

Genesis Chapter Thirty

Genesis 30:1-5

Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die." Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" And she said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her, that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children." So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.

- Rivalry between sisters—first for husband—then for sons
- Rachel is the one who has brought Jacob pleasure—Leah the opportunity for self sacrifice.
- It was an accepted custom for a servant to bear a child by the husband—in place of the wife.
- Child described as being 'born on the knees' of the wife—establishes the legal rights of the child.
- Jacob rebukes his wife Rachel in her lament of barrenness. Isaac had prayed for Rebekah.
- Abraham involved in naming Ishmael and Isaac—only women involved in naming Jacob's sons.
- Barrenness and fertility attributed to God
- Two wives weren't enough trouble? Now add two concubines.

Genesis 30:6-8

Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan. And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed." And she named him Naphtali.

- The rivalry and contempt between the sisters is illustrated in the name given to the second son—born by maid—Naphtali=with my wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and I have prevailed
- Dan=judgment; a judge
- Naphtali-wrestling

- Though there is no indication that Jacob prayed for Rachel—she has made it a matter of prayer—begging the Lord for a son
- These are all raised as brothers

Genesis 30:9-13

When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad. And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women will call me happy." So she named him Asher.

- Gad=troop; fortune
- Asher=happy
- Due to rivalry—bearing 4 is insufficient. When Leah stops bearing she gives Zilpah as a wife
- Names of both of Zilpah's sons speak more of blessing than rivalry.

Genesis 30:14-15

Now 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." But she said to her, "Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also?" So Rachel said, "Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

- Mandrakes: strong smelling roots regarded to have aphrodisiac qualities
- The mandrakes do nothing to help Rachel—but Leah gains another son by parting with them
- Were the children aware of the rivalry—need for reproduction? They seem somewhat involved here
- Leah's response to request shows her sense of rank as first wife—elder sister—and that Rachel had taken from her

Genesis 30:16-21

When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he lay with her that night. And God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. Then Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I gave my maid to

my husband." So she named him Issachar. And Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. Then Leah said, "God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun. And afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

- This exchange starts off a new series of pregnancies
- Issachar=hire
- Zebulun=dwelling
- Dinah=judgment
- Leah is in position of purchasing affection

Genesis 30:22-24

Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. So she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." And she named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me another son."

- When Joseph is born—he becomes the 11th son
- Joseph=let him add
- Indication that Rachel has been praying about her condition

Genesis 30:25-34

Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my own country. Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you." But Laban said to him, "If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the Lord has blessed me on your account." And he continued, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." But he said to him, "You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. For you had little before I came, and it has increased to a multitude; and the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?" So he said, "What shall I give you?" And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock: let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep, and every black one among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages. So my honesty will answer for me

later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen." And Laban said, "Good, let it be according to your word."

- Laban acknowledges the supernatural blessing he has experienced while Jacob was with him
- Jacob has taken Laban from poverty to wealth
- Jacob never wants to be seen as indebted to Laban. Wants it clear to Laban where the increase comes from
- Jacob refuses to make a new wage settlement—instead insists on a productivity deal.
- Usually sheep/goats are white, brown, or black—seldom spotted
- Jacob suggests his wage will be ownership of the spotted and speckled
- As Jacob's family is being established—there is a growing sense of wanting to return to a place and household of his own. Laban is the master in this location (With a father influence over the wives)
- Implies enough service has been rendered to Laban to make the wives and children his own.
- Jacob has learned to believe that among animals—the offspring of a mother will acquire certain characteristics through what happens at time of copulation. Jacob schemes to cause this influence—to affect future births. He does this only when the strong animals breed. It creates wealth for Jacob—to bring about independence.
- He claims that inspiration for this came from God (31:12)

Genesis 30:35-43

So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. And he put a distance of three days journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks. Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink. So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock. Moreover, it came about whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, that Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might

mate by the rods; but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

- Laban removes every current speckled—so Jacob will only receive future speckled. They are removed to another location by his sons.
- It is believed that the sight of these rods will alarm the animals while they mate—thus producing speckles.
- The flocks were not only divided by outward appearance—but according to strength
- This is a description of transfer of wealth—thru manipulation