who may visit your Sunday School class for the first time? Did you ever visit a Sunday School class for the first time? Were the other students friendly towards you or did they ignore you? What can you learn from your experience?

Jacob had a favorite son (Joseph) and a favorite wife (Rachel). In Genesis 29:30 we learn that Jacob loved R_____ more than L_____. This does not mean that he did not love Leah. He loved Leah and he took care of her, but he loved Rachel more.

In Genesis 29:31 we read, "when the LORD saw that Leah was _____ (by Jacob)...." "Hated" is a very strong word. What does this mean? Did Jacob really hate Leah? The word "hated" is used here used as a comparison. Jacob's love for Rachel was so great that his love for Leah seemed as hatred in comparison.

Illustration: A boy loves Wheaties cereal. He has it for breakfast every morning. It is his favorite cereal. But one day he tries a new brand: honey sweetened, sugar coated, chocolate flavored Crispies with real pieces of blueberries, strawberries and bananas in it. It is the best cereal he has ever tasted. He has it for breakfast every morning for weeks, instead of Wheaties.

One morning his mother says, "Son, we are out of that new cereal you really like, but I've still got a box of Wheaties." Would you like a bowl of Wheaties this morning? The boy says, "Mom, I hate Wheaties!"

Obviously he doesn't really hate Wheaties. It used to be his favorite cereal. But he likes the other cereal so much more that his feelings towards Wheaties becomes like hatred in comparison. Hate, in this example, means "to love less" than something else.

This illustration may help us understand what our Lord said in Luke 14:26--"If any man come to Me, and _____ not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." We know that God does not want us to hate our close relatives. In Ephesians 5:25 husbands are told to _____ their wives. In Titus 2:4 women are told to _____ their husbands and to _____ their children. In Galatians 5:14 believers are told to love their neighbors and our near relatives are certainly our closest neighbors. So when Jesus said that we are to "hate" our loved ones, what did He mean? Our love for the Lord is to be so great that our love for even our closest family members is to be as hatred in comparison. Our Lord's words are explained further in Matthew 10:37 (read this verse carefully). Should we love anyone more than we love the Lord? _____ The Lord Jesus Christ must always come first. Our love for Him should be greater than any other love.

A true story. A high school wrestler was also a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. In his senior year, he was having a tremendous season, winning almost every match. His coach and teammates thought that he might win the state championship. The matches for the championship were supposed to be held on a Saturday. However, a snowstorm forced these matches to be rescheduled for Sunday. This young man had to make a very difficult decision. Should he attend the wrestling matches where he could win a championship or should he honor the Lord Jesus Christ by gathering together with God's people on the Lord's day (Heb. 10:25)? He honored the Lord, and decided that pleasing Christ was more important than winning a championship. Have you ever had to make decisions like this? We will never lose if we honor the Lord and put Him first. Someday when the Lord hands out the true awards, He will reward those who loved Him and put Him first.

God's Original Plan

What was God's original plan for marriage? Did God want man to have many wives or one wife? In the beginning, how many wives did God bring to Adam (Genesis 2:22)? _____ **One woman, one man--this was God's original plan.** In Old Testament times, there were some men who had many wives. This was true of Jacob and David and especially Solomon. How many wives and concubines did Solomon have (1 Kings 11:3)? _____ Did Solomon follow God's original plan? _____ Did Solomon's wives help him or did they get him into trouble (1 Kings 11:4)?

_____ Jacob and David had problems because of their many wives also. There are all kinds of problems and complications that can arise when we fail to follow God's very best plan for our lives (compare Matthew 19:3-8). God's plan is always for our good.

How did Jacob show his love for Joseph in a way that constantly reminded the older sons about Joseph's favored position in the family (Genesis 37:3)?

_____ Because of this the brothers could **see** that their father loved him (Genesis 37:4), because this token of the father's love was plainly and painfully displayed before their eyes!

This special coat was probably a long tunic or robe reaching to the feet. It had long sleeves as well and probably was ornamented (adorned with beauty). It was the type of tunic worn by young men and women of nobler rank, such as kings' daughters (2 Samuel 13:18-19). This unique tunic pointed to the fact that Joseph was given the rights and privileges that belonged to the firstborn son.

Reuben who was the firstborn of Leah lost this "birthright" because of his sin (Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4). As a result, the birthright belonged to Joseph who was the firstborn of Rachel (see 1 Chron. 5:1-2). Thus Joseph's "coat of many colors" served as a visual reminder of his favored and exalted position in the family.



Illustration from *Bible Visuals*