

Genesis 30

Verses 1-8

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." ² 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?" ³ 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." ⁴ So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. ⁵ Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. ⁶ Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son." Therefore she named him Dan. ⁷ Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. ⁸ So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestling's I have wrestled with my sister, *and* I have indeed prevailed." And she named him Naphtali.

And Rachel said to Jacob, "Give me children, or else I die

There is some sad irony in this statement

See Genesis 35:16-20

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?"

We can all understand her frustration, but some things are out of our control

Rachel said, "Here is my maid Bilhah, that through her I too may have children

How did this social custom work out for Sarah?

When her handmaid conceived, Sarah became insignificant in her sight

Sarah then became angry with Abraham

Abraham basically said it's your problem you deal with it

Then Sarah treated her harshly until she fled from her presence

Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son

DAN means God is my judge

Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again

NAPHTALI means my struggle, or my strife

Both of the boys were named by Rachel, not the handmaid

This says a lot about the social position of a handmaid in those times

But despite what people may have thought or said, God saw them as wives.

Verses 9-13

⁹When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. ¹⁰Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. ¹¹Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad. ¹²Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. ¹³Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women will call me happy." So she named him Asher.

Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son

GAD means fortunate

Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son

ASHER means happy and blessed

Hear again the "wife" names the two sons of the handmaid

However, the reaction of Leah is quite different from that of Rachel

But that can be explained by the fact that Leah was able to bear 4 sons before her handmaid was given to Jacob

Verses 14-21

¹⁴ 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.” ¹⁵ 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.” ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. ¹⁸ Then Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband.” So she named him Issachar. ¹⁹ Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah

See pics 3005



Mandrakes have unusually large, forked roots that sometimes resemble a human body

See pics 3010



The form of the mandrake roots gave rise to many superstitions including the belief that they were effective as a fertility drug

One has to wonder if Rachel wanted these for food or as medicine

We know that Rachel was not free from pagan ideas, because she later took personal charge of Laban's household gods

See Genesis 31:34

Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son's mandrakes also

Leah was both right and wrong about Rachel taking her husband

She was wrong because Jacob had worked 7 years to marry Rachel not Leah

She was right because Rachel decided when Leah could spend time with Jacob

When Jacob came in from the field, 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

If anyone thinks polygamy is a good idea, this family should nullify that thought

1. Leah felt hated because Jacob loved Rachel more
2. Rachel farmed out Jacob like a hired hand

This family needed an intervention, but even Dr. Phil might have passed on this one

There is no doubt that men had more control and authority over their wives during this time in history but it may have been less than what many have suggested.

Let's read verses 15 and 16 again

So Rachel said, "Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes." ¹⁶ 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."

There is no doubt that Rachel controlled this part of their relationship

Not much has changed in the last 3,700 years concerning this matter

Come on ladies, you know what I'm saying is true. 😊

God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son

Issachar means hired man

No explanation needed on this one 😊

Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob

Zebulun means dwelling, because Leah said; now my husband will dwell with me

The woman who wasn't loved gave birth to half of Israel

Afterward Leah bore a daughter and named her Dinah.

There might have been other daughters born to Jacob, but none are mentioned

Dinah's involvement with Shechem in Genesis 34 might lie behind her introduction here

Verses 22-24

²² Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb. ²³ So she conceived and bore a son and said, "God has taken away my reproach." ²⁴ She named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me another son."

Then God remembered Rachel, and God opened her womb

Sometimes the answer to prayer is no or not at this time.

In this case, her time had finally come

Rachel named him Joseph, saying, "May the Lord give me another son."

Joseph means add, because Rachel wanted to have another son

Jacob worked 7 years for Rachel

During the next 7 years he had 12 kids in 7 years (11 sons and 1 daughter)

So 14 years have passed since he came to Laban

However, Jacob was still working for Laban and did not have any flocks of his own.

Verses 25-36

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ 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.” ²⁷ 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.” ²⁸ He continued, “Name me your wages, and I will give it.” ²⁹ But he said to him, “You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me. ³⁰ 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?” ³¹ 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: ³² 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. ³³ 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.” ³⁴ Laban said, “Good, let it be according to your word.” ³⁵ So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, everyone with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons. ³⁶ And he put *a distance of* three days’ journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks.

Jacob said to Laban, send me away

After 14 years, Jacob had a desire to go back to his own country

He also wanted to own his own business (flocks)

Laban said to him, “If now it pleases you, *stay with me*”

Laban wanted Jacob to stick around because he had fared well on account of Jacob

This should have been fairly obvious, since Laban had little before Jacob came and now his cattle had increased to a multitude (verse 30)

Jacob requested that he be paid from the flocks and herds and Laban agreed to that arrangement

Verses 37-43

³⁷ 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. ³⁸ 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. ³⁹ So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. ⁴⁰ 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. ⁴¹ Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods; ⁴² but when the flock was feeble, he did not put *them* in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. ⁴³ So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted

There were two factors that turned Laban's herds into Jacob's herds

1. God showed Jacob which animals would breed the most
2. Jacob aided it by controlling the breeding

So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

The providence of God is quite evident in this narrative

1. Jacob learned a good lesson concerning the evils of deception
2. God gave the greater number of children to Leah who was not loved
3. God blessed Jacob and his family abundantly

We all have flaws and weaknesses in our lives but for those that believe and trust in God, He will turn all of these things into a blessing

We just shouldn't expect it to happen overnight.