

Genesis Ch. 30

Ch. 29 The Lord opened Leah's womb and she conceived:

Reuben: "Behold a son".

- Leah's desire is for the love of her husband.

Simeon: "Hearing".

- The Lord has "seen" and "heard" that she was not loved, and blessed her – affirmed His love for her.

Levi: "Joining", "jointed to".

Judah: "Praise"

- Leah has at this moment stopped looking at her husband, and is looking to the Lord, and giving Him praise: finding her fulfillment in God.
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V: 1 The shoe is now on the other foot. Rachel envies Leah, possibly for the first time in a long time. Rachel had been the object of Jacobs love and affection, possibly the center of attention even prior to that because of her beauty.

- Now however, beauty no longer satisfies and there is a deeper longing yet to be satisfied.

1 Peter 3:3-4 ³Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting of apparel; ⁴But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

A seeming contrast to Leah, who looked to the Lord for her fulfillment.

- Here we see Rachel looking at both her sister with envy, and to her husband with expectation, a demand for fulfillment.
- Like Leah who was likely not oblivious to Rachel's plight, other than praying for her sister there is nothing she can do.

Proverbs 24:17 "Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth:"

Matthew 5:44 "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

- We don't want to read between the lines too much, but it does seem as though Leah and Rachel have moved from a simple sisterly relationship to a more adversarial relationship – or at the least they are competing for the affections of Jacob.

“... give me children, or else I die.”

- Ironically it would be just a few years later when Rachel would die in child birth.

V: 2 Jacob's point is correct, and there may have been extenuating circumstances that we don't read about – generally speaking anger is a manifestation of the flesh.

Ephesians 4:26 “Be angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.”

Galatians 5:16 “This I say then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”

V: 3-8 Plan “B” – not waiting on God, or calling out to God – but doing what Sarah did, taking matters into her own hands and ushering a 3rd woman into the scenario.

- This may be as a result of a lack of prayer, or of waiting on God for an answer to prayer:

Matthew 7:7-8 “⁷Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: ⁸For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

James 4:2-3 “²Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. ³Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

- Bilhah: “care free” / “un-worried”
- Tradition: (surrogate motherhood) a pregnant servant could deliver their child while seated upon the knees of their mistress, and in a symbolic and practical way all at once, it was as if the child was born from between the knees of the mistress.
- Thus both Dan & Naphtali are born of the hand maid, Bilhah.

Dan: “Justice”, or “Judged”
Naphtali: “Wrestling” –

- Thus far the score is 4 to 2, with an asterisk over the two.

V: 9-13 Leah sees that she left off bearing children, joins in on Rachel's plan seeking to pad the numbers a little.

Zilpah: "Short nosed" – "A Trickling"

Gad: "Troop" – "Fortune"

Asher: "Happy"

V: 14-16 **Mandrakes**: A small, perennial plant (*Mandragora officinarum*) native to the Middle East. Although not grown for food, its root and berries are edible. The Ancient Near East viewed it as an aphrodisiac and fertility drug.

- Superstition / wives tale – no real effect. Later we see that Rachel only bore children after God enabled her to do so – not because of her will, or any superstitious practice.

V: 15 Gives us a glimpse into the pain and emotion brought to bear in this situation. What comparison is there to "taking a husband away" and "trying to get someone's herbs or flowers?"

- Only misguided emotions make something that is normally insignificant more important than it really is.
- Rachel desires Leah's mandrakes as a solution to her "problem".
- Leah probably didn't want to help the "competition".
- Wife rights being sold just like the birthright and the blessing, and Jacob plays along.

V: 16 Rachel gets the mandrakes, Leah gets Jacob.

- Rachel probably thought that since Leah had stopped bearing children that it was safe, and she herself would benefit from the fertility treatment.
- Leah goes out to meet Jacob.
- Just something cool about this wife that goes out to greet her husband.
- I love it my wife greets me when I get home.
- Rachel got the mandrakes but they didn't do her any good. She only had children when God allowed it.

V: 17-21 *“And God hearkened unto Leah,...”*

- This implies that Leah was asking God, praying to God for children.

James 5:16 “... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

Philippians 4:6-7 ⁶“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Answered prayer for Leah – two more sons and mention of a daughter:

- 5th son: grace
Issachar: “man for hire” – “hireling” – “reward”
Zebulun: “elevated dwelling” – “exalted”
- Leah sees that her children are a gift from God.
- Dowry: A marriage present that ensured the new wife's financial security against the possibility her husband might forsake her or might die.
- The husband-to-be or his father paid the dowry or bride price to the bride's father to be kept for the bride. The bride could protest if her father used the dowry for other purposes.
- Service could be substituted for money; (Gen. 29:15-30; Josh. 15:16-17).
- Besides guaranteeing future financial security, the dowry also compensated the bride and her family for the economic loss represented to her family by her leaving to join her husband's family.
Dinah: “Justice” – “Judgment”
- Rachel saw that Leah was being blessed with sons, she had tried various things, maidservants, mandrakes, etc. – she's being provoked to jealousy.
- Just as Leah copied Rachel in the giving of her maidservant to Jacob to wife.
- In the next verse we see God responding to Rachel's request. It appears that she calls out to God, possibly because she saw the result of Leah doing so.

V: 22-24 God hears the cry of his saints:

Psalms 34:4 “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.”

Psalm 34:6 “This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.”

Psalm 34:15 “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.”

Psalm 34:17 “The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.”

V: 23 Rachel acknowledges that it is God who has enabled her to have children.

V: 24 **Joseph**: “Adding” – “Jehovah has added”

- What she is saying is that she wants more, she isn't satisfied.

She has tasted and seen that the Lord is good, she desires, craves, God's blessings.

Job 23:12 “... I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.”

V: 25-26 Jacob had served 7 years for Leah, and now he had served an additional 7 years for Rachel – he's been with Laban for 14 years and it's time to go home.

- Jacob has fulfilled his obligation to Laban.
- No doubt Jacob remembers God's promise from chapter 28.

Genesis 28:15 “And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

- Jacob doesn't just leave, he's looking for Laban's blessing to go back home with his wives and kids.

Romans 12:18 “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

V: 27 *“And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favor in thine eyes, tarry...”*

- Who is asking who here?
- Laban has experienced the blessing that God had promised to Abraham:

Genesis 12:2-3 “²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: ³And I will bless

them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

- Jacob is asked to tarry a little longer, to delay.
- Eliezer was given the same proposal, but he refused – not wanting to delay not only his return, but the marriage of the bride to the son.
- So often this is the tactic of the world, if they can't stop us from entering the promise land, maybe they can delay us.
- What's the hurry? It can wait until after _____.

“For I have learned by experience...”

- Experience: (H5172) nachash, naw-khash'; to hiss, whisper a magic spell; divine, enchanter, use enchantment, learn by experience, X indeed, diligently observe.
- “For I have learned by divination and enchantment...”
- Laban is involved in pagan worship and in enchantments, all good reason to leave ASAP.

V: 28-30 Jacob is reluctant to stay, he wants to go home, and he wants to take care of his own family.

- Jacob probably also knows that Laban doesn't make any deal that he doesn't prosper by.
- Laban made out pretty good the last time he let Jacob name his own wages so he tries again.
- Jacob reminds Laban of how Laban has prospered with Jacob serving him.

V: 31 “... *Thou shalt not give me anything:...*”

- Just as Abraham wouldn't take anything from the King of Sodom, neither would Jacob accept gifts from Laban.
- Jacob would, however, work for wages. Bearing in mind that his motive is to take care of his family.

V: 32-36 Jacob names his wages – all the specked, spotted, streaked, or off color sheep & goats.

- These were considered the off breed animals, not as desirable as the white, solid colored animals.

- To this day in the middle east, sheep are primarily white, goats are predominantly brown or black.
- Jacob has the understanding that God would bless him, even with the off color, less desirable stock.
- Jacob was operating by faith, not by sight.
- Jacob was trusting God at His Word, something that is very pleasing to God.

Isaiah 40:8 “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the Word of our God shall stand forever.”

- It was entirely up to God as to what Jacob would receive.
- Laban removed the off colored stock personally and placed them with his sons, 3 days away from Jacob and the main herds.
- Jacob would be starting from scratch – not a problem for God.
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd, who feeds the flock. He is removed 3 days from the spotted, speckled, and streaked cattle. It is the outcast that are his reward / wages, because He loves us.

V: 37-43 No one really knows the effect or significance of stripped sticks being set by the watering troughs.

- Some have suggested that it caused the animals to go into heat, or that it was pre-natal suggestion or marking. Bovine aphrodisiac?
- Not completely understood, but this does cause an increase in animal sexual activity.
- Jacob probably knew the principals behind what we now know to be Mendellian’s law regarding dominant and recessive genes.
- Jacob being 90-91 years old and an astute shepherd and observer was able to determine which of the solid colored stock were:

- Homozygous: which if mated with other homozygous stock would produce the same dominant genes.

Or

- Heterozygous: stock which did contain some proportion of genes to produce off colored stock.
- With selective breeding, large herds of strong breeding stock, predominantly off colored stock could be developed, and was.

- Laban continued to benefit, Jacob simply benefitted more in a short time.
- Jacob was blessed because God was blessing him.

Romans 8:31 “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us,
who can be against us?”