

# GENESIS 30

## The Children Born to Jacob

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### KEYWORD

God (Plural)  
God (Singular)  
LORD  
GOD  
Lord  
lord  
El Olam  
Bara  
Asah  
Beth  
Numbers

### REVERANCE

Elohim (The Trinity)  
El  
Jehovah & or Yahweh (YHWH)  
Jehovah & or Yahweh  
GOD the Master (Kurios), Adonai  
Man the Master  
Everlasting God  
God creating from nothing  
God making or assembling from existent materials  
House

- 1 - Unity between God the Father & His Son Jesus (John 10:30)
- 2 - Represents union, division, and verification
- 3 - Harmony, New Life & completeness (467 times)
- 4 - Creation & The creative ability of God.
- 5 - God's grace, goodness and favor toward humans (318)
- 6 - Imperfection of man and the sin and weakness he has
- 7 - Perfection
- 8 - New beginnings
- 9 - Divine completeness or conveys the meaning of finality (49)
- 10 - God's authority, completeness, order, and divine perfection
- 11 - Disorder, chaos and judgment (11 - 24 & "11th" - 19)
- 12 - God's power and authority (187)
- 13 - Rebellion
- 40 - Represent completeness or wholeness.
- 70 - Perfect spiritual order carried out with all power.

### Keywords

"create" (bara), "make" (asah), and "form" (yatsar). In Isaiah 43:7 - All the three are used.

*Jehova means the becoming one as God relates to man and man's needs and becomes to man whatever man may need*

### PRAYER

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**Father we thank you for the privilege of studying your word together.**

Thank you for the records Jesus, that lead us to you and eternal life in you.

**Jesus let your Holy spirit now implant upon our hearts your truths.**

Thank you Jesus that revelation knowledge will flow freely, uninterrupted & un-hindered by satanic or demonic forces.

**In Jesus's name and everybody say Amen!**

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# GENESIS 30

## REVIEW

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Genesis 30 is characterized by sibling conflict between Jacob's wives, the birth of many more children under the blessing of God, and Jacob eventually achieving great wealth after striking a deal with his father-in-law.

Chapter 29 described the treacherous circumstances of Jacob's marriage to a pair of sisters: Leah and Rachel.

Expecting to marry Rachel after seven years of free labor, Jacob was stunned to find that his father-in-law had switched sisters during the wedding night.

The end result of this ploy was Jacob being married to two women, and with another seven years of labor ahead of him.

In response to Jacob's understandable resentment of Leah, God allowed her to conceive sons, while Rachel remained barren.

This chapter begins with a despondent Rachel declaring to Jacob,

***"Give me children, or I shall die!"***

Not only is she desperate to become a mother, she envies her sister Leah who has already born four sons to Jacob.

Jacob loves Rachel more than Leah, but he rightly corrects her that God alone is the giver of children in verses 1–2.

This will become a theme of the chapter; one explored both in human and animal examples.

In response to her infertility, Rachel follows the unfortunate example of Jacob's grandmother Sarah (Genesis 16:1–4).

She gives her own servant woman to Jacob as a wife.

By customs of the time, any children borne to that servant would have been considered those of the wife.

Bilhah soon bears Jacob two sons, Rachel's sons by proxy.

Rachel named the boys for her circumstances and feelings at the time they are born in verses 3–8.

At the same time, Leah had stopped becoming pregnant, perhaps because Rachel's influence is keeping Jacob from sleeping with her in verse 15.

She now followed Rachel's example and gave her servant woman to Jacob as a wife.

Zilpah, in her turn, gives birth to two sons.

These belong to Leah by proxy, and she gives them happy names in verses 9–13.

## GENESIS 30

None of these births, though, ended the rivalry between Rachel and Leah.

Both know that Rachel remains barren and that Leah remains unloved by Jacob.

Their conflict flares to the surface when Leah's son Reuben brings home some rare mandrake plants he found.

Mandrakes were thought to help with arousal and infertility.

When Rachel asked Leah for the plants, likely hoping they will help her to get pregnant, Leah lashed out that Rachel had taken her husband and now wants to take her mandrake plants.

Rachel, apparently desperate, offers to give Leah one night sleeping with Jacob in exchange for the plants.

Rachel, apparently, held great power over Jacob in the family dynamic in verses 14–16.

Leah began to bear children again, having another two boys and a girl, naming them all for God's provision in her life.

Rachel, too, finally bears her first son, Joseph.

Her name for him amounts to a prayer for another son to follow in verses 17–24.

The narrative then shifts to inform us that Jacob's 14 years of service to Laban in exchange for his two wives has come to an end.

He demanded that his father-in-law send him away so he can return home to his own people.

Its possible Laban retained some legal right to not release Jacob.

In any case, Laban said plainly that he has become wealthy because of the Lord's blessing on Jacob.

He asked Jacob to name new wages to continue to work for him verses 25–28.

Instead of Jacob asking for a flat wage or even a percentage of Laban's flocks, he asked to keep any newly born goats or lambs that are off-color.

Most of the sheep in Laban's flock are white, and most of the goats were black.

A small percentage of the goats were speckled, striped, or spotted, and some sheep were black.

After agreeing to Jacob's deal, Laban immediately removed all of the off-color animals from the flock three-day's journey away from the main group.

It looks like Jacob's deal will go bust in verses 29–36.

## GENESIS 30

Instead, the Lord supernaturally blessed Jacob's unconventional efforts to cause white sheep to produce black lambs and black goats to produce mixed-color offspring.

While we aren't told, yet, Jacob had apparently been informed in another dream that God intended to correct Laban's cheating of Jacob in Genesis 31:7–12.

So, while this chapter only mentions Jacob's use of striped poles, there is no confusion that God, and not the poles, causes the change in the animals' color.

In addition, Jacob breeds the flock to produce strong, off-color animals for him and weak, solid-colored animals for Laban in verses 37–42.

Jacob grew enormously wealthy.

With the Lord's blessing, he overcame Laban's scheme to keep him poor and dependent on his father-in-law in verse 43.

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*That's it, The Summary of Genesis 30*

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# GENESIS 30

## GEN 30: 1

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And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

This is called Rachel's rash prayer, for God indeed gave her children, and she died in Genesis 35:16-20.

However despite Rachel's great beauty, she also was near despair.

No doubt Leah often said,

*"If I only had my sister's beauty and the love of my husband, I would be happy."*

And Rachel often said,

*"If I only had sons like my sister, I would be happy."*

Beautiful or plain, we all have our problems.

This principle shows us the need to stop looking to how God deals with others and set our eyes on Him.

Jesus taught the same principle to Peter in John 21:19-22.

Rachel becomes the third wife in three generations unable to have children when they wanted to.

1. Abraham's wife Sarah famously became pregnant for the first time at age 90 (Genesis 17:17; 21:1-5).
  2. Jacob's own mother Rebekah waited 20 years to become pregnant with her twins (Genesis 25:20-26).
  3. Now, another family of God's people is learning that it is ultimately God, not men, who decides conception and birth.
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## GEN 30: 2

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And Jacob's anger was kindled against Rachel; and he said, Am I in God's stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

Basically, Jacob was saying it wasn't his fault that she was not able to produce.

Rachel's statement implied that her barrenness is somehow Jacob's fault.

This was absurd, given that Leah had born four sons by Jacob.

It also suggests Rachel did not have the same kind of relationship with the Lord that her sister did.

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## GENESIS 30

Leah's actions in the prior chapter suggested that she was faithful to God despite Jacob loving her less.

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### GEN 30: 3-6

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And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah,

(Much like Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham in a surrogate-mother type arrangement in Genesis 16, Rachel gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob.)

go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees,

(The phrase **bear a child on my knees** refers to the ancient practice of surrogate-adoption.

Some believe that the phrase refers only to a symbolic placement of the child on the knees of one who adopts it.

Others believe that it refers to the surrogate sitting on the lap of the adoptive mother during both insemination and birth. )

that I may also have children by her. <sup>4</sup>And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife; and Jacob went in unto her.

(Jacob agreed to this plan and did to Bilhah what a man does to his wife. They played kawuna 😊

This is very similar to how Rachel's grandmother, Sarah attempted to have a child, through her servant Hagar, after being unable to conceive with Abraham in Genesis 16:1-4.

To modern readers, the circumstances out of which Jacob's children are born seem far less than ideal.

- Leah was less loved by her husband.
- Rachel was unwilling to trust God and wait on Him.
- Bilhah is, in essence, a slave-wife.

In fact, the situation is tragic, and only becomes more dysfunctional over time, as the two sisters engage in a "birth race," competing to produce more sons.

Still, God kept His promises to Abraham and Jacob through these wives and children.

As He does even today, the Lord will accomplish His purposes, even through sinful and conflicted people.)

<sup>5</sup>And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. <sup>6</sup>And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son; therefore called she his name Dan.

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## GENESIS 30

(When Jacob's grandmother Sarah had a child by giving her servant girl as a wife to Abraham in Genesis 16:1–4, she seemed to quickly regret it in Genesis 16:5–6.

Rachel, on the other hand, received the baby born to her servant Bilhah as a gift from God.

Indeed, unlike Sarah's Ishmael, this son, and the others to be born to Jacob by his wives' servants, became children of God's covenant promises to Jacob.

In fact, they became the patriarchs of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Rachel named this boy Dan, related to a Hebrew term *diyin*, used earlier in the verse when Rachel said God had "vindicated" her.

The word is also a play on the Hebrew word for "give."

Rachel apparently prayed for children, after all, in spite of her angry words to Jacob in verse 1.

She credited the Lord both for vindicating her and for hearing her voice.

As her sister Leah had done, Rachel worshiped God in the naming of her son.)

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### GEN 30: 7-8

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And Bilhah Rachel's maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son.

(Bilhah conceived again and gave birth to second son, Jacob's sixth.

This child will be named Naphtali, a reflection of Rachel's great struggle to obtain children, as well as her sense that there is a competition afoot between the two wives.)

<sup>8</sup>And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed;

(This seems strange, because at this point Leah had four sons, and Rachel through Bilhah had two sons.

Yet Rachel said that she had **prevailed**.

Perhaps she meant it in the sense that now Leah seemed to have stopped having children.)

and she called his name Naphtali.

(Rachel gave this name (meaning wrestle), because relationships in their home had broken down to the point where Rachel openly acknowledged the baby competition.)

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### GEN 30: 9

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## GENESIS 30

When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.

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Leah, who had stopped bearing children, figured she could use the same surrogate-mother method to increase the number of children accounted to her, so she gave her maid Zilpah to Jacob, as Rachel had given her maid Bilhah to Jacob.

Men, the sisters were competing against each other, but you don't hear of Jacob complaining 😊

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### GEN 30: 10-11

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And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a son.

(Zilpah eventually had a son, Jacob's seventh boy, who was named *Gad*, to reflect what Leah sees as good fortune.)

<sup>11</sup>And Leah said, A troop cometh; and she called his name Gad.

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Previously, Leah named her sons in recognition of God's provision or in worship of the Lord.

This time, though, she names her son *Gad* because of the good fortune she has had, and "good luck" or "luck has come" is the literal meaning of this word in Hebrew.

According to some scholars, *Gad* may also have been a form of the name of a god worshiped locally around this time.

Shamefully the wives of Jacob continued to use their children as pawns in a power struggle within the home.

Leah had apparently lost the peace she had when her fourth son was born; she no longer had the peace praise (*Judah*) brought.

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### GEN 30: 12-13

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And Zilpah Leah's maid bare Jacob a second son.

(Zilpah bore to Jacob her second boy, his eighth son. This child was named *Asher*, to reflect Leah's happiness.)

<sup>13</sup>And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed; and she called his name Asher.

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Again, Leah named her son in response to her emotional state at the time and her recognition that God, or perhaps a lesser local god, had provided for her.

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## GENESIS 30

Even worse she was more concerned about her status in the community than the child himself.

The name *Asher* means "blessing" or "happiness," and could be related to a word that sounds like "God has filled with joy."

However, well known gods of that era also had names similar to *Asher*.

We will learn later that some of the house gods of Rachel's and Leah's youth continued to be part of Jacob's household in Genesis 31:32.

You know interestingly it's beginning to sound a little like the seven dwarfs: happy, judgment, wrestlings, praise, etc. 😊

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### GEN 30: 14-16

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And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son's mandrakes.

(Reuben is Leah's firstborn son and was about 7 years old at this time.)

It's possible that Reuben was helping with the wheat harvest when he found these plants known as mandrakes.

Mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*), also called "The Love Apple," is a stemless perennial of the night shade family, having emetic, purgative, and narcotic qualities.

The forked, torso-like shape of the tap-root with blue flowers and yellow fruit in season widely grows in Palestine.

Mandrakes were thought to increase fertility in women and still are among some peoples.

It's possible that mandrakes were quite rare in this region at this time, making Reuben's discovery quite a find.

This discovery became contentious, because sisters Rachel and Leah are engaged in a bitter competition to produce children for their mutual husband, Jacob.

Rachel had never herself given birth to children, instead obtaining hers using a cultural law which allowed her to claim the children of her servant, Bilhah.

Leah, for her part, had stopped conceiving after giving birth to four sons.

Thus their interest in these mandrake plants makes perfect sense given their desire to become pregnant, as well as their urge to corner Jacob's affection.

Now we don't know if the effect of the mandrakes was something biological or if it worked more as a placebo.

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## GENESIS 30

Under the guiding hand of God, the mandrakes seemed to work in the case of Leah and Jacob.

Whatever strange agencies God may allow to be used (such as mandrakes), the real factor was His sovereign will.)

<sup>15</sup>And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son's mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son's mandrakes.

(Her statement that Rachel has "taken away her husband," in light of what follows, reveals to us that Jacob is likely no longer sleeping with Leah.

His desire for Rachel has given her full control over his affection and attention.

Leah has been left on her own.

It's not surprising that she's not inclined to share her mandrakes, especially if she believes they may help Rachel to become pregnant and cement Jacob's preference for her.

Rachel responded with a revealing offer: *Leah can have Jacob for one night.*

Not only does this show us just how much power Rachel had over Jacob, it also shows us how desperate she is for anything which can help her get pregnant.

The offer itself also strongly indicates that Leah's recent lack of fertility is directly due to Rachel's influence over Jacob.

Leah's acceptance of this offer, in turn, shows her desperation to become pregnant again, as well as her eagerness to spend more time with Jacob.

Men, it must have been terrible living in a home where one wife believed the other had stolen her husband from her.

It's sad and tragic and was probably not a very happy home.

This confirms the wisdom of God's original plan, as expressed in Genesis 2:24: one man to be joined to one woman in a one-flesh relationship.

Later, Leviticus 18:18 forbade the marrying of sisters, and this shows why.)

<sup>16</sup>And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son's mandrakes. And he lay with her that night

(Now Leah claimed what she had purchased and tells Jacob that he belongs to her for the night.

That she had hired him and he must come with her. ☺

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## GENESIS 30

We're not told any details of Jacob's response, but he does agree to come home with Leah and sleep with her.

As he often does, Jacob appears to be a passive bystander in the story of his own life, submitting to the will of the stronger personalities around him.

Still, God used all the personalities in this complicated and messy family to continue to accomplish His plan for Jacob and for Israel.

God's blessings were not dependent on the apparent worthiness of those to whom He was giving them.

Our God graciously keeps His promises in all circumstances.)

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### GEN 30: 17-18

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And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son.

(In spite of this strange trade between Rachel and Leah, we're told in this verse that God listened to Leah.

In other words, Leah had been asking God to give her more children with Jacob.

Now God has answered her prayer.

Despite the efforts of man, Genesis continues to insist that God is ultimately the one who gives children, not husbands or mandrake plants, or—as seen later in this chapter—striped sticks.

This fifth natural-born son of Leah was named *Issachar* due to the circumstances of his birth. This was Jacob's ninth son in total.)

<sup>18</sup>And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband; and she called his name Issachar.

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Leah named this son based on her understanding that God was repaying her for giving her servant Zilpah to Jacob as a wife.

That seems to indicate that Leah saw this sharing of Zilpah with Jacob, even for the sake of having more sons, as a sacrificial act for the better good of Jacob.

The name *Yissaskar* is similar to the word used in this verse for wages, *sakar*, so the name might also mean "my hire" or "man of hire," referring to the night with Jacob that Leah bought by giving her mandrake plants to Rachel.

Alternatively, the name may mean "may God be gracious."

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# GENESIS 30

## GEN 30: 19-20

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And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. <sup>20</sup>And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons; and she called his name Zebulun.

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Again Leah credits God for giving her another son.

Specifically, Leah says God has endowed or presented to her a good gift, using the Hebrew word *zabad*.

Leah's faith in and gratitude to God seems to be a constant in her life.

The other constant in Leah's life seems to be a deep desire to be loved and valued by her husband Jacob.

That desire has often gone unmet, according to the details of this chapter verse 15.

Now that she has born him a sixth child, with two more through her servant Zilpah, Leah expresses her deep hope that perhaps her husband will at least "honor" or perhaps "live with" her, depending on the translation of the Hebrew word *zabal*.

She connects these two expressions, gratitude to God for this gift and confidence that her husband will honor her, with the name Zebulun.

That name, *Zabuwluwn* in Hebrew, contains references to both "gift" and "honor."

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## GEN 30: 21

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And afterwards

(The ungodly competition ended with no winner. Leah and the two maids did not bear any more children from this point on.)

she bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

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Scripture is often short on details, especially when those details are not especially relevant to the point at hand.

This even includes genealogies and family trees, where the Bible frequently only mentions key figures.

In other words, unless the Bible explicitly says someone *did not* have other children, it's possible that there may have been births which went unreported in the text.

So far, the Bible has recorded the birth of ten sons of Jacob, and this is the first daughter of whom we're told.

The sons became patriarchs of the tribes of Israel, making their mention necessary.

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## GENESIS 30

A likely reason Dinah is mentioned, even if other daughters were not, is that she will become a key character in the story of Jacob's family later on in Genesis 34.

Though we're not told why Leah gave her the name, the Hebrew *Diy nah* means "judgment" or "vindication."

Her birth was one more piece of evidence that God had vindicated Leah, in spite of the fact that her own husband seemed to value her so little.

This also reflects on the nature of the competition still boiling between Leah and her sister, Rachel, over their mutual husband, Jacob.

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### GEN 30: 22-24

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And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

(Now Rachel's long years of waiting come to an end.

A major theme of this chapter is exactly who gives the gift of children: **God, and God alone.**

Personal schemes (Genesis 30:1–3), plants (Genesis 30:14–17), and even striped sticks (Genesis 30:37–43) are irrelevant, since it's God who holds the real power.

Now, God "remembers" Rachel, a phrase which refers to God's favorable consideration.

He opens her womb.

The Bible is consistent from start to finish in teaching that God is the creator of life and the giver of children in all cases, but this teaching is a particular focus in the lives of Israel's early ancestors.

The idea of God's sovereignty over the womb is a repeated theme in the Bible.

The purposes of God in opening one and closing the other may be completely unknowable, but God has His purpose.

- God granted twins to Rebekah in Genesis 25:21.
- He opened the womb of Leah in Genesis 29:31.
- He closed the womb of Hannah, for a time in 1 Samuel 1:5)

<sup>23</sup>And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach;

(The previous verse told us that God "remembered" Rachel.

This does not mean, of course, that she had slipped His mind for a few years.

It simply means that He thought of her with favor, He showed her mercy and He responded to her prayers by making her able to become pregnant with Jacob.

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## GENESIS 30

So, she conceived and had a son, giving credit to God for taking that cultural shame and reproach away.

She acknowledged that God is the giver of this good gift.

And at this point, one might think this eleventh son would end up being the key son used to further God's redemptive purpose through this family.

Yet our thoughts are far less than God's

Isaiah 55:8-9 says:

*"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.")*

<sup>24</sup>And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.

Now Rachel gave her son a name that also serves as a prayer for yet another son.

Joseph means, in part, "may God add."

The Hebrew for this name, *Yowceph*, is related to the word used earlier in the verse for "taking away" her shame, *ā'sap*, as well as the word used for "giving" of a future son, *yacaph*.

Rachel, indeed, had another son born on their way back to the land, in the area near Bethlehem.

He was the twelfth son born to Jacob. Unfortunately in the child birth, Rachel died.

As he was being born and she was having such a difficult time in delivery, she called his name Benoi, *"the son of misery"*

Jacob changed the name to Benjamin, *"the son of my right hand"*

Favoritism, unfortunately, ran in Jacob's family.

Jacob's mother and father were very clear about which child they each preferred in Genesis 25:28.

Rebekah's preference for Jacob inspired her to help Jacob cheat his brother, Esau, out of a blessing from their father, Isaac (Genesis 27:5-10).

Since he never wanted to marry her in the first place, Jacob demonstrated a clear "hatred" for his first wife Leah, in comparison to her sister and his adored second wife, Rachel (Genesis 29:18-30).

Rather than learning a lesson from these imbalances, Jacob will instead follow suit, lavishing his favor on Joseph to such an extent that it fuels jealous revenge in the hearts of his other sons in Genesis 37:3-4.

## GENESIS 30

The birth of Joseph increased the number of Jacob's sons to 11.

It also seems to be the event that turns Jacob's thoughts to moving back to his home in the promised land of Canaan.

Now that his true love, and favored wife, has borne a son, Jacob probably feels that he is ready to return home, and to face his future.

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### GEN 30: 25

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And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

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The deal Jacob had made with his father-in-law Laban was to work for him another seven years after marrying Leah and Rachel.

After 14 years, Jacob had eleven sons, one daughter, two wives and their two maids and he is asking Laban to send him home, to the Promised Land.

The birth of Rachel's son Joseph seems to be the moment Jacob has been waiting for to finally declare his intention to leave Laban's household and to return to his own homeland in Canaan.

He now had a natural-born son from the woman he so dearly loved.

This, in a sense, means that Jacob has entirely fulfilled his father's purpose for sending him to this land in Genesis 28:1-3.

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### GEN 30: 26

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Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go; for thou knowest my service which I have done thee.

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Though Jacob was in Haran with Laban and his daughters for more than 14 years, he knew that he belonged in the land promised to him by God, through the covenant made with his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

Jacob stated clearly that he has met the terms of their agreement.

He demanded clearly that Laban give to him his wives and children in exchange for all of his service.

It's possible there may have been a legal question about whether, as an indentured servant of sorts to his uncle, Jacob would have been entitled to possession of his own wife and children when leaving service to his "master."

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## GENESIS 30

### GEN 30: 27

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And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry; for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.

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The word “**experience**” is the Hebrew word for **enchantments**.

It is possible that Laban is saying that he has learned by enchantments that the LORD had blessed him for Jacob’s sake.

He was involved in the worship of false gods.

Perhaps he had gone into one who was a diviner to learn the secret of his success and learned that Jacob was the reason for God’s blessings.

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### GEN 30: 28

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And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it.

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Earlier in the story, Laban had made that statement to Jacob and he had gotten a good deal. Jacob had promised to work for him for seven years to get Rachel for his wife.

In this verse, he presented his refusal to let Jacob go as an opportunity for Jacob:

"Name your price."

In other words, Laban is proposing that he and Jacob strike a new deal now that Jacob has fulfilled the terms of the old one.

This is dangerous territory for Jacob:

So far, every time he has negotiated a price for service with Laban, those deals have either ended in treachery, or a request for more service, as in this verse.

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### GEN 30: 29-30

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And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me.

**(The implication is that Jacob will be without any property of his own if he were to leave at this point.**

**As a servant in Laban's household, legal practice of the time would have suggested that everything in Jacob's family belonged to the master—including the wives and children.**

**Without permission, more than likely, any attempt by Jacob to leave could have been seen as an act of theft.**

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# GENESIS 30

Now Jacob begins to make a proposal of his own.

(He starts by asking Laban to admit that he knows both that Jacob has served faithfully and that Laban's livestock have thrived under his care.)

<sup>30</sup>For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming; and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?

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So, Jacob is saying that when he came there, Laban had very little. The LORD had blessed him through Jacob and now Laban was quite wealthy with cattle and flocks, but, Jacob had none of his own.

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## GEN 30: 31-32

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And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock. <sup>32</sup>I will pass through all thy flock today, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and of such shall be my hire.

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Apparently, most of the sheep in a flock were white all over, and most of the goats were entirely black.

In essence, Jacob is asking for a seemingly small subset of the animals.

He would take the **speckled** and **spotted** offspring, but first he had to separate the currently speckled or spotted animals from the rest of the flock.

This set the probability of more **speckled** and **spotted** offspring against him.

But as the following verses will reveal, Jacob believed he could produce a lot of these spotted and speckled animals with selective breeding (Genesis 30:37–39).

Much later, Jacob revealed his knowledge that God, not strange farming practices, is the real source of the animals' growth in Genesis 31:10–13.

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## GEN 30: 33-34

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So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face; every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me.

(Jacob insisted that this will keep things honest between them.)

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## GENESIS 30

After all, if Jacob's personal flocks contain any all-white sheep or all-black goats, they will stand out as ones which should belong to Laban, and can be considered stolen.)

<sup>34</sup>And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

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What Jacob was saying was for Laban to go through the flocks and remove all the speckled and spotted and brown lambs among the flock.

The solid colors would be Laban's.

Take out the speckled and spotted so that they wouldn't breed with the solid colours.

Then Jacob would get all the speckled and spotted that were born from the solid coloured animals as his hire.

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### GEN 30: 35-36

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And he removed that day the he goats that were speckled and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and everyone that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons.

(After agreeing to Jacob's terms for his wages, Laban immediately finds a way to cheat.

We see again that this man, Jacob's father-in-law and Rebekah's brother, is a thoroughly dishonest man.

Earlier, he treacherously claimed a local custom in order to cheat Jacob out of seven years of service, as well as indebting him to seven more (Genesis 29:18-30).

Now, Laban again demonstrates that he's not above blatant sabotage in order to prosper.

The agreement between Laban and Jacob was that Jacob would own every black sheep and mixed-color sheep or goat born among the flocks from this time forward.

Fully white sheep and fully black goats were far more common, so the deal was already tipped in Laban's favor.

Jacob is asking to only keep the uncommon, "defective" animals.

At least in theory, Laban again stood to gain a great deal from this arrangement.

And yet, to improve his odds even more, Laban now acts to remove all of the mixed-color animals and black sheep from the existing herds and gives those to his sons.

Spotted and speckled sheep and goats are mostly likely to be born to spotted and speckled parents.

If Laban were to remove all of those at the start, only a very small percentage born in the remaining flock—if any—were likely to be black lambs or mixed-color sheep or goats.

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## GENESIS 30

This is a cheat designed to turn Jacob's own plan against him.

To further drive home his plan, Laban moved these animals several days' journey away from Jacob.)

<sup>36</sup>And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob; and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

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Now, to further seal up his underhanded plan, Laban moved all those mixed-colored animals three day's journey away from the rest of the flock of solid white sheep and solid black goats.

By this, Laban is ensuring that no wandering animals from the main flock will end up mating with a mix-colored animal or a black sheep.

From his experience of owning large flocks of sheep and goats, Laban understood that he had vastly reduced the odds of many mixed-color animals or black sheep being born out of the main flock.

Those that will belong to Jacob should be very few in number.

Obviously, Laban is neither a gracious boss nor a caring father-in-law.

In fact, he's a blatantly greedy fraud.

Even his own daughters, who are bitter rivals (Genesis 30:1-24), will later unite in an opinion that their father is unworthy of further obedience (Genesis 31:14-16).

But Jacob had a plan of his own, one we will later learn is fueled by another dream from God (Genesis 31:10-13).

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### GEN 30: 37-40

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And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white strakes in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods.

(When Jacob put these branches in the **watering troughs** of the flocks, it apparently increased the number of speckled and spotted offspring from the solid-colored flock that Jacob managed on Laban's behalf.

How he executed this plan may sound like some kind of folk magic, but it is the process by which God supernaturally blessed Jacob's efforts to get more black sheep and mixed-color animals.)

<sup>38</sup>And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink.

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## GENESIS 30

(Jacob gathered fresh sticks from three specific trees and peeled back the bark to expose the white underneath.

This, in fact, may have been part of Jacob's symbolism in using these sticks.

The Hebrew term for "white" is *laban*, making this a fairly direct reference to his cheating father-in-law.

Now Jacob placed these sticks in or near the watering places for the flocks, since this is where the flocks also mated.)

<sup>39</sup>And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstraked, speckled, and spotted.

(Using another method described in the following verse, the white sheep also produced black lambs. In other words, it is God, not the sticks, which are producing these results.)

<sup>40</sup>And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstraked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

(The previous verses described Jacob's strategy for getting the black goats to produce striped, speckled, and spotted offspring.

This verse describes his method for getting the white sheep to produce black lambs.

This is a notoriously difficult verse to translate, and to interpret.

It's possible that Jacob caused the white sheep to mate while facing the black and striped animals in the flock, causing them to produce black offspring.

Once more, this isn't intended to show that either Jacob or the Bible believed this to be a scientific method for breeding off-color animals.

Jacob understood from the Lord that the flock was going to yield off-color animals (Genesis 31:7-12).

The Lord honored Jacob's method for identifying which of those animals he wanted to produce off-color offspring and caused it to happen.

As the following verses will reveal, Jacob did not want all of the animals to be striped, speckled, spotted, or off-color.

As the off-color animals were born, Jacob separated them from the rest of the flock.

In short, he separated his burgeoning flock from Laban's, allowing him to keep track of just how quickly his own wealth was growing.)

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# GENESIS 30

## GEN 30: 41-43

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And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.

(So when the strong goats were mating, Jacob made sure they would see the sticks he had stripped and placed among them.

As the next verse will reveal, Jacob removed the sticks when the weaker animals were breeding.

This selective breeding ensured that Jacob's animals would be strong, while Laban's would become increasingly weak.)

<sup>42</sup>But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in; so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

(Jacob also used selective breeding to increase the strength and vitality of his flock.

We don't know exactly how this method worked.

It is possible Jacob knew more about animal husbandry than we do today; but it is more likely Jacob did the best he knew, and God blessed it.

Genesis 31:10-13 tells us that Jacob saw in a dream the blessed reproduction of speckled and spotted sheep and goats.

That dream was also connected with a promise of God's care for Jacob and a command to return to Canaan, the land of his family.)

<sup>43</sup>And the man increased exceedingly, (The ancient Hebrew says, "The man burst out exceedingly exceedingly.") and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.

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God blessed Jacob not because he was good but because of the promises God made to him in Genesis 28:13-15 and the covenant made to Abraham.

In the same way, blessing comes from the LORD to us not because we are great or good, but because of the covenant God has made with us through Jesus, and promises He has given us in His word.

Jacob was very skilled in the art of husbandry and began to be very prosperous.

There are those who would criticize the account at this point, because Jacob believed in prenatal marking.

By putting these striped rods that he thought that he could bring forth striped and speckled offspring.

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## GENESIS 30

It could be that Jacob did have these thoughts as he was sly and crafty; however, **Jacob had approximately eighty years in the observation and workings of husbandry.**

**Jacob probably knew by experimentation and observation what is now known as The Mendellion Law concerning the dominant and recessive genes.**

**Knowing that in the solid colored animals that there could be the recessive spots and stripes.**

In the King James translation, the word “yakham” is conceived, but more literally “yakham” means to be hot.

It is more likely, understanding a little about animal’s reproduction, Jacob knew as the animals came in for the watering and the striped branches were placed in front of them that it caused them to come into heat and thus reproduce.

It was the LORD who blessed and prospered Jacob and gave him the strong speckled and spotted offsprings.

Later on Jacob acknowledged that God had granted him the success and wealth.

We may note Jacob’s principles for prosperity:

- Don’t make wealth your goal (Genesis 30:25-26).
- Don’t be afraid to work for others and try to increase their wealth before or as you work to increase your own wealth (Genesis 30:27).
- Work hard, dedicating yourself to your employer’s success (Genesis 30:26, 31:38-42).
- Trust God (Genesis 30:31-33).

As we wrap up Chapter 30:

This exceedingly important section of Genesis presents the Twelve Patriarchs, fathers of the Twelve Tribes, from whom Christ himself named his holy church, calling it in Matthew 19:28:

*"The Twelve Tribes of Israel"*

Along with the Twelve Apostles of the New Dispensation, these are also symbolically presented in Revelation 11:16 as

*"The Four and Twenty Elders on Their Thrones before God".*

The divine force that shaped the destiny of the Chosen People was exercised without regard to human preference, using and overruling the most obstinate wickedness to achieve God's purpose.

How wonderful it would have been if the chief actors in that historical drama had been able fully to trust God and to believe in their hearts that



# GENESIS 30

*"all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:25).*

But we fear that, like ourselves, Jacob and his family were often resentful and fretful from the things they endured.

Long after these events, while standing before Pharaoh, Jacob complained in Genesis 47:9,

*"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have been the days of the years of my life".*

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## **THE LESSONS WE LEARN FROM THIS STUDY ARE:**

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1. God is less interested in our strategies and techniques and more interested in our dependence on Him.
  2. Jacob gave God the glory for any success he had brought to Laban's house, and because of it, God continued to bless Jacob.
  3. Knowing what we know now about breeding and genetics, it's clear that forcing sheep/goats to stare at striped sticks doesn't increase the chances of speckled and striped offspring.
  4. God blessed Jacob even though his science wasn't up to date.
  5. Perhaps we should spend less time relying on our own ingenuity, strategy, and cleverness when it comes to multiplying God's flock (the Church), and more time in prayer and in recognition of the necessity of God's power to work through our insufficiency.
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We will start from Chapter 31 next week ...

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## **IF YOU HAVEN'T RECEIVED JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR, I WANT YOU TO PRAY THIS PRAYER WITH ME RIGHT NOW**

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- Heavenly Father, I realize that I'm a sinner
  - But right now I repent of my sins
  - I make you my Lord
  - I receive the free gift of forgiveness of sin
  - I need you, Jesus
  - Be my savior
-



# GENESIS 30

➤ So right now I declare by faith that I am saved in Jesus' name. Amen & Praise God

If you just prayed that prayer with me online, please let us know through our website and we shall send you a free eBook as a gift to you today.

Otherwise, welcome to the family of God. Amen!

## LET'S STANDUP FOR THE FINAL BLESSING

Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us:

- Be with you, bless you and keep you
- May the Lord cause his face to shine upon you and give you peace
- May your heart be filled with his love
- May you walk in the spirit
- May you be strengthened by the work of his Holy spirit in your inner man
- May you be increased in knowledge and understanding of His word, His will and His purposes for your life that you might walk before the Lord in a way that's pleasing unto him
- And may God increase your faith and your trust
- May he work in your life in a beautiful way as he nurtures you and as he leads you into that path of fellowship with him self
- May your life be enriched in all things in Christ Jesus
- And May the Lord and his blessings be upon you while we are absent from each other until we are brought back together again to continue our fellowship and our growing together in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ
- Amen