

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

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.” <sup>2</sup> 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 Rachel’s frustration, but this was not something that Jacob had any control over. The fact that Jacob became so angry about this matter tells us that this subject had been broached a few to many times.

<sup>3</sup> 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.”

How did this work out for Sarah? When her handmaid conceived, Sarah became insignificant in her sight and Sarah treated her harshly until she fled from her presence.

<sup>4</sup> So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her. <sup>5</sup> Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. <sup>6</sup> Then Rachel said, “God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son.” Therefore she named him Dan.

5. DAN means God is my judge.

**<sup>7</sup> Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. <sup>8</sup> So Rachel said, "With mighty wrestling's I have wrestled with my sister, *and* I have indeed prevailed." And she named him Naphtali.**

6. 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 these handmaids as wives.

Verses 9 - 13

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

**<sup>10</sup> Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son.**

7. GAD means fortunate.

**<sup>12</sup> Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.**

8. ASHER means happy and blessed.

**<sup>11</sup> Then Leah said, "How fortunate!" So she named him Gad.**

**<sup>13</sup> Then Leah said, "Happy am I! For women will call me happy." So she named him Asher.**

Hear again the "wife" names the two sons of the handmaid. However, the reaction of Leah is quite different from that of Rachel

Rachael named her sons God is my judge and my struggle while Leah named her sons fortunate and happy and blessed.

This can be explained by the fact that Rachael was still childless whereas Leah had 4 sons.

Verses 14 - 21

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

<sup>14</sup> 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

<sup>34</sup> **Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddlebag, and she sat on them. So Laban searched through all the tent, but did not find *them*.**

**<sup>15</sup> 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?”**

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. But she was right because Rachel decided when Leah could be with Jacob.

**<sup>16</sup> 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.**

If anyone thinks polygamy is a good idea, this family should nullify that thought for the following reasons:

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

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

**<sup>17</sup> God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. <sup>18</sup> Then Leah said, “God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband.” So she named him Issachar.**

9. Issachar means hired man.

God gave Leah another son, but it wasn’t because she had given her maid to Jacob. That kind of thinking can lead people to conclusions that nullify the word of God.

**<sup>19</sup> Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob. <sup>20</sup> 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.**

10. Zebulun means dwelling.

Leah came to another false conclusion. It was true that she gave Jacob 6 sons but Jacob still chose to dwell with Rebekah. However, she was blessed because the woman who wasn’t loved gave birth to half of Israel.

<sup>21</sup> **Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah.**

It is likely that Dinah is mentioned here because of her involvement with Shechem in Genesis 34.

Verses 22 - 24

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

11. Joseph means add.

Rachel waited 7 years to have a child but this child would make it all worthwhile.

Verses 25 - 36

<sup>25</sup> **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.** <sup>26</sup> **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.”** <sup>27</sup> **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.”** <sup>28</sup> **He continued, “Name me your wages, and I will give it.”** <sup>29</sup> **But he said to him, “You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me.** <sup>30</sup> **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?”** <sup>31</sup> **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:** <sup>32</sup> **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.** <sup>33</sup> **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.”** <sup>34</sup> **Laban said, “Good, let it be according to your word.”** <sup>35</sup> **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.** <sup>36</sup> **And he put *a distance of* three days’ journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban’s flocks.**

<sup>25</sup> 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.

After 14 years, Jacob had a desire to go back to his own country and to own his own business (flocks).

<sup>27</sup> 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.”

Laban wanted Jacob to stay because he had fared well on account of Jacob.

<sup>31</sup> 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: <sup>32</sup> 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.

Jacob requested that he should first be given back pay in the form of sheep, lambs and goats. And from this time on his flocks could easily be identified from Laban’s so there would be no misunderstanding about his pay. And Laban agreed to that arrangement.

After this Laban moved 3 days away from Jacob and his family.

Verses 37- 43

<sup>37</sup> 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. <sup>38</sup> 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. <sup>39</sup> So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted. <sup>40</sup> 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. <sup>41</sup> 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; <sup>42</sup> but when the flock was feeble, he did not put *them* in; so the feebler were Laban’s and the stronger Jacob’s. <sup>43</sup> So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.

<sup>39</sup> **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.

See Genesis 31:10

<sup>10</sup> **And it came about at the time when the flock was breeding that I raised my eyes and saw in a dream—and behold—the male goats that were mating were striped, speckled, or mottled.** <sup>11</sup> **Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob'; and I said, 'Here I am.'** <sup>12</sup> **He said, 'Now raise your eyes and see *that* all the male goats that are mating are striped, speckled, or mottled; for I have seen everything that Laban has been doing to you.**

2. God controlled the breeding process so Jacob gained an advantage over Laban who had been treating him unfairly.

<sup>7</sup> **Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to do me harm.** <sup>8</sup> **If he said this: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flock delivered speckled; and if he said this: 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock delivered striped.** <sup>9</sup> **So God has taken away your father's livestock and given *them* to me.**

<sup>43</sup> **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 and Laban 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 just as he had promised.

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.