

God, The Provider of all Blessings! Genesis 29:31 – 30:24 5.10.2023

Turn in your Bibles tonight to Genesis Chapter 29. For tonight we are going to begin from verse 31 of Chapter 29 and go through verse 24 of Chapter 30. What we are going to see tonight is a bunch of babies being born, but there is a lot more in these verses for us to learn from. Speaking of babies being born! I got curious! So, if my Planning Center list worked, we would have had around 14 babies born over the past year and with a few more on the way. If that is not exact it is definitely close.

Once again, what we are going to see is the effects within a family when there is deception and competition for that matter.

Jacob, whose name means: heel holder or supplanter, he cheats, has now himself been deceived.

As we learned, Laban, Rebekah's brother, therefore, Jacob's uncle, contracted with Jacob into working for him for seven years so Jacob could marry Rachael, Laban's youngest daughter. But, when the seven years were up it was not Rachael, but Leah, Laban's oldest daughter that Jacob was deceived into marrying. Jacob asked Laban, "Why did you this to me?" Laban said, "It was not custom for the younger daughter to be married before the older daughter. Take Leah, and for another seven years of work, you can marry Rachael!"

That is exactly what Jacob did and after seven more years, he was able to marry Rachel. Now the fun begins! Let's begin to read our verses beginning with verse 31 to 35 of Chapter 29.

Genesis 29:31-35

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.

We see a word here that is pretty strong! The word, Hated! What we have seen over the past two weeks is that it was not Leah that Jacob wanted to marry. His love was for Rachael! As Matthew brought out a few weeks ago, Leah was part of the deception, along with Laban, that brought her to this point of being married to Jacob.

Was this hate in its complete sense? I don't believe so. Whose affection was Jacob completely devoted towards? Rachael! In the Gospel of Luke, Luke wrote, being led by the Holy Spirit, these words of Jesus, talking about the cost of being a true disciple of Jesus.

Luke 14:25-27

²⁵ Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Is this a command to hate our family? No! But our love for Jesus should outweigh our love for our family.

This is what we see here. It isn't that Jacob hated Leah, it was the fact his love and affection for Rachael was so great that it appeared as hate compared to his affection for Leah. In fact, we see from verse 30 of last week that it shows us that there was some affection towards Leah.

Genesis 29:30

³⁰ So Jacob went in to Rachael also, and he loved Rachael more than Leah, and served Laban for another seven years.

So, there was some affection, but it was obvious who was Jacob's true love, and it was obvious to Leah as well. Look at Leah's responses when she would have a child.

Verse 32 – Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction; for now my husband will love me.

Verse 33 – Because the Lord has heard I am hated, he has given me this son also.

Verse 34 – Now this time my husband will be attached to me because I have borne him three sons.

Leah was acknowledging that the Lord was the provider of the blessing of the children, but she was also hoping this would draw Jacob closer to her as well.

Look at the names she gave her children:

Reuben – behold a son.

Simeon – heard.

Levi – joined to

It was definitely very important that a father have his family name continue on. With the agrarian society they lived in it was important for that first child to be a what? A boy! A son! Leah is showing Jacob, look a son Jacob!

Leah was in turmoil here and with Simeon she gives acknowledgment to the Lord that he sees her pain and struggles and hears her prayers. Then with Levi, meaning joined to, now my husband will attach to me. Now, he will treat me the same as my sister, surely, I have won his love. I have given him 3 sons!

Well, that does not happen, and Leah gets to the point where her praise or let's say attitude changes a little bit. It is not that she is not still seeking Jacob's love, but she directs her praise and thankfulness not so much in what she can get from God but in the fact of who God is. God is the provider of all blessing!

Leah is blessed with another son, and she names him:

Judah - Praised

Genesis 29:35

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.

We cannot make people act a certain way that we want them to act in many situations. We can't make a lost person act saved! We can't make a person think about us any differently than they do! We can't make a person that says they are a follower of Jesus Christ live more obediently to the Word, though we would like to take them by the neck and say, "What are you thinking, don't you know that is not biblical and you are being a stumbling block!"

What we can do is speak truth according to God's Word, love on them, pray, and turn them over to the Lord Jesus!

Well, if you are keeping score! Here it is:

Leah – 4

Rachael - 0

As I mentioned earlier, from all this deception that happened it brings a lot of turmoil, and we even see a competition boil over between Leah and Rachael. Leah was in turmoil and anguish because of Jacob's love for Rachael and Rachael is in turmoil and anguish because she is barren. Rachael lets Jacob know in no uncertain terms her feelings.

Genesis 30:1-2

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?"

I am going to go back just a little bit to where it says at the end of verse 35, that Leah ceased bearing children. What was the reason for that? We are not certain; it is not really explained. But here is Rachael, having to watch her sister give birth to four sons and she is not able to provide any children for her beloved husband.

It was and I believe still the desire of a woman to provide children for her husband but not only that, but it is the maternal instinct God put into the woman at creation. The desire to bear children. What was the gender that was always hoped for of the first child? A male, a son! Remember that was God's command from the beginning as he told Adam and Eve, be fruitful and multiply. After Noah and his family came out of the ark, God again commanded, be fruitful and multiply.

We saw through the promise to Abraham, that his descendants would be like the number of the stars in the sky. We saw the promise renewed to Jacob a couple of weeks ago, as Jacob had a dream, and God told him his offspring would be like the dust of the earth. Well, for that to happen there had to be a lot of being fruitful and multiplying going on.

We must also remember there was the stigma of shame and embarrassment if a woman was barren. Rachael not only had to put up with that, but she also had a sister giving birth to four sons to the man she loved. So, we see envy along with the anguish of being barren.

Envy and jealousy can bring us to a point of being irrational in our thinking. To be jealous of the good fortune of another individual is a sin that brings you to a point of bitterness in your heart. It brought Rachael to the point of commanding Jacob to give her children, asking Jacob to do something about what he had no control over and neither did Rachael.

It caused Jacob to be angry with Rachael as he saw this sin in her life. This was true anger. You know Jacob would do anything for Rachael if he could, but again he reminds Rachael that God is in control here. We need to realize something here.

Though we may not fully understand the circumstance we are in, it does not change God's sovereignty. Even in God's sovereignty and his majesty he is always right beside us to lean into and to depend on and trust in. Though we may look at a situation as chaotic and unable to understand, God is in control.

I said how envy, and really sin can cause us to make irrational decisions. Well, we are about to see something we have seen before. Rachael, unwilling to wait upon the Lord and listen to him for direction, makes a decision like her husband's grandmother, Sarah, made some years back. Let's read verses 3 to 8 because not only do we see this decision I have mentioned but we also see this competition hit into high gear.

Genesis 30:3-8

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.

With Rachael's decision and Jacob going along with it, they go the way of Abraham and Sarah. Not waiting on the Lord like Isaac and Rebekah had. Yes! The Lord was gracious to them that two sons were born from Bilhah and Rachael and Jacob take them as their own. Dan, meaning judged, Rachael's saying God had judged her and it was God that had made her barren.

Naphtali, meaning wrestling's, because showing that she was in competition here with her sister. Wrestlings, meaning there was a struggle and there was to be a winner as Rachael says, "I have prevailed!"

Well, Leah was not going to be outdone. Two can play this game! Look at verses 9 to 13.

Genesis 30:9-13

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.

Leah, seeing the children that are now given to Rachael she goes and gets her servant Zilpah and again goes down the route of Abraham and Sarah. Leah was not content to leave things as they are. Leah had already given birth to four sons. The rivalry, the jealousy between these two sisters. Through Zilpah, Leah adds two more to her score.

Leah – 6 (2 assist attributed to Zilpah)

Rachael – 2 (Both assisted attributed to Bildah)

We also see the vanity that comes with this where Leah says that all the women are going to recognize all that I have. There is no mention of God's blessing here. It is her prestige and her glory that she is going after. Things do not stop there. Let's read verses 14 to 21.

Genesis 30:14-21

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.

We have seen jealousy, competition, vanity, and now we see superstition enter into this fray. What is a mandrake? Look at this picture:



You see that it resembles the human body, and it was believed by many pagan nations that it helped with infertility. Reuben, Leah’s first born, found these and brought them back to his mother. Rachael sees this and asks for some, not all, but for some. You see the tension! Leah, it is kind of like her saying to Rachael, “Really? You actually are going to ask me for these! You have Jacob! Okay, Let’s Make A Deal!” Give them to me and you make be with Jacob for a night.

Now, I am going to pause here for a moment. God does not condone of what we have seen here. From the beginning of time God designed marriage to be between one man and one woman, male and female, for life. **Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Matthew 19:1-4.** Marriage does not come in any other shape or form. But God, in his mercy will complete his will and his plan in spite of all our failures and weaknesses.

Remember a couple of weeks ago I mentioned that the Bible does not hold any punches when bringing out the bad and ugly of people’s lives. What we have seen here is the way not to do things! We have seen over the past few weeks in our study that encompassed many years is:

1. A son that despises a birthright so much he would sell it for a bowl of soup.
2. A son that despises God so much he would live a life to torment his parents.
3. A son and wife deceive, a father and husband, to assure a blessing given to that son that God had already promised.
4. A brother hates his brother so much that he was plotting to murder him.
5. A son having to flee his family.
6. A deceiver, deceived into marrying a woman he did not love.

7. Now, two sisters, where envy, jealousy have caused tension, division, treachery, within their family to the point that one has pimped her husband out to the other.

You may say, well it all worked out in the end! No one goes unscathed when sinning or living in a life of sin. Yes, there is God's forgiveness, and his mercy. Yes, if we truly repented of our sins, we can live a life of peace and strength because we know we have been forgiven.

You know for some of us, there are scars and reminders that can come up once in awhile and we have an adversary, the devil, who likes to remind us of our past sometimes. But, to steal a line from the Chosen, as Mary Magdalene was sharing with Nicodemus.

I was one way, and now I am completely different. And the thing that happened in between was him! So, yes, I will know him the rest of my life!

May I remind us! ***For we have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless, we live, not I, but Christ who lives within us. And the life we now live in the flesh we live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us!***

So, with the deal that was made between Leah and Racheal, Leah conceived and bore three more children. Two sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and a daughter Dinah. Back to the scoreboard.

***Leah – 8 sons, two assists from Zilpah, and one daughter
Rachael – 2 sons, assists given to Bildah.***

And from the verses we read, it is obvious that Rachael was crying out, praying to the Lord to let her give birth to a child. God answers that prayer.

Genesis 30:22-24

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!"

Rachael is blessed to conceive and bear a son. Joseph, his name meaning, Jehovah has added! Let's jump ahead! Rachael would give birth to one more son and his name would be Benjamin. So, in the end the score would look as such:

***Leah – 8 sons, two assists from Zilpah, and one daughter
Rachael – 4 sons, 2 assists from Bildah***

A total of 12 sons. Through this competition, if you will, through the envy, the treachery, there was still a bigger picture outside of all this. There was a promise that God made back some 200 years or a few more to Abraham.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

This promise was passed on to Isaac, and as we saw two weeks ago, passed on to Jacob in a dream. Now, nowhere do we see that the promise was that Jacob would have 12 sons to fulfill this promise or covenant. But, through the events of what we saw, Rachael and Leah were trying to fulfill the promise that the descendants were to be more like the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore.

To use the term, jump ahead again. We know that this nation became great in number while enslaved by the nation of Egypt. Through God's mercy they were redeemed from this nation as Moses led them out of Egypt. From these 12 sons, which would be called, the 12 pillars, would become the 12 tribes of Israel. These 12 tribes would be made up of the people that God would continue to make his covenant with as God said these words to Moses to the people of the obedience God expected.

Deuteronomy 7:6-11

6 "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, 8 but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations, 10 and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. 11 You shall therefore be careful to do the commandment and the statutes and the rules that I command you today.

This nation was to live as in a way to show God's Holiness, Power, Mercy, Forgiveness, Justice, and his redeeming power.

After Rachael gave birth to her son Joseph, she mentioned that her reproach was taken away from her. There was another son born that takes our reproach away. We can have forgiveness of our sin, the shame and guilt that comes from sinning against a Holy, Righteous God, can be taken away. Sin had left a crimson stain but he, Jesus, made it white as snow.

Now, if you remember from last week, maybe I can jog your memory. Tim mentioned a spoiler alert. It is not through any of the sons of Rachael that Jesus came through. Who knows the line by which Jesus came through? Judah! Who gave birth to Judah? Leah! Leah the unloved, Leah the one who endured the pain of in a way being an outcast by her own father, living with the jealous resentment from Rachael.

In Genesis 49, Jacob, as he is about to die, blesses and prophecies about his 12 sons. When he came to Judah, Jacob said these words.

Genesis 49:8-10

8 "Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

By many and I agree, this is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, who is Jesus Christ! Was Leah alive to hear these words, was she aware of what this meant? We don't know! What grace and love the Lord showed towards Leah, that even in this mess up, crazy family, the Savior of the World would be come to save us from our sins.

God used Moses, who came from the tribe of Levi, to redeem the nation of Israel from their slavery in Egypt. What was the role of the men of the tribe of Levi? To be the priests, to lead the nation in worship and

knowledge of, and repentance to God through the Old Covenant. It is through Jesus Christ, who became the high priest of the New Covenant that redeemed us from the slavery of our sin.

Titus 2:11-14

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation for all people, ¹² training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

Listen to what Revelation 1:4-7 says, now in verse 4 it says to the seven churches in Asia, but this is a letter to the Church, followers of Jesus Christ, as a whole.

Revelation 1:4-7

⁴ John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. ⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.



This is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham as the tribes of Israel that made up the nation divided up the promised land. What was their purpose? To live holy and in obedience to the Lord to proclaim salvation from the Lord.



We are called as a royal priesthood, a royal nation as Peter calls all followers of the Lord Jesus in 1 Peter 2:9. We are to proclaim the excellencies of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. Now we are that ragtag, broken, messed up family to go and proclaim the Gospel to a world!

Stand strong church and Go! Praise God from whom all blessings flow! Proclaim his praises!