

00-01-23b

We're ready now to resume our study of the book of Genesis. And as I mentioned, we're at a place, and I've debated about where we should straighten this particular subject out. And I have chosen to do it here because, as you recall, this section here in Genesis chapter 35 is the close of a very well-structured section of the book of Genesis.

We saw, and I gave you the outline a few weeks back, that from Genesis 25 through Genesis 35 there is one of these classic chiasmic structures where the elements at the beginning of chapter 25 and at the end of chapter 35 correspond to one another. And in 25, 19 through 34, we had the first encounter of Jacob and Esau where they're grasping the heel and so forth. And down at the very end, we have the journey's end for Isaac and for Jacob.

We're going to have the death notice for Isaac and the end of the journey for Jacob here at the end of 35. In chapter 26, verses 1 through 33, we had Isaac and the Philistines. And that corresponds to what we had, and of course at the end of this chiasm we're working backward just as at the beginning of the chiasm we're working forward because these are like parentheses or brackets.

The outermost things correspond, the next inmost things correspond, the next inmost, the next inmost. When you get to the very center, you have a point of great emphasis. And this structural device that God has chosen to employ throughout His Word is very helpful to us when we're in a narrative especially to say, well, what is really the point of all of this? What should I be coming out and really homing in on? Well, you have this structure that tells you what God considers to be the main point of the narrative.

And as we saw when we studied this chiasm, Isaac and the Philistines in 26, 1 through 33, corresponds with Dinah and the Hivites in chapter 34. Very similar thing where there's an interaction with the pagans who occupy the land and it's a test time for the patriarch involved. Within that, the third beginning bracket is in 26, 34 through 28, 9, and this is Jacob cheating Esau out of his blessing.

And that directly correlates with 32, verse 4 through 33, verse 20, which is Jacob meeting Esau again and returning his blessing, sending all of those minkahs before him and saying, I want to redeem myself to the face of my brother Esau and so forth. And those two things exactly correspond. And once you begin to see the outline of this, it's amazing to look at the rest of the things and how they correspond and complement one another and give you an aid in interpreting and understanding and applying the truth that's there.

The fourth beginning bracket was in 28, 10 through 22, where Jacob meets God at Bethel. And that corresponds to 32, verses 2 and 3, where Jacob meets the angels at Mahanaim. He saw the angels when he had his head at the rock and he sees the angels

again when he comes back to Mahanaim.

And we explored the relationship of those two episodes. The next inmost bracket was in chapter 29, verses 1 through 14, where Jacob arrived at Laban's house. He arrived there and he's almost immediately outwitted by Laban because he winds up indenturing himself for his wife.

And when he completes the seven years of services and all ready to marry Rachel, he winds up being hoodwinked and it's Leah instead. And this corresponds to when he finally leaves Laban and he sort of hoodwinks Laban out of his sheep and sneaks away and he has the upper hand over Laban in chapter 31, pretty much the entire chapter. And then within that bracket, we had the relationship of 29, 15 through 30, which was Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel.

And that was where he was outwitted. And then in chapter 30, we had him outwitting Laban. And right in the center of that, we have the naming of Jacob's sons, the circumstances in which each of the 11 brothers, Benjamin, of course, comes later, but Reuben through Joseph, we had the details of their birth and how the mothers were vying with one another and one would become barren and let me have your son's mandrakes.

And all of that is in that central section in chapter 29, verse 31 through chapter 30, verse 24. The birth of Jacob's sons. This is the beginning of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham to make of him a great nation and that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

And it seems like, well, it's just this petty squabbling and well, now I'm going to get my husband's affection. But in the midst of all of this human failure and pettiness, God, in the birth of those sons, by whatever means and whatever the circumstances are, the birth of those sons is the seed of fulfillment, literally, of God's promises, beginning all the way back to in the garden when Adam and Eve fell and God said, Thou shalt be the seed of the woman. There will be enmity and the seed of the woman is going to bruise the head of the serpent.

And this is a very important point here when Jacob's sons are born. And so that's at the center of this chiastic structure. But it also introduces for us something of a chronological problem.

And let me preface what we're about to look at by saying that sometimes we're in the meat of an epistle or we're in the actual words of God or a sermon of Jesus Christ and we know exactly why we're looking at it and what the purpose of it is. It's manna for our souls. It builds us up.

It gives us grist for the mill as we think and as we set our priorities. Other times when we

study things in the word of God, we're laying a foundation for those things to rest on. And what we're about to cover, my point is, this isn't going to be something you're going to run out this afternoon and say, Boy, I'm going to put that into application in my life.

This is something that is going to help us with the framework and with our view of how to interpret the Bible and how to understand the things in the Bible. How literal is it? How accurate are the things that are mentioned? Why are there certain details mentioned or left out? And this is more of a structural understanding that we're going to come to as opposed to just a direct three points in a prayer and let's go out and apply it. So I tell you that ahead of time.

It's important and I think you'll find it interesting, but I could imagine a criticism coming back saying, Well, that doesn't really give me something to feed my faith and advance my walk with God. I think it does. I think it will.

We just have to understand that in the same way that you don't always spend all of your time in boot camp teaching how to fire the weapon and how to lay overlapping fields of fire and so forth, sometimes you're teaching people how to polish their boots and how to buckle their belts and how to keep an unruly squad bay. And that's another part of that life that supports accomplishing the direct mission. So that's the nature of what we're getting into.

Having said that, having forewarned you, I'm going to get on my long cord here and go to the board. And if you have a chance and if you would like, you might want to make a chart for yourself, especially if people that are listening on tape cannot see what I'm about to do. But I'm starting out here with a blank board.

And there's an important issue here related to chronology. And we need to step back a bit and place ourselves because we don't have a convenient dating system. We've just been through the whole Y2K scare or non-scare, depending on how you want to look at it.

And it's all related to how we count time. In ancient days, they didn't know that they were 2000 B.C. or 1850 B.C., which is roughly the time of the life of Abraham. And so they couldn't say, well, in the year 1833 B.C., Abraham did thus and so.

And so they would relate events chronologically by the life of an important person. In the land, it was usually the king. In the fourth year of the reign of King Darius the Mede or so forth.

Well, in Genesis, our chronological notices have been relatively few. But we can start here with Abraham. I'm going to put him in the upper left of my chart here.

And we're going to start at his age 100. He's 100 years old. What happens when Abraham is 100? That's the birth of Isaac, right? So I have this horizontal line going

across, and I'm crossing it with a little tick mark here for 100 for Abraham.

I'm going to have a parallel line below that, which is going to be the life of Isaac. And so Isaac's line is going to start right under the tick mark for Abraham at age 100. We also know that at this same time, and I'll just make a little note here, Sarah was 10 years younger than Abraham, so she's 90 at this point.

We get this information, by the way, from Genesis 17, 17. God tells Abraham about this time next year Sarah will have a son, and Abraham says, Lord, I'm 100 years old and Sarah is 90. Are we really going to have a child? So you get this sort of side comment that tells us how old they are, and he's actually 99, and it tells us in the passage he's 99 when God appears to him, and a year later Isaac is born.

So we know that he's 100 when Isaac is born. And we also know that Abraham is going to live to the ripe old age of 175, and I'm going to extend this line out a ways, but I'm not going to put the 175 tick mark on there yet because I want to line it up with some things below. We want to see who was alive and what happened when.

That's our goal. So here's Isaac. He's born when Abraham is 100, and if we go and try to trace out what happens with him, Sarah dies at the age of 127.

We find this out from Genesis 23.1. It tells us that Sarah died when she was 127. So on Abraham's line here, I'm going to come over to the right here a ways and say when Abraham was 137, this is when Sarah dies because she was 127. We get that from 23.1 of Genesis.

And this is important because we know that Abraham was 100 when Isaac was born. So how old is Isaac? This is like our little story problem example. How old is Isaac when Sarah dies? He is 37 years old.

So I'm going to put a tick mark on his line right under Abraham's 137 and the death of Sarah here at the age of 127. So this tells us something about Isaac because we know that Isaac is not yet married at this point. It is after the death of Sarah that Abraham sends the servant and says, go up to my people and do the camel thing, and Rebekah comes back, and then Isaac gets married.

So we know that he marries Rebekah at age 40. It tells us this in Genesis 25.20. Isaac was 40 years old when he marries Rebekah. So it is in this three-year interval between the death of Sarah and his marriage that the servant goes up and does the thing with the ten camels.

So here he is at the age 40. All well and good so far. Now, it tells us that right after that in chapter 25 of Genesis that Rebekah was barren and that Isaac prayed to the Lord.

And this period of barrenness, it doesn't tell us how long it was, but obviously to declare

someone to be barren, we're talking about some period of time. You can't just say, well, we got married and it's been six months and you're not pregnant yet. You're barren.

It takes time to establish this idea of barrenness, and keep that in mind because this is going to come into play in another situation also. Well, what we actually have to do is start working backwards to figure out how old Isaac was when his sons were born. And I'm going to ask you to bear with me.

I'm going to go ahead and tell you about how old he was, and I'll tell you how I figured it out as we fill in the rest of our chart. But Isaac had to be at least 50. So I'm going to draw another tick mark over here and put 50 on Isaac's line.

And he had to be greater than or equal to 50. He could not have been any younger than 50, and I'll demonstrate why that is. So he's somewhere, he's 50-ish when his sons are born.

So I'm going to now start a new parallel horizontal line underneath Isaac, and this is going to be the Jacob line. So this is the birth of Jacob. Now, we can also figure out how old Abraham was at this point because we know that he's 140 when Isaac gets married, and so he's going to be somewhere in the vicinity of 150 when Jacob is born.

Now, we know that Abraham lived to the age of 175. We get this from Genesis 25, verse 7. So I'm going to go ahead and extend this out another 25 years or so, and here's Abraham's death at 175. Then in the Isaac story, after various things happen with Imgurar, and my wife is my sister, and so forth, then we get into the whole thing where the blessing scene takes place, and Jacob goes in with the woolly clothes, and it says that Isaac was old and his eyes were dim, and so forth.

Well, we know about when this takes place because we also have a notice that Esau had gotten married, and that he was 40 years old when he got married. And it's after his marriage that this blessing and deception and departure of Jacob takes place. So if we come over, because of course the Jacob line is also the Esau line, because they're twins born the same day.

We come over 40 years. This is the marriage of Esau. He marries the Canaanite women, and it's a grief of mind to Isaac and to Rebekah.

Okay, so before Esau gets married, probably about five years before, no, that's not right, my math is wrong. Anyway, Abraham has passed away in the meantime, and we have the notice of him being buried by Isaac and Ishmael in 25-7. Okay, so Abraham's out of the picture.

Here's Isaac, and of course he's still alive all the way up to here. So 40 years later, he's going to be somewhere greater than or equal to 90 at the point that we have the blessing deception take place. And this fits with what the Bible says.

He was old, his eyes were dim. He's not as old as his father was when he was born apparently, but he's quite old. So he's 90 to 100 years old at this point, because very shortly after this marriage is when the deception takes place.

Now, right after this is when Jacob has to leave. That's the occasion, the blessing. Jacob has to leave and go to Haran.

And what we're working up to is how old is Jacob when he gets married? This is important to us. How old is he going to be? Well, he's older than 40 because his brother got married before he did, and Esau was 40 when he got married according to Genesis 26-34. So that's the marriage of Esau.

So Jacob, he leaves. Even if you say, well, this happened the very year that Esau got married to these two Canaanite women. All of this stuff took place in the blessing.

And Rebecca says, you've got to leave. Isaac gives Jacob a real blessing and says, go, my son, go live with the relatives. So Jacob goes up there.

So let's say that Jacob is still 40 years old when he gets to Haran and hooks up with Laban. And he loves Rachel, and he wants to marry her. He meets her at the well.

This is love at first sight. And he says, I have no dowry. I have no possessions.

I will serve you seven years for your daughter. So he serves seven years, and then he marries, and he comes to find out that it is, in fact, Leah who is the firstborn. And Laban says, well, I'll tell you what.

Work for me another seven years, and you can have Rachel also. So he goes ahead and marries after the week of marriage celebration. So one week after marrying Leah, he marries Rachel.

So he is 47, or real close to it, at the point that he gets married. That's the marriage of Jacob. He's roughly 47.

We get this from Genesis 29, 20, and 21. Now, if you're hanging with me here, we're almost at the point where we're trying to get to. We're building up our foundation here.

Jacob is around 47 when he gets to Haran. Now, I'm going to put to you a question. How long do we think Jacob was in Haran? Twenty years, right? He served seven years for Leah, served seven years for Rachel, served six years for the flocks, peeled the sticks and the speckled and spotted and all that.

And we know something about that time. We have a time notice in there. Because he gets married at the age of 47, and in that seven-year period, as we studied it, his sons were born.

That was at the center of archaism. Because the two sisters were vying which one Leah has the four sons, and then Rachel can't have any, and she throws in her maid, and then Leah stops bearing, she throws in her maid, and then suddenly Leah starts bearing again. And at the very end of that, Joseph was born.

And if you'll turn back a few pages in chapter 30 of Genesis, it says in verse 22, Verse 25, But Jacob said to Laban, I want to leave. Laban says, no, name your wages. Jacob says, don't pay me anything.

Just give me the speckled and spotted. And he winds up working for him six years in that mode. So that we know that Joseph, because this conversation for the six years of service for the spotted and speckled, he's there six more years after the birth of Joseph.

We know that. So we're going to start another line down here for Joseph, and we're going to put the beginning of it sometime shortly after the 47. And we think, well, it's got to be within that seven year period, but I want you to hold off on that.

Just start a line down here for Joseph, because we want to figure out now how old is Jacob when Joseph is born. Well, here's where things get interesting. If you turn with me back to the latter pages of Genesis, in the story of Joseph, which we are about to embark on, I shouldn't end a sentence in a preposition, on which we are about to embark, look at Joseph begins to dream in chapter 37.

He goes to Egypt. He rises to power in chapter 41, verse 37. The advice is good.

You'll be over all my house. I've set you over all the land of Egypt and so forth. And it tells us in chapter 41, verse 46, that Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

So on my Joseph line here, I'm going to put a 30. This is when he rules Egypt. Okay.

We know that there are seven years of plenty over which Joseph presides, and he's going to gather the grain into the storehouses and so forth. It's followed by seven years of famine. And it's during the seven years of famine that he's going to reunite with his brothers.

He's going to bring his father down from the land of Canaan to Egypt. Well, the Bible tells us how old Jacob is when he comes down. And it also tells us in what year it takes place.

Turn over to chapter 45, verse 6. Chapter 45, verse 6 tells us there has been a famine in the land for two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. This is Joseph sending a message to his father, Come on down and live in Goshen. So at this point when Joseph says, Jacob, come on down and live with me in Egypt, he is 39 years old, isn't he? Because the seven years of plenty have passed.

Two years of famine have passed. Joseph has been ruling in the land for nine years. The Bible also tells us that Jacob is 130 years old when he comes down to Egypt.

That's in Genesis 47, verse 9. If you flip over another couple of pages, look at 47, 9 of Genesis. Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are 130 years. Few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

It says, My father Isaac lived to be a hundred and... I can't remember how long he lived. I haven't put him down yet. Isaac lived to be 180.

And that's in Genesis 35, 29. And we know that Isaac died before Jacob went down to Egypt, because the Bible tells us that when Isaac died, Jacob and Esau buried him at Machpelah. So that took place before Jacob went down to Egypt.

So that's how I know that he could not have been any older than 50, because if Jacob is 130 here, parallel to Joseph being 39, Jacob is 130, then Isaac has to have already died, because he's already been buried at Machpelah by Jacob and Esau. So if you work backward, to have lived to the age of 180, that's a span, if he's 50 when Jacob is born, that's a span of 130 years. 180 minus 130, he would be 50, right? If you look at the chart, and if he was any younger than 50 when Jacob and Esau were born, he would still be alive when Jacob goes down to Egypt, and why didn't Isaac go too, would be the question.

It's because Isaac is already dead. Or else Isaac would have joined Joseph and Jacob in Egypt. But Isaac is dead, so Isaac has to be dead by the time Jacob is 130, and he goes down to Egypt.

Therefore, if Isaac died when he's 180, take 130 away from that, and he had to have been at least 50 years old when Jacob and Esau were born, or he wouldn't die in time. It's math, it's not the most edifying thing in the world, but the point and where we're going to get to is edifying, because all of this lines up. This all is documented in Scripture, and we know that these things have to be true based on what the Word of God says.

But it puts us in a quandary, and by solving this quandary, we're going to understand our very next section in Genesis, because, look here, Joseph is 39 when Jacob is 130. We know that, right? So that means 39 years before going down to Egypt, that's when Joseph was born. So how old was Jacob when Joseph was born? Well, what's 130 minus 39? He had to be, and my tick mark on the Jacob line for the birth of Joseph is 91.

Right? Jacob has to be 91 when Joseph is born, because Joseph is 39, ruling the land of Egypt. When Jacob comes down, Jacob says, I'm 130, to Pharaoh. So, we said he got married around the age of 47, but it's 44 years later before Joseph is born.

How does that fit into our 7 plus 7 plus 6 idea of his time in Haran? It doesn't fit. You can't find a way to make that work. If Jacob is 91 when Joseph is born, and we have the age notices during the time in Egypt, then you work backward, and Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born.

You can understand him being the doting father, he's the son of my old age. He's nearly as old when Joseph is born as Abraham was when Isaac was born, just 9 years difference. And, of course, Benjamin is going to come along even after that.

So, this is what we have to work with here. Why is there this gap? Because we figure Jacob is around 47, he's been there 7 years when he marries Leah and Rachel, and the notices of the birth of the sons and so forth take place while he's serving the second 7 years for Rachel. Because then he says, I'm going to pack up, and Laban says, No, I'll let you work for flocks, and you do the speckled and spotted.

But, according to this, Jacob arrives in Haran around the age of 40, and he's going to leave after the birth of Joseph at the age of 91. So, we've got about 50 years to account for there, and we only have 20. Is the problem plain? We know that Esau had been recently married, and Jacob leaves almost right after that, around the age of 40, and Joseph is born at age 91.

So, there appears to be much more of a span of time in Haran than what we have accounted for. Well, remember we had a little bit of difficulty trying to make everything fit when we were talking about the birth of the sons, and Reuben went out and got the mandrakes, and we figured, well, how old can he possibly be? Because all of these births are within the 7 years. You have 11 sons born in the space of 7 years, and you say, well, you can overlap some because of the different wives.

But that's still... Leah has 6 sons and a daughter during that time. Remember, she has Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah. Then she has Issachar and Zebulun, I think, are hers.

And then she has Dinah. And, you know, we're thinking, boy, she's just having a birth and conceiving again hard on the heels of that. And it just seems very compressed.

Well, to make a long story a little bit shorter, our whole idea that this sojourn was 20 years goes back to the conversation that we studied recently when Laban pursues Jacob after he leaves, and they confront. And he looks for the teraphim. He doesn't find them.

Rachel is sitting on them. And then he comes back, and Jacob has this conversation about being aggrieved in his sojourn up there in Haran. And so he says in chapter 31, verse 36, What is my trespass? What is my sin that you have so hotly pursued me? Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? See here before my brethren and your brethren that they may judge between us both.

And in verse 38 of chapter 31 he says, These 20 years I have been with you. And you'll see if you've got a new King James or a King James, some of that is in italics. He says, These 20 years I with you.

Your ewes and your female goats I have not miscarried your young. I have not eaten the rams of your flock. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you.

I bore the loss of it. You required it from my hand, whether stolen by day or stolen by night. There I was in the day.

Drought consumed me. It frost by night. My sleep departed from my eyes.

Then in verse 41 he says, Thus I have been in your house 20 years. I served you 14 years for your two daughters and 6 years for your flock. And you have changed my wages 10 times.

And we didn't really have any record of Laban changing Jacob's wages except that he said, Well, I want the spotted. And then one time he said, I want the speckled. But that's an either or.

There's only the two kinds of animals that are not solid colored which they all agree belong to Laban. And so that's only a one change of wage unless he's just alternating back and forth. But even 10 times in the space of 6 years you only get one crop of new goats a year typically.

So how could he change his wages 10 times? And most commentators or most interpreters say, Well, this is just a figure of speech. It means you've been inconsistent in my wages. But here's the thing.

It is probable in my estimation that we have misunderstood this passage. And it's understandable because the way that it reads we think, well, it's 20 years. 7 plus 7 plus 6. But it is very likely, and I think this is what actually happened, is that we have two 20-year periods being spoken of here.

Jacob's total sojourn in Haran is 40 years, not 20. And he refers to those two separate times. He served for 7 years for Leah, 7 years for Rachel, 6 years for his flocks.

But there is another period of 20 years where he served for wages. He got a cash wage. And this was enough to live on and to sustain his family, but he didn't build up any savings.

He didn't have enough to buy any cattle or goats or anything like that. If you factor this in and figure a 40-year sojourn in Haran by Jacob, now you can have the birth of his sons Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and so forth in this early part where he is between 47 and 54 years of age. In that interval, you have the 20 years of serving for wages.

And after that 20 years, he has actually now been there 34 years when Joseph is born, or thereabouts. Again, we don't know his exact age. We know it was sometime greater than 40 when he went up there.

But by putting this in, this does a couple of things for us. Primarily, it helps us resolve this mathematical problem because there's no getting around the fact from the Word of God that Jacob is 91 when Joseph is born. And he was in Haran when Joseph was born, so how did he get to be 91 years old if he only stayed there 20 years and he went when he was 40? Well, by adding this additional 20 years in, which we have apparently misconstrued in reading the account in Genesis 31, we make up that time.

And I'll tell you why this is important. You think, well, maybe, maybe not. What is the real difference? If you look at our next section in Genesis here in chapter 35, it gives the death notice of Isaac.

And we know that Jacob is getting somewhere near the time he's going to go down to Egypt when Isaac dies because he's still in the land to bury him at Machpelah and to meet up with Esau and so forth. And we have the story of Esau in chapter 36. In chapter 37, you have Joseph having his dreams of the sheaf and the sun, moon, and stars and so forth.

Now look at chapter 38. This is where we're going to be here very shortly. This is the story of Judah and Tamar.

And you may be familiar with the nature of that episode there where Judah has these sons and he is in the land when this takes place. He's up by Adullam. He meets up with this man named Hira.

And there's a daughter of a Canaanite whose name was Shua. And he marries her and went into her. This is 38.2 of Genesis.

Verse 3, She conceived and bore a son and called his name Ur. She conceived again, bore a son, called his name Onan. She conceived yet again, and bore a son and called his name Shelah.

He was at Kezib when she bore him. All of this is up in the land. That's why it tells us it's Kezib and Adullam and so forth.

Then Judah took a wife for Ur, his firstborn. Okay, so Ur, he's got to be a teenager at least. Even if you say he's really young when he gets married, maybe he's 14 or something.

Just think about his predecessors have all been in the vicinity of 40 when they got married. And you say, well, okay, Ur can be 14. But go back to our chronology here because Judah is the fourthborn.

So at the earliest, he would be born when Jacob is 51, 52, somewhere in there. Let's just round it off and say Jacob is 50 when Judah is born, which is really not possible because he can't be any younger than 40 when he goes up there. And he doesn't get married until he's 47.

And Judah is the fourthborn son of Leah. So he's got to be at least 51 when Judah is born. Okay, if he's 51 when Judah is born and Judah is on the plan of a 20-year sojourn, then they're going to go back down to the land in another 13 years or so, or 15 years.

So Judah is going to be about 15 when they get to the land. And he's got to have time to grow up and have these sons and have all of this take place before they go down to Egypt. And if you work out the math, Judah would have had to get married and have these sons when he's 14 years old.

And his sons would have had to get married because he's got grandsons by the time they go down to Egypt. If you look at the list of people that accompany Jacob, it lists Judah and his sons, the ones that are still alive. The two have died and his grandsons from the final marriage are with the party that go into Egypt.

And again, I won't take time to work out all the math, but if you sit and work that out, it's virtually impossible for the events of Genesis chapter 38 to take place if Jacob only spent 20 years in Haran because Judah is not old enough to marry the women of the land and he's not old enough to have grandchildren by the time they go down to the land. You just can't make it work. He would have had to get married when he's 12.

And his sons would have had to get married when they were 12. And it just doesn't wash. He's in charge of flocks.

He goes down and hooks up with what he thinks is a harlot on the way, but it's actually his daughter-in-law Tamar. He's not old enough for that on this plan. The only way we can get Judah to be old enough for these things to make any sense is that there is an interval between his birth when Jacob is, say, 51 or 52, and we have to insert an additional 20 years in here so that now when he gets down to the land, Judah is in his 30s or around 40.

Can I ask a question? Mm-hmm. If Jacob is 40, or just slightly maybe older, when he gets to Paddan-Haram, where Laban is, right? He's just over 40. He stays 40 years.

How is he 91 when Joseph is born if Joseph is born in Paddan-Haram? That's my point. If he only stayed there 20 years... No, 40 years. You add 40 to just over 41, you get 81, not 91.

So he'd have to stay 50 years for Joseph. Right. And what I'm saying is that there is some time there unaccounted for.

I'm dealing with the minimums here. At a minimum, no matter how you slice it, you can't get away with any less time than this. And it appears, in fact, that he may have had an even greater period of time because we don't know how much older than 40 he was when he went up there.

But we know he cannot have been any younger than 40 because his brother was married before he left. And in reality, we're going to find that he was closer to 50 when he went up there. And he spent that time before he came back down.

He was in his mid-40s. There was actually some extra time in here. And you can play with this.

I don't have time to go through all of the math, but I'm giving you the outline of this. And if you want the details, you can work out what the minimums and maximums are. But the point here is we have some additional time.

And my whole point in even bringing this up is, first of all, you don't want to get blindsided by this at some future point and say, well, now wait a minute. I'm here at the end of Genesis. Jacob's 130 and Joseph's 39.

And you wind up coming to this and you say, how can these things be? The Bible must be wrong. Well, this is where the resolution of it is. It's in that time in Heron.

We have assumed and we've read superficially, just like if you go through Romans 9 superficially, you can draw all kinds of strange conclusions. But if you look carefully, there's nothing in the wording of the conversation between Jacob and Laban that requires him to have only been there. We just assume that the 7 plus 7 plus 6 is the same 20 that he says I've been in your house when in fact, they are separate.

It's kind of the reverse of the Egyptian chronology problem. We've taken the king lists and put them all serially instead of realizing they were parallel. Where here, we have something that we've assumed was parallel and it needs to be serial.

There was actually 20 years of service for non-cash compensation and another 20 years of service where Laban changed his wages 10 times. Every two years, he changed his wage. And it wouldn't make any sense that he would be responsible to pay for the torn sheep and the lost sheep and so forth.

He says when something was torn, I bore the loss of it. Well, that doesn't make sense when he's serving for a woman. In what sense would he bear the loss? It would only make sense that he would have to pay for that.

It would come out of his wages, so to speak, if he's receiving cash compensation. So if you go back and look at that, it all kind of makes sense. Plus, here's the whole reason we've slogged through this.

Isn't it interesting? We've seen many parallels and many foreshadowings of the life of Jacob to the nation that will bear his name. What is the length of time that Israel is going to sojourn between deliverance from Egypt and entering the land of Canaan? 40 years. And in the same way that God said, I will be with you just as Jacob is leaving the land.

He says, I will be with you wherever you go and I will bring you back to the land. When Israel is delivered out of Egypt, God says, I will be with you. And you have the pillar of cloud and the pillar by fire.

And for the 40 years, even though they're in a learning mode and they weren't ready, just Jacob isn't ready to receive the blessing that he's big dealed his brother out of. It takes that 40 years of sojourning in Haran before he is ready to come back eventually to Bethel. And Israel is going to have the same experience in the land.

But God is with them every step of the way, even during that sojourn. You know, they came right up to the Jordan and could have crossed the spies in Caleb and Joshua. And it's after that that they wandered for 40 years.

And Jacob, if he'd been ready, could have inherited and never left the land, but he just wasn't ready. And so 40 years later, he comes back and now he's ready. And so you get another nice instance of the 40-year time of testing and time of growth in the life of Jacob as that foreshadows the later history of the nation of Israel.

It also allows us to understand things like the episode with Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38, that he's not a 14-year-old boy going and hiring a prostitute. He's in his late 30s when this takes place. And there is enough time when we straighten out the chronology for these things to be so.

And there is integrity. There's nothing wrong with the account. If we find a conflict like this, it's usually our understanding of some passage.

And so in this case, when we go back, and especially, and I've gone through and picked carefully through the Hebrew of that conversation with Jacob and Laban, and we just assume that the two 20-year periods are the same. And in fact, Jacob is referring to two separate 20-year periods. And he says, I've been here 40 years total, 20 years for wages.

I served 7 plus 7 plus 6 for non-cash compensation. Why are you giving me grief is in a nutshell. But it should remind us of the fact that the Word of God has integrity.

Every detail counts. There's a reason why God gives the death notices and the ages when he does, because they're all significant. It all means something.

And among other things, it tells us that it is a factual account. It's not a story that was made up. It would be real easy in the convoluted details of these patriarchal stories to make a chronological mistake if somebody just thought it up and randomly assigned

dates and ages.

But when we study it, the more closely we study it, the more accurate we find it to be. And it's also a reminder to us to not come to a quick conclusion or to take one passage and say, well, it must be so because look at this one passage. We can straighten out our understanding of the conversation between Jacob and Laban and the length of the sojourn by looking at the rest of Scripture.

And that educates and informs our understanding of that one passage that on the surface seems to say something else. And it's so important. We've seen this in our study of Luke.

It is so important to not rest our case and hang our life. I said Friday night, I don't believe in the idea of a life verse that you can take one verse and say, this is my life verse. I can't tell you in seminary, you know, 11 years of seminary, you hear countless people say, well, such and such, that's my life verse.

Well, for me in my house, I don't believe in a life verse. I believe in a life book. I believe we have to try to... This was the great thing about J. Vernon McGee in the Through the Bible.

He says, it's all equally important or God wouldn't have given it to us. We need to take the whole of it together. And so if one passage seems to suggest, you know, give to every man who asks of you or pluck out your eye and cut off your hand, we need to take the witness of Scripture on that subject from Genesis to Revelation and synthesize our understanding so that we have balance.

So that we take the context into account in any given statement that it makes. In one case, it says, lend and don't expect to get anything in return. And if you've borrowed, be sure and return it.

Don't let the sun go down before you have given what you owe. And in another place, it says, neither a borrower nor a lender be. How do we reconcile that? Well, we've got to take the whole witness of Scripture and understand that it's okay to buy something on time, but don't be late on a payment.

Owe no man anything doesn't mean never be indebted. There was extensive provision in Leviticus for being indebted, for leasing land and returning it in the year of Jubilee and so forth. It means, don't be delinquent in the obligations that you have made.

Don't owe someone something that you promised and you haven't given it to them. So house mortgages are fine. Prudence in taking out loans and things is fine.

It is diligence. But that's just an illustration of the idea that we have to take the entire witness of Scripture and not just home in on Matthew 28 and 19 and say, the goal of the

church is to go preach the gospel to every nation. That's taking one verse and not looking at the witness of Scripture together to decide what our calling and what the mission of our life on earth here is.

So, this is a great illustration of the need to be constantly