

In the Beginning

Genesis 30:1-43

- Since we've met Jacob we see him making deals that he believes will benefit him in the long run, in **Ch 27** we saw that when he used his brother's hunger and struck a deal to take his birthright from him, we saw in **Ch 28** the Lord speaking to Jacob and reassuring him that He is the God of Abraham and Isaac and the land that he walks on He will give it to him and his descendants, and afterward Jacob bargain "**if you will be with me, protect and provide for me so that I return to my father's house then You will be my God and I will give a tenth of what I have to you**", in **Ch 29** after meeting Laban his uncle he strikes another deal for Rachel his daughter to be his wife.
- When you are always looking for the best deal inevitably you can't help but to lean on your own understanding, and eventually it is going to backfire on you, well in Jacob's case it has backfired at every level. After the Esau deal it led to the dissolving of his family as Esau hated Jacob and plotted to kill him for what he done, the deal at Bethel where he bargained for what God had already said He'd do, then finishing with if God did these things then He gets to be his God, and now after making a deal for **1** wife for **7yrs** he ends up with **2** wives for **14yrs** of servitude.

V1-43

- **V1-2** after having a wedding rooted in deception, Jacob is now a father of four, and instead of celebrating the expansion of his family there is nothing but strife and jealousy inside the home. We see this in the request that Rachel makes to Jacob asking him "**to give her children or she'll die**". If you ever questioned how can you tell if a request is righteous or unrighteous, the answer usually lies in the motive, here Rachel is envious of her sister for having children and she doesn't so her motive for wanting children is not to honor the Lord but to compete with her sister and fill some void in her life, children do not fill voids they expose problems that are already there.
- Rachel is not unlike many today, who also have uttered the phrase give me ----- or I'll die, you can fill the blank with anything > relationship, job, finances, home, whatever it is you believe you cannot live without. Jacob initially responds correctly telling Rachel that it is God Who controls the womb and not he, and that this is something that he cannot bargain for. **V3-4** Rachel has another suggestion why don't we use my handmaid Bilhah as a surrogate, we see right away that many of Laban's traits had rubbed off on his daughter as she without any prayer or seeking the Lord believes that she has found a solution to her problem by means of the flesh.
- After **14yrs** one would think that Jacob would have caught on that the suggestions from this family are not wisdom that comes from the Lord but benefit only themselves. In the **20yrs** that Jacob will be here not once will we see him praying to the lord before making decisions, in the description of Rachel scripture mentions only how beautiful she was physically, it doesn't say anything favorable about her spiritually, and in this situation we can see why. Sadly although Jacob acknowledges that it is God Who controls the womb yet he gives in to Rachel's solution.

- **V5-6** just like in **Ch 16** lack of prayer leads to no wisdom and much compromise as Jacob succumbs to the sad arrangement his grandfather Abraham did which produced “**Ishmael**” the **son of the flesh** instead of the **son of promise** Isaac who wouldn’t come for another **13yrs** later. When Leah had her first 4 sons we read that it was the Lord who saw how Leah was unloved and mistreated that He had opened her womb and so she named her children after her hope –faith. As **Reuben**- See a son, **Simeon**- Hearing, **Levi**- Attached, **Judah**- Praise, Rachel on the other hand names her children not after hope or faith but envy, as she felt wronged over her barrenness.
- **V7-8** after naming the first son Dan meaning “**God has judged my case**” Bilhah conceives again and she names him Naphtali meaning “**with great wrestling’s I have wrestled my sister and have won**”. Can you imagine the dysfunction that these kids have been born into? **V9-13** Leah says two can play this game and includes her handmaid; oh foolish Jacob gives into it and now has **2 wives, 2 concubines and 8 sons**, the phrase they gave their maids as wife didn’t mean Jacob actually married them it means he did with them what a man should only do with his wife.
- **V14-21** the children are brought into this ungodly competition as Reuben brings Leah some mandrakes which was a root called the love-apple in Hebrew, as it was thought to increase fertility in women, so she uses this to entice Jacob to be with her. Rachel hears about it and asks for some but Leah response shows how intense the hostility between the sisters had become, as both sisters believed that the other had stolen their husband from them, can you imagine living in an environment like this. It just confirms the wisdom of God’s original plan as expressed in **Gen 2:24**, where **one man** was to be joined to **one woman** in a **one flesh relationship**.
- So after having **2** more sons and a daughter it seems that the competition was over, but in a competition like this there are no winners only losers and this is just the tip of the iceberg concerning the problems that await this disjointed family, for when you are playing games you easily forget that its more at stake than you and your feelings its people you’re dealing with. **V22-24** even in all the chaos, confusion, and disobedience, God is still a God of mercy as He remembers Rachel and gives her a son, and she names him “**Joseph**” may He add, this meant she believed the Lord would bless her with another son as well so Joseph’s name reflected that.
- **V25-26** after **11** sons, **1** daughter, **2** wives, **2** concubines, in **14** yrs of serving Laban, Jacob wants to leave, and Laban just like the world doesn’t want to let him go. Laban is what the world is all about, physical pleasure, sandwiched between lots of pain and work, it offers you 1 thing and when you reach for it you find that it wasn’t what was promised. **V27-30** this is exactly what Laban envisioned when he trapped Jacob into marrying his daughters to prosper by his hand, he remembered how his servant came to them after decades of being gone and told them how prosperous Abraham was and the promises that God had made him and he wanted some of that

- Satan would like nothing better than to have **Ps 106:13-15** happen to you, remember this when you're making requests, examine your motives, to see if the request is for God's glory, and did it originate from my trust of God or out of a lack of faith in God? **V31-36** knowing that Laban didn't want him to leave Jacob tells him he'll stay only if he allowed him to have all the speckled and spotted sheep of his fold and that would be his wages, Laban quickly agreed to it. Then had his sons take all the speckled and spotted goats out of the flock so they couldn't reproduce any more assuring that Jacob would have to stay, what a scoundrel Laban is.
- **V37 -43** but God works beyond genetics, as He had already spoken to Jacob in a dream telling him what to do and what He was going to do, so he need not worry about what Laban does. In the next chapter we'll read how uncle Laban had stacked the deck many times in the Jacob's **14** yrs there, and had even changed his wages **10** times for the worst and not for the better, and yet when Jacob allowed the Lord to deal with Laban it's the only time he comes out ahead.