

Jacob's Children

29:31 to 30:24

The **twelve sons** of **Jacob** will become the **twelve tribes** of **Isra'el**. Each **tribe** has a translation of its name, and each name is associated with a quote from the mother. These **twelve sons** are listed in the Scriptures over a dozen times. Most of the time **they** are listed in a different order. As we have here, one way they are listed is the order of **their** birth. Another order is to put all of **Leah's son's** first, then **Rachel's son's**, and then **the sons of the maidservants**. But in addition to that, **Joseph** later will have **two sons**, **Ephraim** and **Manasseh**, both of whom are adopted by **Jacob**. Because of **the twins**, **Joseph** will end up getting the double portion of **the firstborn**. **Reuben** was actually **the firstborn**, but like **Esau**, lost **his** position due to sin. When **the tribes** are listed there are fourteen to choose from, but twelve are always numbered. There is always a reason for the omission of one or more of the tribes in each list because **the Holy Spirit** teaches us a lesson each time.

To the nation of **Isra'el** these narratives were more than interesting stories. The rivalry that appears here explains much of the tribal rivalry that followed down through **their** history. But **Genesis** is clear: **the LORD** chose the despised mother, **Leah**, and exalted **her** to be **the mother** of **the Seed son**. Isaac preferred **Esau**, but **ADONAI** chose **Jacob** as **the son** of promise. **Jacob** preferred **Rachel** and **her son Joseph**, but **the LORD** chose **Leah** to bear **Judah**, through which **the Messiah** would come.⁴⁷²

From a human perspective we are amazed at the rancor and bitterness that divides this family. Yet it is through this dysfunctional family **ADONAI** used them to become the channel of **His** blessing to the world. From a divine perspective, **God's** grace is working in the lives of some very improbable subjects. We should be grateful that our salvation rests on the grace of **the LORD** rather than on any human merit.⁴⁷³