

## 10.04 Jacob's Children (Genesis 29:31–30:24)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows  
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- I heartily recommend Herein Is Love Commentary Series; *Genesis, A Commentary for Children*, written by Nancy Ganz and published by Shepherd Press in 2002.

- For 3D visuals: 12 spring-type clothespins; 17 small bases made of Styrofoam®; 4 wooden women (for Jacob's four wives); one wooden man (for Jacob). (These wooden figures may be found at hobby stores.) (Photo shows Rachel, Joseph's front, Benjamin's color-coded back to identify him as Rachel's, and Jacob.)



The clothespins are for Jacob's sons. Their names and torsos, found at the end of this lesson, should be printed on card stock. Clamp a torso with the clothespin, thus making the clothespin the “legs” and the printed torso the body for each son of Jacob. Place clothespin figures in Styrofoam® bases.

- A simpler idea is to print the twelve sons' torsos as found below on card stock and place them, as the lesson progresses, in a pocket chart below the names of the mothers.



**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged below. For this lesson the teacher may wish to display all the words on one letter-sized page since the terms all have the same definition.

- *tribes of Israel, children of Israel, people of Israel, Israelites:* all of these terms mean the descendants of Jacob's sons

### Scripture: (ESV)

Genesis 29:31 When the Lord saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren. 32 And Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Reuben, for she said, “Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.” 33 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, “Because the Lord has heard that I am hated, he has given me this son also.” And she called his name Simeon. 34 Again she conceived and bore a son, and said, “Now this time my husband will be attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.” Therefore his name was called Levi. 35 And she conceived again and bore a son, and said, “This time I will praise the Lord.” Therefore she called his name Judah. Then she ceased bearing.

30:1 When Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!” 2 Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel, and he said, “Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?” 3 Then she said, “Here is my servant Bilhah; go in to her, so that she may give birth on my behalf, that even I may have children through her.” 4 So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. 5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Then Rachel said, “God has judged me, and has also heard my voice and given me a son.” Therefore she called his name Dan. 7 Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed.” So she called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10 Then Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 And Leah said, “Good fortune has come!” so she called his name Gad. 12 Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13 And Leah said, “Happy am I! For women have called me happy.” So she called his name Asher.

14 In the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, “Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.” 15 But she said to her, “Is it a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son’s mandrakes also?” Rachel said, “Then he may lie with you tonight in exchange for your son’s mandrakes.” 16 When Jacob came from the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, “You must come in to me, for I have hired you with my son’s mandrakes.” So he lay with her that night. 17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband.” So she called his name Issachar.

19 And Leah conceived again, and she bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 Then Leah said, “God has endowed me with a good endowment; now my husband will honor me, because I have borne him six sons.” So she called his name Zebulun. 21 Afterward she bore a daughter and called her name Dinah.

22 Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. 23 She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” 24 And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the Lord add to me another son!”

### **Introduction/Review:**

When Jacob had arrived in Haran, he was met by a woman he would come to love. He worked seven years for this lovely lady, Rachel. Rachel’s father, Laban, tricked Jacob by giving him the older daughter, Leah. Jacob worked another seven years for Rachel.

A Chinese symbol for trouble [found below] is said to be “two women under the same roof.” Jacob’s family (with two wives) was not a happy home. Leah, the older sister and first wife, was unhappy because Jacob obviously loved Rachel, her younger sister and second wife, far more than he loved her.

In Bible times it was a disgrace for a married woman not to have children—to be barren. Most women wanted to have children, and not to be able to get pregnant was a cause for others to look down in judgment upon the barren woman.

### **Story:**

One of these two women was barren, just as Sarah and Rebekah had been. The one unable to become pregnant was Rachel, the wife Jacob loved most. When children began to be born to Leah, the turmoil in the family grew worse.

#### ***Leah’s children***

The Bible states, “When the Lord saw that Leah was hated (✓in comparison to Rachel), he opened her womb.” ✓It was as if God was compensating Leah for the disheartening situation in which she found herself. So Leah’s babies began coming. [Refer to the picture below with names and meanings.]

First was Reuben. Leah named this son Reuben, whose name meant “See, a son,” for she said, “Because I have borne Jacob a son, now my husband will love me.” Sorry to disappoint you, Leah. That didn’t happen.

When her next son was born, Leah said, “Because the Lord has *heard* that I am hated, he has given me this son also.” The name of this second son, Simeon, means “hearing.” Despite Leah’s having a second son, there was no change in Jacob’s love for Leah.

Levi was Leah’s third son. His name means “attached” because she thought, “Now this time my husband will be *attached* to me because I have borne him three sons.” That still didn’t happen.

A fourth son, whose name meant “praise,” was Judah. Leah named him, thinking, “This time I will praise the Lord.” This son was special because he would become the ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ. Although Leah didn’t know this fact, she could praise the Lord because He had given her four sons; however, she had not gained the love she desired from Jacob.

After these four sons, Leah ceased having babies—for a while.

### ***Rachel's rage***

Meanwhile, Rachel was unhappy. Why? She was having *no* babies! Rachel, jealous of her sister and ✓seeking to blame someone, lashed out at Jacob. "Give me children, or I shall die!" she cried out.

This accusation angered Jacob. He retorted, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?" So who had kept Rachel from having children? [God.] Rachel needed to understand this.

Do you remember Sarai's solution when she could not bear children for Abram? She gave Abram her maid as a wife so that Abram could have a child by her, and Sarai could somehow claim the son as her own. That didn't work out too well for Sarai, but Rachel thought it might work for her. So, like Sarai, she gave Jacob her maid Bilhah as a wife—a third wife, all at the same time! Oh, this isn't looking good.

Bilhah was not barren like Rachel; she bore Jacob a son whom Rachel claimed and named Dan. Dan means "a judge," for Rachel said, "God has judged me and given a son."

A second son, Naphtali, was born to Bilhah. Rachel gave him a name that means "my struggle," saying, "I have struggled with my sister and won." Bilhah had no more children.

### ***Zilpah's children***

✓"Well," said Leah. "Since I now am not having children, I can play Rachel's game too. Here, Jacob. Take my maid, Zilpah, for your fourth wife so that I can claim to have more children."

Jacob, indeed, took Leah's servant Zilpah as a wife. She bore Jacob a son. Leah claimed him and said, "A troop (like soldiers) has come!" ✓as if Leah's children were growing into an army. Gad, meaning "a troop," is what Leah named this son.

When Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son, Leah said, "Happy am I!" "Happy" is the meaning of Asher, this son of Zilpah's that Leah again claimed and named. Zilpah's childbearing, like Bilhah's, ended with two sons.

### ***Leah's additional children***

After Zilpah's two sons were born, Leah began to bear children again. She named her next son Issachar, meaning "reward" or "wages," for she said, "God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband."

Another son, Zebulon, was born to Leah. His name meant "dwelling," for Leah said, "Now my husband will dwell (or stay) with me (✓in comparison to Rachel) because I have given him six sons." Well, part of Leah's statement is true, and part is not true. She had given Jacob six sons by actual birth, but he still favored Rachel.

Leah had one more child, a girl named Dinah. Then she stopped having any more children.

Remember the catechism question, "Who made you?" This whole story is an example of this principle, for God was responsible for each of these births. Now it was time for Him to bless Rachel in this way.

### ***Rachel's first child***

We don't read during this time that Rachel had any more temper tantrums, but ✓we can assume she listened to Jacob's remark about God's withholding children from her. Instead of blaming, she took up praying to Jacob's God. The Bible tells us, "God listened to her and opened her womb," which means He made a baby inside her body.

Joseph was her son's name. "God has taken away my disgrace," she said. "May the Lord add to me another son!" The meaning of Joseph is "adding." Rachel believed God would give her another son after Joseph. She was right, but that would happen later than the period of time this lesson includes.

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- We see Jesus: He was a descendant of Judah.
- It is God who gives children. We should think of them as God's gift to us.
- God answered the prayers of Sarai, Rebekah, and Rachel for children. Pray to Him about your needs.
- Thank the Lord for your parents.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: children—eleven boys, one girl
- Sing one of the songs found below that list the names of Jacob's sons.
- Sing the first four verses of "Jacob" found in Lesson 10.01 and on the Songs page at [teachingthebibleto kids.org](http://teachingthebibleto kids.org).
- Place large sheets over a table for a tent. Students and teacher may sit inside this tent. Perhaps the class can sing or answer the review questions in this location.
- Review questions: (Game: Print, back with paper towel, and cut out eleven (not Benjamin) torsos of the sons of Jacob. Students may place a "son" on the flannel board or in a pocket chart for each correct answer.)
  1. Why was there trouble in Jacob's home? [He had two wives; one was loved and the other not loved.]
  2. Which wife was loved but barren? [Rachel.]
  3. With which wife did God show the favor of giving children? [Leah.]
  4. Give the names of three of Leah's sons. [Any three from Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Gad, Asher.]
  5. All of the meanings of Leah's sons' names had to do with her relationship to Jacob. What did Leah think would change with the birth of each son? [Jacob would love her.]
  6. Name the two maids of the sisters. [Bilhah and Zilpah.]
  7. How many sons did each of these maids have? [Two.]
  8. Finally, Rachel had a son. What was his name? [Joseph.]
  9. Why did Rachel name her son Joseph, whose name means "adding"? [She believed she would add another son.]
  10. Who decided when all these children would be born? [God.]

### **Memory Verse[s]:**

- Psalm 127:3—Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward.

### **Handwork:**

- Complete the word search below; color the picture.

*tribes of Israel*  
*children of Israel*  
*people of Israel*  
*Israelites*

all of these terms mean the  
descendants of Jacob's sons

#1 Leah Leah's maid Zilpah

#2 Rachel Rachel's maid Bilhah

Underline or highlight Leah in blue; Zilpah, in red; Rachel, in purple; and Bilhah, in yellow or orange.

# Jacob's Sons

<b>Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Mom</b>
1. Reuben	See, a Son	Leah
2. Simeon	Hearing	Leah
3. Levi	Attached	Leah
4. Judah	Praise	Leah
5. Dan	Judging	Bilhah
6. Naphtali	Wrestling	Bilhad
7. Gad	A Troop	Zilpah
8. Asher	Happy	Zilpah
9. Issachar	My Wages	Leah
10. Zebulon	Dwelling	Leah
11. Joseph	Adding	Rachel
12. Benjamin	Right Hand	Rachel



# Jacob's Sons

Jacob is calling his twelve sons to a Father's Day celebration. Can you help him find them all? Asher, Benjamin, Dan, Gad, Issachar, Joseph, Judah, Levi, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, Zebulun—where are you?

L E A R S I H W F N G G  
A J A C O B R S E C E N  
N W K O A N D B U J N I  
B A B Y A I U G Z U E S  
J E P D F E M B E D S S  
I A N H R K N H B A I A  
S J C J T G J L U H S C  
R I O W A A A V L K Y H  
A T M S I M L D U R U A  
E C V E E B I I N G Z R  
L S M E O P T N L E V I  
A S H E R N H J A C O B



by Page Zyromski

## The Oldest Father

To find the age of Methuselah, the oldest father who ever lived, divide the number of years this father (Noah) lived following the flood (Genesis 9:28) (\_\_\_\_\_) by the number of this father's (Zebedee) sons who became disciples of Jesus (Matthew 4:21) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_. Subtract the number of years this father (David) reigned as king over Israel (1 Kings 2:11) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_. Multiply the number of years it took this father (Solomon) to build the temple (1 Kings 6:38) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_. Add twice the number of sons born to this father (Jacob) (Genesis 35:22) (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_. Your answer is the number of years Methuselah lived. Turn to Genesis 5:27 to check your answer.

by Carroll McNutt

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**Twelve Tribes of Israel** (tune: “Whosoever Will to the Lord May Come”)

(In this song the sons are not in birth order.)

Jacob lived in Canaan, there he had twelve sons;

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun,

Issachar and Asher, Naphthali and Dan,

Joseph, Gad, and Benjamin.

**Twelve Tribes of Israel** (tune: “Ten Little Indians”; put to music by Rhonda Wooten)

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah,

Issachar, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali,

Gad and Asher, Joseph, Benjamin -

These are the sons of Jacob. (Shout, “Twelve!”)

**Twelve Tribes of Israel** (tune: “Reuben, Reuben”)

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah

Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali,

Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin

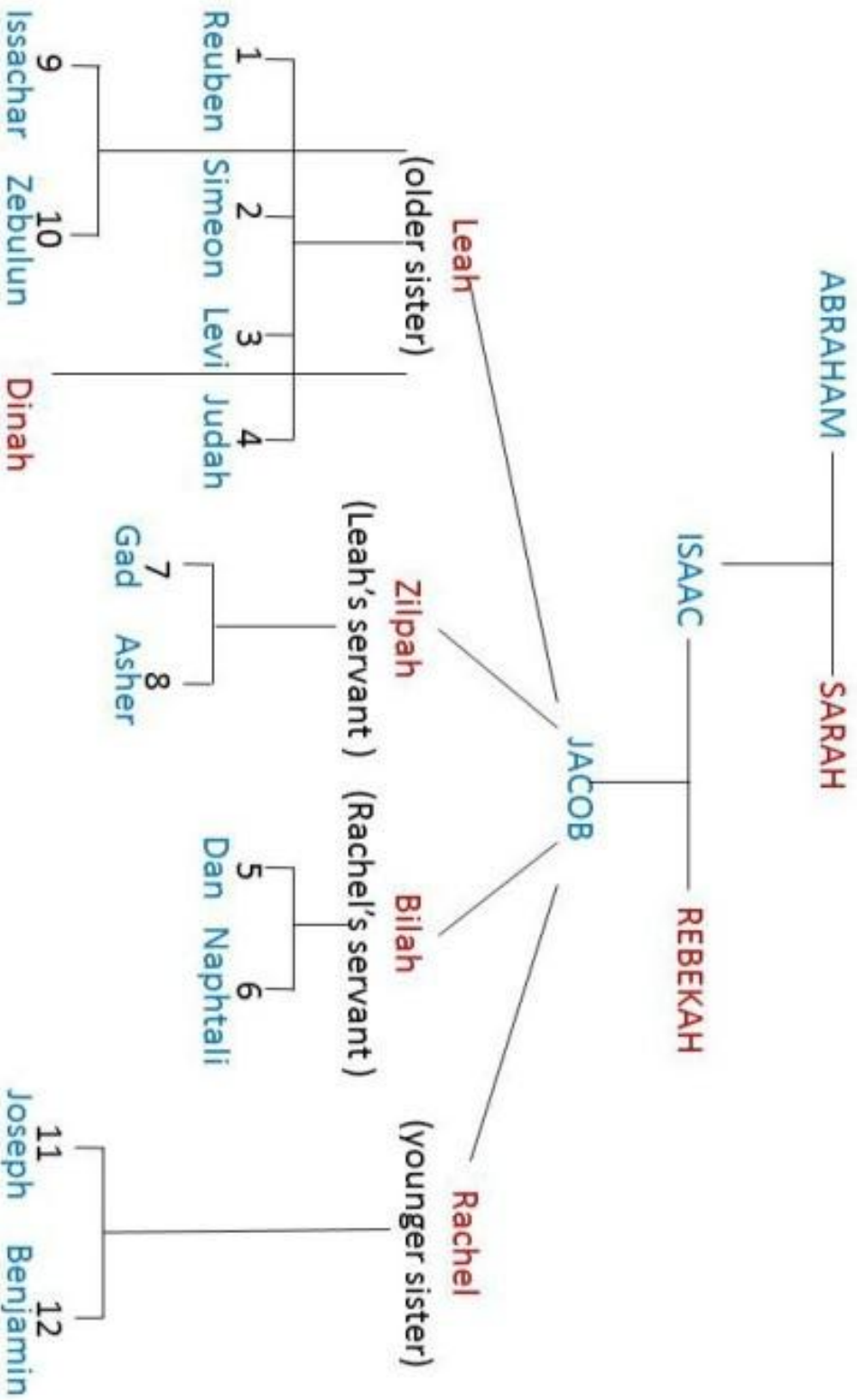
Are the sons of Israel.

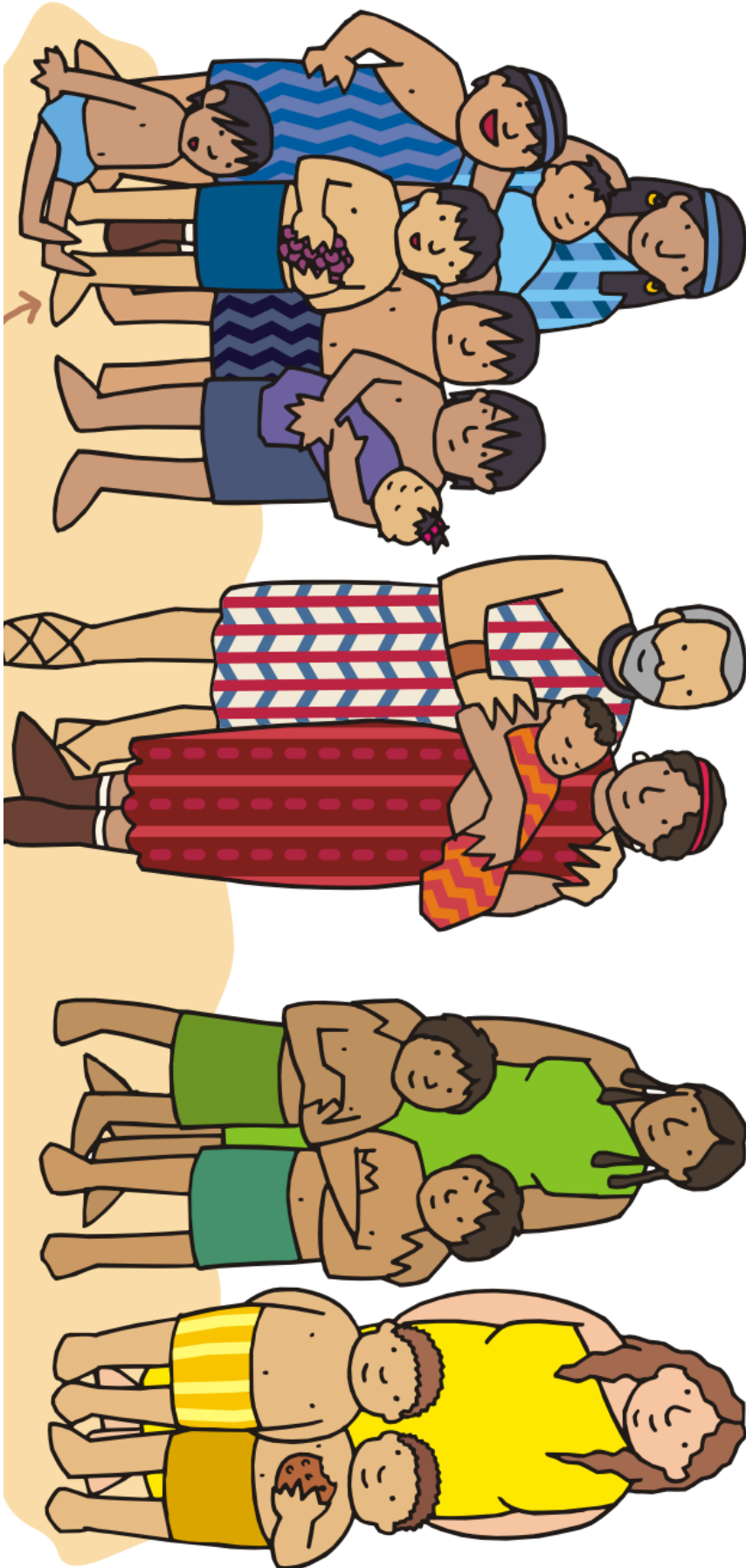




Supposed Chinese symbol for trouble—two women under the same roof  
<http://oldlankagal.blogspot.com/2011/09/trouble-two-women-in-same-kitchen.html>

# 12 Tribes of Israel





### LEAH

1. Reuben ("See, a son")
2. Simeon (hearing)
3. Levi (attached)
4. Judah (praise)

9. Issachar (my wages)
10. Zebulun (dwelling)

Dinah, a girl (judgment)

### RACHEL

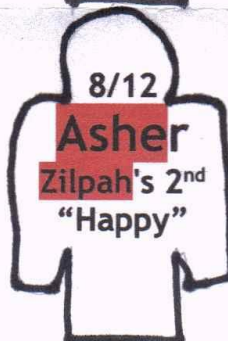
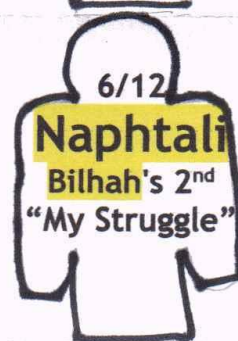
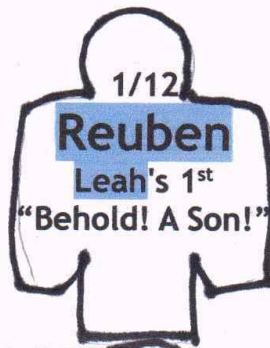
11. Joseph (adding)
12. Benjamin (son of my right hand) not pictured

### BILHAH

5. Dan (judging)
6. Naphtali (wrestling)

### ZILPAH

7. Gad (a troop)
8. Asher (happy)



Leah	Bilhah	Zilpah
Rachel		