



Story: adapted from an Indian short story about envy

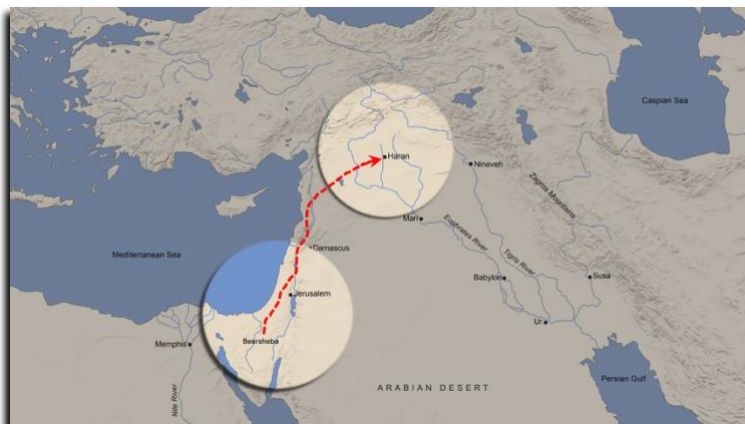
There was a poor, bitter old woman in a small town here in the USA. All her neighbors were very well off, and she really resented them.

One day her raggedy old car died, and she was extremely sad. Just then, as she was walking home, a kind, rich man who owned a car dealership saw her and said, "What is the problem?" She said, "Everyone I know has a nice new car that works, and money, and things to live on, but I have nothing left! The rich man quickly called his guys on the phone, and then three guys drove up in three brand-new cars. He said, "Today is your day! I am going to give you a brand-new car!" But before I do, I want you to tell me your neighbor's name and address. The poor woman said, "Why do you want my neighbor's address?" The rich man said, "I also want to give him two new cars."

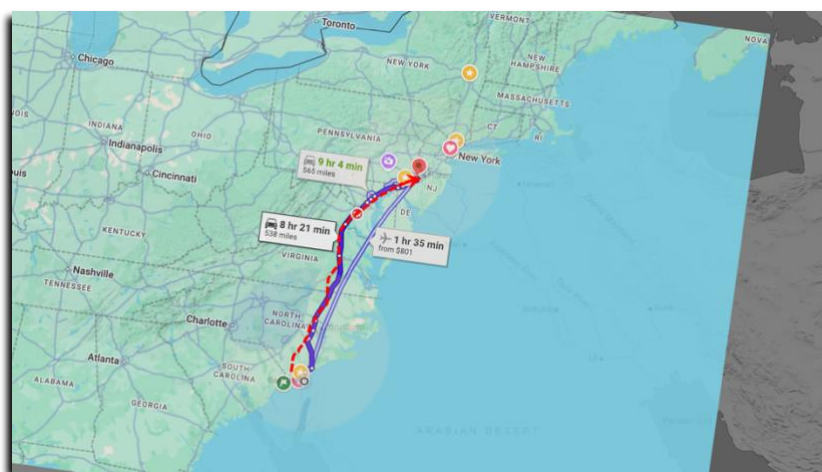
The poor woman's joy began to turn to jealous anger. She said, "My neighbor already has everything he could need! If you give him two new cars, I don't even want one from you!"

The rich man said, "Your issue is not poverty; it's jealousy." He continued, "If you would just be content with whatever you are getting, then you wouldn't be so angry and unhappy when your neighbor prospers." After he said this, he looked at his guys, and they jumped back into the brand-new cars and drove away. The Woman walked back home and asked God to heal her of her jealous heart, and he did.

- Today we are going to see how envy can make life very difficult, yet God will work through it all for His will.
- [Matthew 20:1-16](#) – **The laborers in the Vineyard story** is similar



- [Map]



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- **Jacob** walked or donkeyed around 500 miles
 - Equal to Wilmington, NC to Philly!
 - By car: 8 hr. 21 min, 538 miles, via I-95 N

Pick up **29:31-35** Leah has four children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah

Genesis 30

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.”

- Envied –
 - Envy is a reaction to lacking something that another person possesses
 - Biblical envy is presented as a distressing or resentful recognition of someone else's advantages, combined with a wish to have them.
 - **Cain/Abel; Saul/ David; The Pharisees/ Jesus**
 - **envy(n.)** – late 13c., from Old French *envie* "envy, jealousy, rivalry" (10c.), from Latin *invidia* "envy, jealousy" (source also of Spanish *envidia*, Portuguese *inveja*), from *invidus* "envious, having hatred or ill-will," from *invidere* "to envy, hate," earlier "look at (with malice), cast an evil eye upon," from *in-* "upon" (from PIE root *en "in") + *videre* "to see" (from PIE root *weid- "to see").
 - Jealousy is the malign feeling which is often had toward a rival, or possible rival, for the possession of that which we greatly desire, as in love or ambition. Envy is a similar feeling toward one, whether rival or not, who already possesses that which we greatly desire. **Jealousy is enmity prompted by fear; envy is enmity prompted by covetousness.** [Century Dictionary]¹
 - They both want what the other has.
 - Rachel has Jacob's love; **she wants** Jacob's children
 - Leah has Jacob's children; **she wants** his love
 - Envy is never good from a biblical perspective:
 - ([Romans 1:29](#); [Galatians 5:19–21](#); [1 Peter 2:1–2](#))
 - [1 Timothy 6:6](#) – ⁶ But godliness with contentment is great gain,
- Give me children, or I shall die – This expresses the depth of her pain

¹ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/envy>



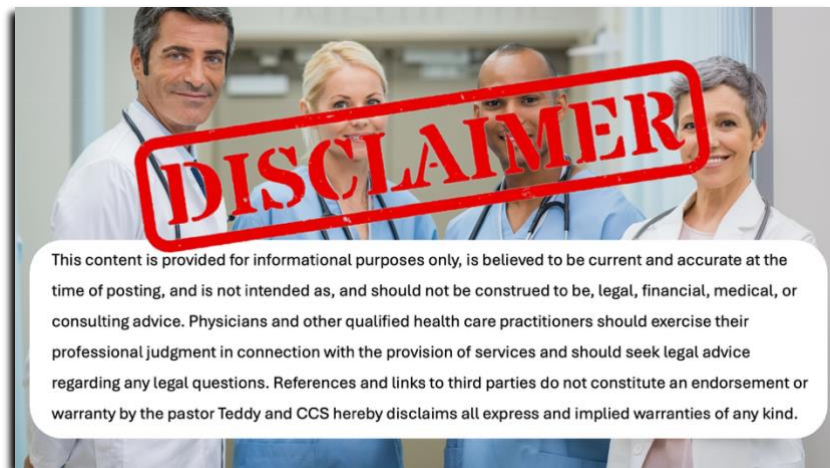
- The irony of her statement is that she will die giving birth to Benjamin many years later ([Genesis 35:18-20](#)).
- Rachel's demand reflects the historical/traditional view of that period, which held that women's status was frequently linked to their capacity to bear children.
- Isaac prayed for his barren wife. 20 years passed. Jacob pray?

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.

- **Surrogacy – There are different views**

- The Bible does not directly address our modern definition of surrogacy.
 - IVF
 - Medical techniques and practices have broadened what a barren couple can do.
 - Some people feel that to have someone else carry a child for a barren couple is to play God.
 - It is important to recognize that not all cases of barrenness stem from God's direct judgment on a couple; rather, many (if not most) stem from the overall fallen state of mankind, where things often don't function as they should.
 - Having a sperm and an egg does not automatically mean that life will result from them. If so, IVF would always work. It does not.
 - **Life is still from God.**
 - Others recognize the beauty of God empowering humans with abilities to overcome and address medical challenges.

- For many people, ignoring a medical opportunity, even with the subject of barrenness, seems inconsistent with many other medical decisions.
 - We do blood transfusions to save lives; we remove tumors and perform many other medical procedures to save lives.
 - The Bible does address the use of medicine
 - In Hezekiah's case, when he was about to die ([2 Kings 20:7](#)) – ⁷ And Isaiah said, “Bring a cake of figs. And let them take and lay it on the boil, that he may recover.”
 - [1 Timothy 5:23](#) – ²³ No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments.



- It doesn't prohibit the use of medicine.
 - [Luke 5:31](#) – “Jesus answered them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.’”
- One ethical objection is that a medical procedure to save a life is different from creating life.



- A counter is that the creation of life is still up to God; the procedure to bring it about is just more complex through medical techniques.
- There are passionate people on both sides of the issue.
- The Bible points to family dynamic issues when surrogacy is used
 - Hagar/ Sarah
 - **However**, surrogacy doesn't seem to be the primary problem; inquiring of God is the main issue.
 - In both cases, Hagar/ Sarah and Rachel/ Leah, no one asked God if it was ok.
 - Nowhere does God condone these multiple-wife situations.
 - On the contrary, one-wife policy is His prescription.
 - Yet, He allows things that are not best.
 - This is the guidance for a couple today considering options.
 - A desire to be parents is good.
 - Inquire of God about the options. Commit your steps to Him as you seek His leading.
 - [Proverb 3:5-6](#)

⁸ Then Rachel said, "With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister and have prevailed."

So she called his name **Naphtali**.

- Talk about a dysfunctional household! It's a battle for kids.
 - Where is the joy over a child? Only joy over besting her sister.

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."



- Mandrakes?
 - "Mandrake is probably the most famous 'magic' plant in Europe, known for both its medicinal and psychoactive properties and a wide range of legends and myths have been associated with it over the centuries. Known since ancient times, it appears sculpted in various Egyptian tombs and its healing properties are mentioned in the Eber papyrus (1500 BCE). Initially used as an amulet for good luck, as an aphrodisiac and to treat infertility, its use from the 1st century was as a sedative and anesthetic in surgical procedures. Pliny gave his patients a piece of root to chew before operations and Dioscorides used mandrake wine as an anesthetic and to ease pain."²

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

² <https://www.europeana.eu/en/exhibitions/magical-mystical-and-medicinal/mandrake>



mandrakes.” So he lay with her that night. ¹⁷ And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.

- you have taken away my husband – Leah was part of the shady operation in the 1st place.
 - Technically, she took away Rachel’s husband

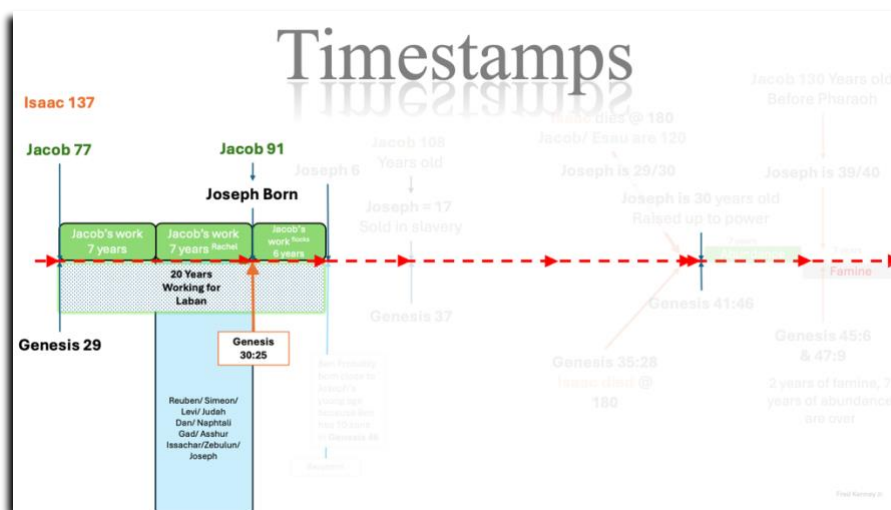
¹⁸ Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I gave my servant to my husband.” So she called his name **Issachar**.

- Issachar - reward

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!”

- Then God remembered Rachel – It’s not that He ever forgot. This is about His action now giving her a son.
- **11 sons and one daughter**
 - God sovereignly worked through the sinful envy, jealousy, competition, failure to love a wife, and abuse from father-in-law to bring about the sons who would become the nation of Israel. Within a seven-year period.



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1. *What is the purpose of this study?*

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also?" ³¹ He said, "What shall I give you?" Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this for me, I will again pasture your flock and keep it:

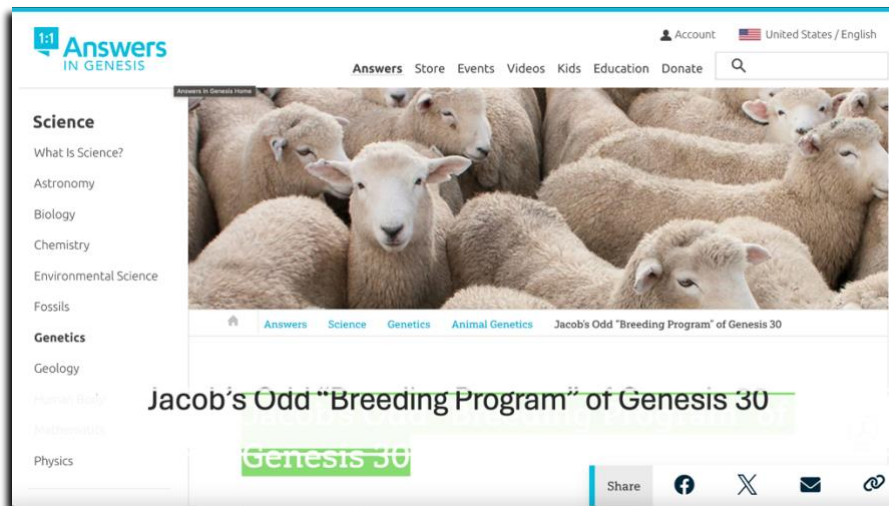
³² let me pass through all your flock today, removing from it every speckled and spotted sheep and every black lamb, and the spotted and speckled among the goats, and they shall be my wages. ³³ So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come to look into my wages with you. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, shall be counted stolen." ³⁴ Laban said, "Good! Let it be as you have said."

³⁵ But that day Laban removed the male goats that were striped and spotted, and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had white on it, and every lamb that was black, and put them in the charge of his sons. ³⁶ And he set a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob pastured the rest of Laban's flock.

- Laban is not an honest operator!
- He already confirmed he knew that God is with Jacob!
- Look at how Jacob is demonstrating trust in God for provision.

³⁷ Then Jacob took fresh sticks of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white streaks in them, exposing the white of the sticks. ³⁸ He set the sticks that he had peeled in front of the flocks in the troughs, that is, the watering places, where the flocks came to drink. And since they bred when they came to drink, ³⁹ the flocks bred in front of the sticks and so the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.

- In the next chapter, Jacob says God gave him a vision ([Genesis 31:11-13](#)).
- The main message here is not about a new medicine or supplement to increase production; it is about God's provision.



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- Answers in Genesis [article](#) on the science behind what Jacob did.³

⁴⁰ And Jacob separated the lambs and set the faces of the flocks toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban. He put his own droves apart and did not put them with Laban's flock. ⁴¹ Whenever the stronger of the flock were breeding, Jacob would lay the sticks in the troughs before the eyes of the flock, that they might breed among the sticks,

- Is Jacob using trickery again?

⁴² but for the feeblers of the flock he would not lay them there. So the feeblers would be Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. ⁴³ Thus the man increased greatly and had large flocks, female servants and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

- The man increased greatly – God made him wealthy from nothing!
 - Keep in mind, he is set to inherit the wealth of Abraham and Isaac when Isaac passes.
 - Yet, he arrived in Haran with nothing.
- Jacob's journey

³ <https://answersingenesis.org/genetics/animal-genetics/jacobs-odd-breeding-program-genesis-30/>



- Very much like our own.
 - We met the Lord, we grew, we are growing; still, old us is there-just less

The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵ the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you;

²⁶ the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.